

## **ANNEX I: PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

**General:** Oil and hazardous substance spills generate a great deal of public attention and media coverage, particularly if a spill is large or the substance spilled is extremely hazardous. This attention, reflecting legitimate public concern, may be local, statewide, or even national or international in scope. The Public Information Officer of the Unified Command's Incident Command System organization serves as the lead manager for all spill-related public information activities conducted on behalf of the Unified Command or on behalf of the OSC. The State DEC Information Officer serves as the lead manager for all spill-related public information activities that fall under State jurisdiction, and will maintain a State public information office, as needed, which is directed by the State On-Scene Coordinator. The following appendices provide general guidance regarding public affairs and media relations during spill response operations.

The **Resources Section** of each Subarea Contingency Plan provides a media listing for use during oil and hazardous substance release contingencies in that specific subarea.

## APPENDIX I - General Rules for Media Interaction, Community Relations and Internal Information

### Public Information Tools:

**a. Staying Ahead of Changing Events:** One of the information officer's precepts for day-to-day effectiveness is to stay ahead of the "information curve." During a rapidly-changing emergency this will become one of his or her most exacting challenges. Not only must this person assemble information quickly, arrange interviews and assist reporters, but also must maintain close contact with the OSC and spill team members to anticipate as much as possible each major development in the spill response that will generate the next wave of public concern or media interest.

These events may come in the form of escalated response actions, the release of new water sample data or wildlife mortality figures, a formal decision delivered by a member of the Unified Command, or others serving in an official capacity. When events such as these can be anticipated, press information can be prepared to enable the OSC to maintain his/her role as the primary, responsible spokesperson for the incident. Additionally, the information officer must work within media deadlines as much as possible. Much of the national news media is driven by east coast deadlines, a full four hours ahead of Alaska, and this may require special attention. It is a simple fact that information delivered prior to deadlines will be more effectively reported by the press.

To stay ahead of changing events and to meet deadlines, the information officer must assimilate a mass of information by coordinating with local government officials and Federal, State, and Responsible Party public information staff, attending staff meetings, reading situation reports and asking many questions. All of this consumes time. Sufficient staff support and resources in the spill information office or Joint Information Center (JIC) is essential for answering phones, writing and dispensing bulletins, and hosting the press. Obtaining staff resources is thus one of the information officer's first duties upon arrival at a spill site.

- **Staff and Resources:** Experienced crisis managers know that when information officers are needed, the need can be critical, and the OSC's effectiveness with the media and public is often in direct proportion to the public information staff's experience and training in complex environmental emergencies. Effective communication with the public is indispensable to a successful spill response.

Arriving at a spill site, the information officer must ensure that an **officer/recorder** is assigned from the professional spill response staff to assist in recording and transmitting written information. The staff person is responsible for writing a "spill bulletin" summarizing salient facts and information about the incident. The bulletin is transmitted,

on a frequent basis and usually by Fax, to DEC's Central Office in Juneau, the Governor's Office, communities, Native groups, resource organizations, the media, and federal agencies (as appropriate). The information contained is also of obvious usefulness to the information officer.

Additional information officers and clerical staff should be added to handle the work load, as should photographic services, both still and video. An advance agreement should be made with the OSC that photos and video footage shot for public information may be used for that purpose, without delay or restriction for legal reviews.

Other resources required for the spill information office include suitable maps of the impacted area, up-to-date media and community contact lists, dedicated phone lines, portable phones or beepers if available, PCs for all writers on staff, and a Fax machine.

## **TAB A - MEDIA INTERACTION**

**1. General:** The general public's opinion of response efforts are not always based upon what action has been taken, but upon what information they have received. Supplying information to the media is a critical component of spill response and is a primary function of the On-Scene Coordinator (OSC). Early and accurate news releases serve to minimize public apprehension and to enhance their faith in the response community's ability to deal with oil and hazardous substance contingencies.

To ensure an accurate flow of information, a single point of contact or pool of public affairs personnel should be established for media relations. The number of people needed to respond to inquiries will vary depending on the size of the incident and the media interest involved. The OSC has many resources available to assist with the media. For small spills, the assistance of the Public Affairs Officer (PAO) may be sufficient. For larger spills with more media interest, it may be necessary to seek assistance from other sources such as the Coast Guard's Public Information Assist Team (PIAT) as well as State agency public information officers. **Appendix III, Tab D** of this annex provides general checklists to be used for public affairs procedures during pollution response operations.

The following general guidelines are also provided:

a. Fast and accurate information must be provided to protect public health and obtain public cooperation, and to assist in guarding against further environmental damage.

b. Clear communication by spill response authorities is essential for the delivery of accurate information to avert misinformation or rumors sometimes engendered by an emergency.

c. The OSC must immediately establish and maintain his/her position as chief articulator of an incident. As statutory guardian of public health and resources, it is the Federal and State OSC's role--not the role of the spiller or others--to deliver public statements regarding the effects of a spill, including evaluations of a spill's size, extent, nature, dangers to public health or resources, details of the response plan, the OSC's expectations for response plan implementation, degree of success or lack of success of a spill response, and the anticipated long-term effects of a spill.

d. When a spill occurs the OSC must immediately open communications with local government officials of affected communities, conveying facts needed by residents for their own response activities and protection of public health and resources. Initial phone calls to establish communication channels with local governments and appropriate organizations, such as fishermen and Native groups, should be followed by regular updates through spill bulletins, press releases, and briefings.

***Credibility with the press and the public is the best foundation for an effective public information effort, and the efficient delivery of accurate information is the key to credibility.***

**2. Media Access:** The question of media access to spill sites may arise during emergencies, usually because of one of three issues: safety; potential interference with response activities; or admission to private property.

In general, it should be the Unified Command's policy to allow free access for the media where public resources are concerned, with reasonable guidelines to protect personal safety and preclude interference with response activities. The information officer must work through and seek permission from the Incident Commander before allowing media access to the emergency scene. If conditions will not accommodate crowds of reporters, "pool" reporting may be necessary on a temporary basis. In regard to private property (a spill, for instance, on the grounds of a privately-owned refinery or storage facility) reporters or their companies must negotiate their own access. The information officer should obtain permission and legal counsel before releasing photos or video footage on private property, both for purposes of conserving legal evidence and potential violation of owners' rights.

- **The Daily Press Briefing:** during a significant spill with a rapidly developing situation and the presence of a large number of reporters, a briefing held daily at a pre-established time (8:00 am or 8:30 am is recommended) is one of the most useful means of delivering information. This is an opportunity for the OSC and other spokespersons to brief the press and answer their questions, and for other key staff members to follow up with important data. For example, if applicable, ADF&G should present information on wildlife and fisheries impacts, or public health authorities may offer their findings on contamination of local subsistence foods. It is the information officer's duty to work with the OSC to prioritize the information according to importance, point out backup factual material and other sources, provide written information for distribution, and conduct the press briefing.

Early morning is the best part of the day for the information officer to coordinate the day's press activities and ensure that everyone receives written information and background facts.

These press briefings may relieve the OSC and other spokespersons of some of the pressure of interviews throughout the remainder of the day, as well as free reporters to proceed with field work. The early hour also means that East Coast deadlines can be met.

- **News Releases, Fact Sheets, Background Papers:** News releases should be reserved for announcements of major decisions, policy changes, or new developments. They must report on items that are actually news, should summarize issues clearly, and provide quotes from decision-makers that encapsulate and clarify the Unified Command's

position. Distribution should be to affected communities and all response agencies in addition to the media.

Fact sheets should be prepared and updated regularly to present key data needed by the press or the public, such as amounts of oil or hazardous substance spilled or cleaned up, or wildlife mortalities. Background papers should be written to amplify and clarify complex issues and the Unified Command's related actions and policies.

Desktop publishing technology should be utilized in the public information office from the outset of the spill for rapid reproduction of documents that communicate effectively.

- **The Spill Bulletin:** This simple but essential publication is one of the key vehicles for conveying information about the spill response. It is produced several times daily by the **liaison officer/recorder**, a staff member with technical spill and environmental expertise who works closely with both the information officer and the spill management team. The liaison officer keeps track of the changing status of the response and records the information in brief, summarized informational "bullets." The bulletin is Faxed to communities, other response agencies, the Governor's Office, DEC Commissioner's office, Federal agencies, and others who require the information. With OSC approval, the bulletin may also be made available to the media through the information officer.

- **Mapping:** Oil, chemicals, or toxic gases often present increasing dangers to resources and public health because of their tendency to move after being released into the environment. The location of the spill, and the changes in location, are thus essential pieces of information for local residents, communities and the media. The spill information office or the JIC should obtain maps from agency technical mapping teams and make them available on a continuing basis. they can also be attached to the Spill Bulletin.

**3. Designation of Spokesperson:** At the State level, the designated State spokesperson is normally the State On-Scene Coordinator (SOSC). He or she will articulate the State's key policy positions and provide continuity of spokespersonship throughout the spill response. The spokesperson should have experience in media interviews and be capable of delivering clear and frequent explanations of the State's actions during a rapidly-changing emergency.

All information regarding State involvement at the spill site will be documented by staff to the SOSC either at the scene or through his/her regional office, and the SOSC or State DEC information officer will disseminate the information appropriate for release. For major incidents requiring participation of higher State executives, the DEC division director or the DEC Commissioner may be designated to make certain State policy announcements. The DEC information officer will be designated by the SOSC, the responsible DEC director, or the DEC Commissioner.

The DEC information officer will work closely with the SOSC and DEC Commissioner, reiterating the State's positions and policies, delivering them in writing or verbally to the news media and affected communities, and arranging appropriate interviews and press briefings to facilitate the flow of information.

Other agencies outside State government, such as the U.S. Coast Guard, EPA, and local government officials may be important media sources depending upon the severity and location of an incident and the type of response required. For an oil spill in marine waters, for example, the Federal On-Scene Coordinator (FOSC) will provide information on the overall spill response. However, the SOSC or information officer will remain the source for the State's position on human and environmental effects and State response activities.

The DEC Information Officer should contact the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (ADHSS) PIO and/or the Emergency Response Coordinator in the earliest stages of any incident that may impact public health. ADHSS will provide a flow of accurate and timely information to public health personnel in the field and will provide information on public health issues and policy to DEC's information officer.

The company responsible for the spill or the company's contractor may choose to inform the media of its actions in the spill response, but should defer to the SOSC and FOSC for statements about public health, dangers to resources, extent of the spill, or other issues within State or Federal jurisdiction. Before releasing scientific data or other information that bear upon public concerns about the extent and nature of the spill, the spiller should first submit the information to the SOSC or FOSC for assessment of its scientific accuracy.

## **TAB B - COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

Providing information directly to members of the impacted community, free of the filtering and potentially distorting effect of the media is critical to public understanding of the incident response. Community relations may include scheduling of public meetings, preparing speeches, and coordinating public activities with public officials and protocol personnel.

In order to ensure that important constituencies are not overlooked or slighted during a major response, it is important that a Community Relations/Liaison Officer coordinate closely with the public affairs element. (Under no circumstances should community relations be a collateral duty of the media relations officer during a major incident).

Additionally, public information officers should contact local government officials and have them offer information and comments on the situation. Federal, State and local governments should coordinate their responses/press releases to the media.

## **TAB C - INTERNAL INFORMATION**

Informing the members of the response community of the status of the response is vital if consistent and accurate information is to be conveyed to all interested parties. Internal information is the process of informing our own people of the status of our activities.

At a minimum, all personnel assigned to response duties should be provided with access to the daily fact sheet prepared by the media relations officer. This will help ensure a consistent and accurate flow of information.

## **APPENDIX II: MEDIA LOGISTICS**

### **TAB A - GENERAL LOGISTICAL CONCERNS FOR PRESS CONFERENCES AND NEWS BRIEFS**

Pollution incidents that generate significant media interest normally require press conferences or news briefs. These media gatherings provide an opportunity to film and ask questions of senior response officials. People arranging conferences and briefings should ensure that top officials are available and up-to-speed on any special interest areas. It is beneficial to provide a press release, statement, or press packet prior to conducting a press conference. The spokesperson(s) should approach the conference with a clear idea of the specific points to be discussed and anticipate questions that may be posed. Charts, diagrams and other visual aids serve to facilitate presentations and clarify response actions.

A schedule of the times and locations for press conferences should be published and made available to the media well in advance, whenever possible. This can be accomplished with a news advisory. It may be beneficial to conduct press conferences near the site of a pollution incident. This presents a challenging scenario to the PAO or other Public Affairs personnel.

Public buildings in the area which could handle the expected media representatives should be quickly identified. This may include local Federal, State, or community facilities, fire stations, police stations, or other state and local government buildings.

One alternative is to conduct a conference or briefing on scene or alongside a mobile command post. On scene conferences or briefings must be carefully coordinated to ensure efforts to control the spill are not disrupted. For press briefings, efforts should be made to find a location which provides convenient access for federal, state, and local officials and which is large enough to accommodate the anticipated number of media personnel.

Some members of the media will request access to the spill site for photo opportunities. Direct access to private property such as facilities, vessels, or barges will remain under the control of the owner. It may be advantageous to have a Coast Guard vessel available to tour the affected area from the waterside. When media interest exceeds the capacity of the Coast Guard vessel, it will be necessary to form a press pool. The selection of participants is best left to members of the media. The media may also obtain their own vessel or aircraft with which to view the spill site. They will continue to be governed by a Security or Safety Zone that may be in effect unless granted specific access by appropriate authority.

Members of the media may also approach personnel at a spill site. If possible, they should be referred to the PAO, the OSC's representative or to the OSC (in that order).

Agency representatives on scene may answer questions regarding their particular role. The rule of thumb is, if it's your job, you can talk about it; if it's not, then refer them to whomever is responsible.

Accompanying a spill of significant interest will be an increasing demand for information from public officials. Federal and State Public Affairs personnel are also responsible for fielding political inquiries as directed by the OSC. They should also prepare briefing materials for elected or public officials who may request information about the incident.

## **TAB B - MEDIA CONTACTS**

### **SECTION I - GOVERNMENT RESOURCES: FEDERAL AND STATE**

**Figure 1** should be utilized as a media contact list to identify points of contact, phone numbers and Fax numbers for wire services, television, radio, and newspapers.

#### **1. Federal Resources:**

The District Public Affairs Office is ready to assist an OSC by providing Public Affairs Specialists for media liaison and photo documentation. This office should be contacted early as the primary source for public affairs assistance. A Coast Guard Public Information Assist Team (PIAT) is also available to OSC's when additional personnel or expertise are required to accommodate the media. PIAT is a specialized, self-contained, public affairs resource which is available through the National Response Center (800) 424-8802 or the National Strike Force Coordination Center at (919) 331-6000. In the event a Joint Information Center (JIC) is established, the spiller should be encouraged to provide a spokesperson to the JIC to facilitate "one stop shopping" for the media.

#### **2. State Resources:**

- **Governor's Office:** A spill of any significant magnitude in Alaska, especially if it has important implications for public health or the environment, will almost certainly generate contacts with the Office of the Governor from the media and members of the public, and the Governor will likely need to comment on the spill status and response.

The DEC information officer for the spill must establish direct contact with the Governor's press secretary at the outset of a significant incident, provide a flow of accurate and timely information to the Governor's Office, and assist in coordination among the SOSC, DEC Commissioner, and Governor for statements to the press. If a major spill occurs, the information officer should coordinate the overall State approach to media relations with the Governor's press secretary. The press secretary will provide guidance on press issues within the Governor's purview.

- **Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G):** The DEC information officer should contact the Chief of ADF&G's public communications section in the earliest stages of any incident that may impact the State's wildlife or fisheries. A close working relationship between the DEC information officer and ADF&G spokespersons will enable ADF&G to deliver media information on the resources within its jurisdiction. In the event of a major incident, ADF&G should provide an information officer as part of the State's public information team to both share the work load and ensure accuracy of information on fish and wildlife resources and ADF&G policy.

- **The Department of Natural Resources (ADNR):** The ADNR public information staff likewise should be contacted in any incident in which State park lands or other State lands or resources under ADNR jurisdiction are affected. The ADNR Agency Representative will contact ADNR public information staff when State lands, waters or resources are involved in an incident.

- **Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs/Division of Emergency Services (ADMVA/ADES):** For participation under this Unified Plan, ADMVA/ADES media contacts will be deferred to the incident commander's media officer. If the spill response is part of a larger disaster, requiring the implementation of the State Emergency Operations Plan, then media contacts will be through the public information officials designated to act through that Plan. If an emergency is declared, the DEC information officer should immediately establish contact with ADMVA/ADES public information personnel for information exchange.

- **Core Public Information Team:** When a spill occurs, the following agency individuals, as needed, will form a core group to serve as the nucleus of a public information team: DEC director of affected division; DEC section chief or Area SOSC; on-scene information officer and DEC Commissioner's Office information officer; Governor's press secretary; ADF&G, ADES, ADNR, and ADHSS information officers.

## **SECTION II - WIRE SERVICES**

**(See the Resources Section of the appropriate Subarea Contingency Plan for a list of Wire Services in the subarea of concern)**

The Associated Press (AP), United Press International (UPI), and Reuters wire services are among the first to be contacted with breaking news and provide electronic media as well as newspapers with immediate information.

## **SECTION III - TELEVISION**

**(See the Resources Section of the appropriate Subarea Contingency Plan for a list of Television stations in the subarea of concern)**

Apart from radio, TV is the most important news medium. It is the one by which the greatest number of people will formulate their feelings, plus gain information about a significant spill. This emotionally powerful medium is a major influence on public opinion and a key to delivering the Federal/State and local position on the impact of a spill and how resources are being protected from further damage. The information officer should focus in three ways on this medium:

- Facilitate TV interviews with the OSC or other appropriate spokespersons and cooperate with stations and networks for video crews to visit spill sites, accompanying them where possible, to obtain news footage in a manner that is safe and does not interfere with the spill response.

- For a large spill, immediately activate a professional video team to shoot broadcast-quality footage from the first days of the incident and utilize the material for the Unified Command's own video reports on the spill. For a small spill, request field personnel record spill events with issued cameras.
- Use the video team's footage to produce video news releases on the most important issues and events of the spill and identify a distribution system to deliver these releases electronically to interested stations and networks. "B-roll" footage should also be provided for stations to use in editing their own news pieces. The footage can be delivered statewide and nationally by satellite link. A private company may be contracted for production and editing, but the JIC may find it more expeditious to employ its own production personnel.

#### **SECTION IV - RADIO**

**(See the Resources Section of the appropriate Subarea Contingency Plan for a list of Radio stations in the subarea of concern)**

This medium, especially public radio with its well-developed statewide and national networks, plays a more significant role in Alaska news perhaps than in other states. With public radio stations in a number of communities and efficient networking by Alaska Public Radio Network (APRN), radio represents an aggressive and professional news capability. Radio should receive equal notification and information during a spill response.

#### **SECTION V - NEWSPAPERS**

**(See the Resources Section of the appropriate Subarea Contingency Plan for a list of newspapers in the subarea of concern)**

Newspapers often provide more in-depth coverage than television and are sometimes more closely perused by decision-makers, legislators, community officials and other opinion leaders. While TV is viscerally powerful, its images are more fleeting than stories and editorials appearing in print. Thus newspapers can have a longer-lasting effect, and in a sense newspapers write the "history" of a spill -- at least in the public view.

**Figure 1 - MEDIA CONTACT LIST**

Media Contact List

POC

PHONE

FAX

Associated Press: \_\_\_\_\_

United Press: \_\_\_\_\_

CNN: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Wires: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Local TV: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Local TV: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Radio: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Newspapers: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **TAB C:        JOINT INFORMATION CENTER (JIC)**

During a major oil spill where media activity is expected to last several days, the OSC should establish a Joint Information Center (JIC) to coordinate the Public Affairs activities of participating agencies and parties. The role of the JIC includes:

- Providing multiple phone lines for incoming calls, manned by knowledgeable individuals.
- Ensuring State and Federal government Public Affairs representatives are available to the media.
- Issuing press releases to the media and providing copies to response officials.
- Scheduling and coordinating news conferences and media briefings.
- Providing the responsible party (spiller) an opportunity to coordinate their media efforts with those of the OSC.
- Developing and maintaining a Unified Command website on the Internet to keep the public informed on the status of response activities.

The JIC should be kept separate from the Command Center. This provides greater control of information flow without disrupting response operations. Equipment needs for the JIC will vary depending upon the size of the incident.

The Subarea Committees for each of the ten subareas within the State of Alaska should include specific logistical needs of the JIC for various spill scenarios in their respective plans. Items which may be included are potential sites for the JIC, and equipment needs such as phone lines, Fax machines, copiers, and computers.

### **APPENDIX III - Samples and General Checklist**

The following Tabs provide a sample fact sheet, a sample press release, a sample news advisory, and a general checklist for use by public affairs/information officers.

**TAB A:      SAMPLE FACT SHEET**



**Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation**

***Prevention and Emergency Response Program***  
**FACT SHEET**

**Ninilchik River Sulfur Spill**  
**Ninilchik, Alaska**

*Along the Sterling Highway, a container of sulfur fell off a transport truck and spilled along the bank into the Ninilchik River. The container held approximately 17 tons of sulfur*

**Background**

On Tuesday, September 16, 1997, a Lynden Transport truck traveling on the Sterling Highway transporting two containers of sulfur from the Tesoro Chemical Plant in Nikiski to Homer spilled one of the containers along the bank and into the Ninilchik River at the Ninilchik River Bridge.

The sulfur spilled down the bank and across the width of the river. The sulfur also settled a short distance downstream covering small portions of the river bed.

Two small areas of sulfur ignited and burned. Because burning sulfur may produce irritating or toxic sulfur dioxide gases, area residents were evacuated to nearby fair grounds as a safety precaution. The fires have been extinguished, and the residents have returned to their homes.

The product spilled is dried sulfur, a by-product of desulfurization of crude oil at the Tesoro Chemical Plant in Nikiski.

**Spill Investigation Activities & Sampling**

The Department of Environmental Conservation is working with the trucking company, the Department of Fish and Game, Tesoro, and the Department of Health and Social Services to determine what impacts, if any, may be associated with the release of the sulfur.

Field water chemistry examinations conducted by ADF&G, upstream and downstream of the spill site, show no change in pH, water conductivity, or oxygen levels. Also, benthic organisms, rainbow trout fry, and silver salmon fry were captured immediately below the spill site by ADF&G personnel and no visual adverse impacts to the organisms were noted.

**Next Steps**

Sulphur spilled onto the embankment has been picked up with a vacuum truck and shovels. The tentative plan for pickup of the product in the river is to remove the large chunks by hand and follow up with an underwater vacuum system using a hose and wand connected to centrifugal pumps. All of the sulfur may not be removed from the river bed in order to protect fish spawning areas.

***What is SULFUR?***

Elemental SULFUR is largely extracted from petroleum. It is also used as an ingredient in insecticides, over the counter skin medications, and soil stabilizers. Sulfur – in its elemental form – is an odorless, flammable, yellow, translucent solid. Sulfur makes up 15% of the inner core of the earth and 0.052% of the earth's crust. Traces of impurity may give off a rotten egg odor to the sulfur compound.

***What happens when it is spilled?***

Sulfur will not mix with water. So, when spilled onto soil, it cannot be transported downward into the ground water table, and when spilled into a water body, it is likely to thicken and sink to the bottom and not dissolve into the water. Sulfur is also oxidized by microbial species in soils and sediments. Plants are able to utilize the oxidized forms of sulfur.

***Potential Health Risks Examined***

Inhalation of sulfur dust can cause eye irritation, respiratory tract irritation, inflammation of the nasal mucosa and possibly increased nasal secretions. Sulfur is not particularly toxic when ingested. The major health risk in handling sulfur is ignition and the potential to produce toxic sulfur dioxide and hydrogen sulfide gas.

***Ecological Risks***

Sulfur is a natural component of river water and sea water. In its sulfate state, it is present in sea water at about 2,700 parts per million (ppm) and at about 11 ppm in river water. Sulfur does not bioaccumulate or build up in fish, clams or oysters.

Sulfur is dangerous to aquatic life when extremely high concentrations are suspended into the water column. Low levels of sulfur settled into the sediment do not appear to be dangerous to the aquatic environment.

## Information about the Prevention and Emergency Response Program

DEC's Prevention and Emergency Response Program is responsible for all ADEC prevention and emergency response activities related to oil and hazardous substance releases statewide. Its objectives are to ensure the safety of all persons involved in an incident, and to protect the public health and the environment.

The Alaska Legislature created the Oil and Hazardous Substance Release Response Fund to enable the state and local governments to cover the costs of oversight and cleanup. These costs are in turn recovered from the responsible party as mandated by state law.

### Additional information:

*For more information about the Ninilchik River Sulfur Spill, please contact one of the following DEC staff:*

**Brad Hahn**, (907) 269-7548  
email: [bhahn@envircon.state.ak.us](mailto:bhahn@envircon.state.ak.us)

**John Bauer**, (907) 269-7522  
email: [jbauer@envircon.state.ak.us](mailto:jbauer@envircon.state.ak.us)

fax: (907) 269-7648

*or write:*

**DEC PERP Program**  
**555 Cordova Street, 2nd floor**  
**Anchorage, AK 99501-2617**

## *Additional Human Health Toxicity*

Routes of Entry: inhalation, skin, eyes, ingestion.

Non-Cancer Causing:

According to the National Toxicology Program (NTP), sulfur is not listed as a carcinogen (cancer causing agent).

Acute (short term) Health Effects:

Over exposure can cause reddening of the eyes and skin. Inhalation of dusts can be irritating to the nose and throat.

Chronic (long-term) Health Effects:

Prolonged skin contact can cause the development of allergic reactions.

OSHA:

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has not established a permissible exposure limit (PEL) for sulfur.

ACGIH:

The ACGIH has not established a threshold limit value (TLV) for sulfur.

## *Additional Ecological Toxicity Information*

Aquatic toxicity:

Freshwater toxicology of sulfur on fish is as follows:

- 16,000 ppm for 5 hr on goldfish resulted in 100% mortality under turbid water conditions;
- 10,000 ppm for 96 hr on mosquito fish resulted in adverse effects in turbid water conditions;
- 1,600 ppm for 3.5 to 5.25 hr on goldfish provide fatal under colloidal sulfur in tap water.
- 200,000 ppm for <1 hr on goldfish proved fatal under colloidal conditions.

*Note: colloidal conditions means that the sulfur was kept suspended in the water.*

# Sample Unified Command Website

UNIFIED COMMAND      BP / U.S. Coast Guard / AK Department of Environmental Conservation

**BP 1998 ALASKA SONS EXERCISE**  
*Spill of National Significance Exercise*  
September 18-23, 1998 • Valdez, Alaska

**This is a Drill!**

Updated 9/16/98

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**Unified Command**

- [BP](#)
- [U.S. Coast Guard](#)
- [AK Department of Environmental Conservation](#)
- [Kenai Peninsula](#)

**Supporting Organizations**

**Citizen Advisory Groups**

- [EMEREGAC](#)
- [Cook Inlet EGAC](#)

**Mutual Aid Responders**

- [Alaska SERVE](#)
- [ARCO](#)

**Local Governments**

- [Chena](#)
- [Cordova](#)
- [Kodiak](#)
- [Seward](#)
- [Tatook](#)
- [Valdez](#)

**Government Agencies**

- [AK Regional Response Team](#)
- [NDEA](#)
- [U.S. Navy](#)
- [AK Department of Natural Resources](#)
- [AK Department of Fish and Game](#)

**\*\*THIS IS A DRILL\*\***

Welcome to the official website for the BP 1998 Alaska Spill of National Significance (SONS) Exercise, sponsored by British Petroleum (BP).

**Location:** Prince William Sound, Alaska  
**Date:** September 18-23, 1998

**Drill Final Report Just Published - 3/6/99**  
**BP 1998 Spill of National Significance (SONS) Final Report**

- [View Only](#)
- [View and Print Entire Report \(PDF format 538k\)](#)

The joint evaluation report of the 1998 SONS Exercise was prepared by a team of representative from BP, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, the U.S. Coast Guard and ERST/O'Brien's. This Final Report provides the consensus recommendations for the exercise, as a direct result of interviews conducted with nineteen key participants and evaluators.

You will need Adobe Acrobat Reader loaded on your computer to view the Final Report. If you do not have Adobe Acrobat Reader, we recommend you visit the Adobe Web Site and download a free copy of Adobe Acrobat Reader. 



[▲ \[Top of Page\]](#)

Visits since 9/17/98 1:30 PM AST

**000053**  
**08-24-99**  
**2:36 PM**

Questions or comments?  
This is a drill; during a response to a large spill, this website would list a toll-free number and an email contact address for public and media questions.  
Technical questions and comments about this website:  
[ostebano@demtroon.state.ak.us](mailto:ostebano@demtroon.state.ak.us)

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[Photos](#) | [Press Releases](#) | [Vessel Information](#)

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**TAB B:      SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE**

**DEC NEWS RELEASE**

**Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation**

**410 Willoughby Ave. Juneau, Alaska 99801-1795**

**Phone: (907) 465-5060   Fax: 465-5097**

<http://www.state.ak.us/dec/home.htm>

April 21, 1996

CONTACT:

John Bauer, State On-Scene Coordinator

DEC Anchorage, (907) 269-7522

Joe Ferguson, Information Officer

DEC, Juneau, (907) 465-5060

**PIPELINE SPILL GETS RESPONSE BY ALYESKA, DEC, AND STATE-FEDERAL JOINT PIPELINE OFFICE**

Spill response personnel have formed an incident command system (ICS) in response to an underground spill at Pump Station 10 on the Alyeska Pipeline. The spill has caused manager-company Alyeska Pipeline Service Company to reduce the flow through the pipeline by approximately one-half (from 1.4 million barrels to 700,000 barrels per day) while excavation and repairs are made. The spill is located about 150 miles south of Fairbanks along the Richardson Highway.

It was reported that the spill was discovered late Saturday by Alyeska maintenance personnel. The company implemented an incident command system to address the spill. The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) personnel joined the ICS on-site at Pump Station 10 to monitor, assist and investigate the spill and response.

Alyeska Pipeline pumped crude oil from storage tanks at Pump Station 10 to make storage available in case the line needs to be evacuated for repairs.

The cause and volume of the spill were not known today, but Alyeska had pumped about 100 gallons from two metal culverts used for accessing flow transducers on the pipeline. The company estimated that crude oil is seeping into the culverts at a rate of about six to eight gallons per hour.

Alyeska organized four task forces to address the spill. They will excavate in the area around "check valve 92," excavate near the metal culvert pipes to locate the leading edge of the spill, establish a contaminated soil stockpile, and provide decontamination of field equipment.

DEC staff are monitoring initial response actions and reviewing cleanup plans, and will review a waste management plan for the response. DEC is working with Alyeska and with the State-Federal Pipeline Office to respond to the spill.

**TAB C:      SAMPLE NEWS ADVISORY**

(To Be Developed)

## **TAB D - GENERAL CHECKLISTS**

### **STATE OF ALASKA - GENERAL GUIDELINES**

No two emergencies are identical. Each event will challenge the information officer's skills in communication, organization and diplomacy. The individual must design the best response possible, flexibly and creatively, to meet the given situation. The following checklist, intended as an aid to the basics, is offered as a starting point.

#### **● Pre-planning**

1. Maintain up-to-date information on the major facilities in the State. Include a file of relevant facts on the industries and the major environmental and public health resources near facilities.
2. Review major oil and hazardous substance transportation routes and examples of vessel and facility contingency plans.
3. At both home and office, keep a kit with communications information for Alaska locales including community and media contact lists.
4. Participate in spill drills.

#### **● At the Scene**

1. Coordinate with the OSC and spill response team.
2. Make all notifications as needed:
  - DEC information officer in Commissioner's Office
  - Governor's Press Secretary
  - ADF&G Public Information Office and other State agencies as needed (DNR, DMVA/DES, DHSS)
  - Coast Guard or EPA Press Officers; and
  - RP's press officer or press spokesperson
3. Identify Liaison Officer/Recorder and determine when first Spill Bulletin will be released.
4. Initiate first press release with basic facts on spill, distribute as soon as possible.
5. Identify additional staffing, office, equipment needs if any and submit to OSC or office administrator.

6. Open communication channels with local government officials of affected communities, assist OSC in keeping local community leadership informed.
7. Log-in press calls, record names, phone and Fax numbers of reporters.
8. Activate video and still photography team.
9. Arrange to obtain maps from mapping team, with regular updates.
10. Work with OSC to set up first press briefing.
11. Attend key staff coordination and update meetings.
12. Identify where reporters and TV crews may go and, if necessary, assist them in getting there.

● **News Briefings**

1. Coordinate with OSC: who will be spokesperson(s), subject matter to be covered, other state staff required, backup materials, time limit.
2. Develop list of probable questions for SOSC.
3. At beginning of briefing, introduce yourself and speakers, give titles and spelling of names, indicate subject matter to be covered.
4. Note or tape questions and answers for follow-up.

● **Type of Information for Release**

1. Names and contact phones to obtain information on the spill.
2. Exact location of the incident, including the proper name of the site, commercial entity name.
3. Time and date of incident.
4. Type of substance spilled, nature of incident (fire, explosion, oil spill, etc.), and size, and effects to date on humans or resources. For any casualties, withhold names pending notification of next-of-kin.
5. Actions taken or recommendations by the Unified Command officials for actions to respond to the incident. If appropriate, obtain quotes from the Unified Command officials regarding actions needed.

6. Resources in area that could be at further risk, including human risks, and information needed by the public for self-protection.
7. How the Unified Command is coordinating efforts with local communities and residents.

- **Precautions**

Information released publicly during an incident may be used in later litigation. When in doubt, secure advice from the legal authorities. In general:

- Do not speculate about the facts. "I don't know but I'll find out" is sometimes the best answer.
- Do not make damage estimates in terms of dollars nor confirm estimates made by persons other than those serving in an official capacity in the spill response operation.
- Withhold names of casualties pending notification of next-of-kin.

- **After the Spill Response ...**

When the crisis has subsided and media interest abated, the incident commanders public information staff, and local government officials, as appropriate, should meet to evaluate their effectiveness with the media and the public.

## U.S. COAST GUARD - GENERAL GUIDELINES

### CHECKLIST FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS RESPONSE TO POLLUTION INCIDENTS

- \_\_\_ 1. Designate an incident Public Affairs Officer. This person may change with time from a unit officer to a PIAT CWO to a District officer to a senior officer from another command. Make sure all PAs know who the PAO is and understand that the PAO reports to the OSC.
- \_\_\_ 2. Complete fact sheet (see Tab A for sample) and prepare a 30-second media statement (about 150 words maximum).
- \_\_\_ 3. Record media statement on Voice-mail, record-a-phone or similar automatic message service so media can get updates.
- \_\_\_ 4. Phone screening system (watchstanders, automated, etc.) directs news media to prerecorded update.
- \_\_\_ 5. Have three phone lines available for public affairs use: incoming (published), outgoing (unpublished), and Fax.
- \_\_\_ 6. Contact district (District Public Affairs or DPA) at outset of any actual medium spill or larger to arrange for PA backup. Temporary Activity Duty (TAD) PAs may be used or referral of media calls to DPA or some variation.
- \_\_\_ 7. Contact NSFCC, PIAT to alert in case of any potential major incident (if not already done as part of 5 above). Note: OSC may request PIAT assistance at any time regardless of spill size.
- \_\_\_ 8. Update fact sheet (Tab A) at least daily and Fax or phone update to major media outlets.
- \_\_\_ 9. Schedule a media availability meeting with the OSC at least daily when media interest is great (if unsure of necessity, ask reporters; they will tell you whether the story is worth a trip to your unit).
- \_\_\_ 10. The primary purpose of the news conference/media availability meeting is to put forth the OSC's assessment of the progress of the response. A secondary purpose is to answer media questions. Use Tab A, Fact Sheet, as the primary tool for briefings.
- \_\_\_ 11. In major spills, designate a protocol office to handle VIP visitors. Do not assign this function to the PAO.

- \_\_\_ 12. In major spills of high interest, designate an OSC aide. Access to the OSC and the OSC's time is critical in such incidents and must be scheduled carefully.
- \_\_\_ 13. Require the PAO to brief the OSC each morning on the media coverage of the incident and the specific public affairs goals for the day. The OSC should update the fact sheet at this time.
- \_\_\_ 14. Establish a Joint Information Center (normally dictated by the size of the incident.) Only the OSC or the OSC's spokesperson speaks for all agencies, but each agency can speak for itself.
- \_\_\_ 15. Maintain close contact with appropriate local government official(s).