

PREP -Area Ex FSE 2015 (Southeast Alaska)

After Action Report

20 Apr 2015 – 24 Apr 2015



Date Released 30 Sep 2015

	Exercise / Event Information
COE #	5097
Event Name	PREP -Area Ex FSE 2015 (Southeast Alaska)
StartEx	20 Apr 2015
EndEx	24 Apr 2015
Event Type	Exercise
Submitting Organization	SECTOR JUNEAU
OPFAC	17-37360
Type of Mission	Marine Environmental Protection
Level of Effort	Sponsor
Type of Exercise	

	Estimated Event Cost	Actual Event Cost
AFC-30:	\$74,125.00	\$62,596.00

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Attachments:

2015SEAKNPREPcosts.xlsx

General Description:

The Southeast Alaska PREP FSE 2015 was a full-scale, industry-led, multi-agency exercise. The command post portion of the exercise was conducted on April 22, 2015, at the Harrigan Centennial Hall, in Sitka, Alaska. The scenario required exercise participants to respond to a release of approximately 80,000 barrels (bbls) of #2 diesel fuel from a barge belonging to Harley Marine Inc., in the vicinity of Battery Island, north of Sitka. Equipment deployment exercises associated with this PREP were conducted on April 23, 2015, and included implementing Geographic Response Strategies (GRS) in Indian River and Pirate Cove.

The exercise evaluated the capabilities and effectiveness of the Coast Guard Captain of the Port (COTP)/Federal On-Scene Coordinator (FOOSC), the Southeast Alaska Area Committee, State of Alaska, and local and industry partners to carry out their collective responsibilities as outlined within Alaska's Southeast Subarea Contingency Plan (SE SCP), Harley Marine Services, Inc. (HMSI) Vessel Response Plans and various other state and local response plans. This exercise provided the response community an opportunity to improve preparedness by validating information and procedures within the contingency plans, identifying weaknesses (for correction in subsequent versions of the plans), identifying strengths (to share as best practices) and practicing command and control within a NIMS ICS unified command framework.

The Incident Management Team was comprised of personnel from multiple agencies (federal, state, local and tribal) and organizations, with varied skill sets and expertise. Participants coached and provided training to members of the team working toward Incident Command System (ICS) qualifications. The professional interaction and relationship building of responders and technical specialist were integral to the safety of participants and the success of this exercise.

Operational Data:

The following field objectives were evaluated on April 23, 2015, at Indian River and Pirate's Cove:

- Implement protection strategies and tactics identified in the Subarea Contingency Plan; and
- Demonstrate the ability to deploy adequate response equipment for one Geographic Response Strategy (GRS) from the Subarea Contingency Plan adhering to safety principles for responders and the public effectively.

The exercise concluded with the testing of the Indian River Geographic Response Strategy (GRS - SE05-05 - Indian River) on Thursday, April 23. The strategy was deployed at low mean tide and it was quickly apparent the tactics recommended would not sufficiently protect the Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA). Thirteen hundred (1300') feet of protected water inflatable boom was deployed from the SEAPRO OSRV Neka Bay, and support barge ORB1. Boom was towed into place by a Petro49 support vessel and SEAPRO work skiff, staffed by SEAPRO and Petro49 response personnel. The boom was anchored and monitored during the incoming tide. The deployment provided valuable information for amendment of the tactics and the ADEC Program Manager, observing on site developed recommendations for establishing a new strategy and GRS development.

The test included use of boom not typically deployed, familiarization between crews from Sitka and Juneau and effective use of communications.

Participants included ADEC -PERP Manager, USCG Sector Juneau, USCG MSD Sitka, USCG Auxiliary Petro Marine Services-Sitka, Harley Marine (Industry Sponsor), SEAPRO, ADNR State Parks, National Park Service- Sitka, ADNR -SHPO, US Forest Service Archeologist and National Weather Service.

Support Data:

Exercise players participated in several team and position specific trainings prior to the start of exercise play. The Exercise Support Team facilitated Intermediate Incident Management Team Training (ICS 320) from April 14-16, in Juneau, AK. Additional ICS training, including position specific training, was conducted in Sitka, on April 21. The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) conducted training on the capabilities of WebMap, an ArcGIS oil spill response and planning tool. Coast Guard participants worked toward completing ICS qualifications throughout the week and participated in qualification boards on April 23.

Location of Operation:

Incident Command Post (ICP)- Harrigan Centennial Hall, Sitka, AK; 330 Harbor Dr, Sitka, AK 99835

Equipment deployment: Indian River and Pirate's Cove

Location of Personnel:

Personnel were located at the ICP, Indian River, and Pirate's Cove.

Objectives and Major Lessons:

All core capabilities and exercise objectives were met.

Objectives

1. Exercise the Alaska Southeast Subarea Contingency Plan (SCP), Vessel/Facility Response Plan and State Contingency Plans assessing the following:
 - Adherence to safety principals at all levels of play.
 - Implementation of a process for ESA consultation.
 - Identification and review of the Volunteer Coordinator position and what it would take to implement the Volunteer Management Plan.
 - Development of strategies and tactics for discharge control, containment and recovery operations, identifying equipment requirements and logistical constraints.
 - Effective use of technologies (WebEOC, WebMap, product tracking trajectories) in existing NIMS/ICS response management system.
 - Implementation of protection strategies and tactics identified in the Subarea Contingency Plan (SCP).

- Establishment of a Joint Information Center (JIC) that effectively communicates with the public and media. (real & exercise play).
 - Effective use of the Liaison position to engage the local response community and the Alaskan Tribal interests in the response organization.
 - Identification of sensitive areas in both the response area and the Potential Place of Refuge process, leading to recommendations to the Unified Command that protect sensitive areas and minimize impacts to wildlife.
 - Effective, accurate and timely situation information disseminated to all levels of the response organization up to agency executives of the Unified Command.
2. Use the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Incident Command System (ICS) as a response management system to form a Unified Command (UC) in response to a simulated incident assessing ICS position specific skills and knowledge leading to ICS PQS qualifications. Qualification boards to be held for multiple ICS positions following the IMT portion of the exercise.
 3. Demonstrate the ability to deploy adequate response equipment for one Geographic Response Strategy (GRS) from the Subarea Contingency Plan assessing adherence to safety principals for the responders and the public, effective activation of USCG assets, and effective use of appropriate recovery methods.

Major Lessons Learned/Best Practices

- Assign a Facility Security personnel to assist Check-in recorders with ensuring the security of the ICP. Check-in recorders are responsible to record check-in information but the Security Manager is responsible to ensure the safety and security of incident facilities. (Lesson Learned)
- Maintain organizational flexibility and select IMT representatives with local knowledge of stakeholder and volunteer issues. (Best Practice)

Today's society is extremely dependant on electronic means of communication. This is no less true in the world of oil spill and hazardous materials response. The importance of having access to and the capability to use technology designed to communicate efficiently internal and external to the ICP has been highlighted in past exercises and actual events in the region. Responders should not be required to bring personal equipment to agency responses. (Lesson Learned)

Limitations and Casualties:

The exercise uncovered two limitations; one regarding exercise communication and the other regarding facility availability for a response.

First, the facility availability issue: The facility in Sitka, as in most small towns in Southeast Alaska, was the only facility of sufficient size to handle the IMT. The facility needed to be reserved 18 months in advance. This is typical as large facilities are used by the entire community for a myriad of activities. What this means for a real response is that the space may not be available for the entire IMT set up. Places like Glacier Bay, Hoonah, and Metlakatla, to

name a few, would unlikely have space for an IMT at all. Future exercises may want to address this contingency for the smallest communities and explore a virtual IMT based in one of the larger towns, either Juneau or Ketchikan, with forward deployed sections.

Second, the exercise communication issue: With facilities having varying types of phones and wiring, it's not always feasible to match equipment. The wiring in the Sitka facility did not match our phones; the exercise host needed to acquire a few phones that worked, but not in sufficient enough quantities to keep up with the exercise pace. Using VHF-FM radios was a back-up plan, but a poor one as no one wants to deliver injects for a FSE by radio. As it turned out, several controllers used personal cell phones to deliver and receive exercise communications. For future exercises, the use of cell phones is highly recommended. Not all players will have work cell phones so identifying short term cell phone rentals for future exercises and building it into the exercise budget is an option.

Participants:

- Harley Marine
- U.S. Coast Guard
- NOAA
- Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
- Alaska Department of Natural Resources
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- SEAPRO
- City of Sitka
- Witt O'Brien's
- Alaska Raptor Center
- Sitka Sound Science Center
- Sitka Tribe of Alaska
- Alaska Chaddux
- Department of Interior
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife

Title	Integration of Safety
Recommended Action	Information only
Type of Contingency	OIL AND HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCE RESPONSE
ICS Category	0.4.2 Safety
Core Component	Operate within management system
Recommended Action Area	Performance

Observation:

The objective of adhering to safety principals at all levels of play was **performed without challenges**.

Discussion:

The Safety Officer and Assistants were actively engaged with other players of the Command and General Staff. The Safety Officer facilitated an effective team and work environment, including a an initial meeting to assess capabilities and assign tasks. Safety personnel were from various agencies and the selection of personnel to participate in the exercise was optimal. The Safety team used job hazard analysis to develop a detailed Site Safety Plan (SSP) and provided relevant safety and occupational health information in the work assignments. The SSP included, at a minimum, work activities, hazard evaluations, air monitoring, PPE requirements, and decontamination considerations.

The team completed ICS 237s to document injuries and near misses. A Communications Plan was developed to report information between field and ICP personnel. Information was also provided to the Situation Unit Leader for communication to the Incident Management Team (IMT). Overall, the Safety team integrated well into the Unified Command and communicated/sought out safety hazards and safety messages to/from all levels of the Command.

A concern was noted, the Safety Officer did not conduct/simulate site safety assessment early enough in the response.

Lesson Learned/Best Practice:

Best Practice

The Safety Officer and Assistants was an optimal mix of industry, state and federal personnel who had varying backgrounds in the area of safety. This variety of expertise and experience ensured that safety was integrated throughout the exercise.

Ensure monitoring is ordered immediately when hazardous vapor release is possible.

Recommendation:

- Continue to provide training to Safety Officers and to conduct exercises where this skill can be practiced and honed.
- Continue to provide opportunities for safety personnel to interact on a professional level, outside of a real world response.

Comment:

Title	Facility Security
Recommended Action	Recommend follow-on action Unit
Type of Contingency	OIL AND HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCE RESPONSE
ICS Category	3.2.2.1 Security Manager
Core Component	Personnel Support
Recommended Action Area	Plans

Observation:

The Harrigan Centennial Hall was not a secure location.

Discussion:

Check-in recorders were assigned at the main building access point, which was also next to the Centennial Hall Administration office. Personnel participating in the exercise were instructed to check-in prior to assuming their assigned duties and this process went very well. Building personnel and visitors to Centennial Hall, not associated with the exercise, entered via the front and back entrances and bypassed the check-in desk, even when approached by the check-in recorders or other exercise participants. Check-in recorders requested facility security but as the exercise went on, they did not identify everyone entering the building. Exercise participants continued to approach the check-in recorders to carry out the duties of the Facility Security Manager. The check-in recorders were not equipped to carry out these duties and additional personnel should have been assigned/ordered.

Lesson Learned/Best Practice:

Lesson Learned

Assign a Facility Security personnel to manage the security of the ICP. Check-in recorders are responsible for recording check-in information but the Security Manager is responsible to ensure the safety and security of incident facilities.

Recommendation:

- Assign a Security Manager to develop a security plan and collaborate with local law enforcement as necessary. The check-in recorders should have a copy of and be familiar with this plan and who to contact in an emergency.
- Responders should have a thorough understanding of performance expectations of members of the IMT in order to request appropriate resources.

Comment:

Title	Stakeholder and Volunteer Coordination
Recommended Action	Information only
Type of Contingency	OIL AND HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCE RESPONSE
ICS Category	0.4.3 Liaison
Core Component	Operate within management system
Recommended Action Area	Performance

Observation:

The following objectives were **performed without challenges**:

- Identify and reviewing the Volunteer Coordinator position and determining how to implement the criteria addressed in the Sub-Area Plan; and
- Effective use of the Liaison position to engage the local response community and the Alaskan Tribal interests in the response organization.

Discussion:

Southeast Alaska is an area rich in culture, tradition, and resources. Identifying and working with tribal partners, volunteers, and other stakeholders is critical to a successful response. Local residents and organizations play an important role in oil spill response as they provide a wealth of local knowledge pertaining to geography, wildlife populations, currents, tides and other environmental phenomena. Additionally, Southeast Alaska’s size and remoteness increases the chances that local responders will arrive on-scene, eager to participate in response activities, prior to response personnel.

The Liaison Officer and Assistants were very proactive in collaborating with the Planning Section and taking on the responsibilities of the Volunteer Coordinator during the early stages of the response. Once the Volunteer Referral Center was established by the Liaison staff, the Planning Section agreed to assign a Volunteer Manager from the Planning Section. The Liaison staff discussed the requirement of the Sub-Area Contingency Plan to plan for the use of volunteers during a response and gained the Unified Command’s trust and concurrence prior to communicating information to potential volunteers.

The Liaison staff used a pre-identified list of regional stakeholders and potential volunteers and developed a Stakeholder Coordination/Outreach plan, that included up to date and relevant information about the response, a communications list, and meeting schedules.

Lesson Learned/Best Practice:

Best Practice

Maintain organizational flexibility and select IMT representatives with local knowledge of stakeholder and volunteer issues.

Recommendation:

Ensure IMT members are aware of the gravity of engaging stakeholders and using volunteers in the Southeast Alaska region. The IMT should have a thorough knowledge of the stakeholders and concerns in the local community and region.

Comment:

Title	Incorporate Info Mgmt/Sharing Technology
Recommended Action	Recommend follow-on action Unit
Type of Contingency	OIL AND HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCE RESPONSE
ICS Category	0 UNIFIED COMMAND
Core Component	Equipment maintenance & support
Recommended Action Area	Policy

Observation:

The objective of effectively using technologies in existing NIMS/ICS response management systems was **performed with some challenges**.

Discussion:

The Exercise Design Team decided early on that an electronic system of managing the incident would not be used due to the different technology used by the numerous participant agencies. Participants were able to easily use paper ICS forms, when appropriate, such as when ordering resources, documenting injuries, and communicating via the General message form. Unfortunately, managing an incident primarily by the use of paper and pencil is almost impossible, based on the timely need for information and sharing. Very few agencies had the available hardware (laptops, specifically) to manage the information associated with the scenario. Fortunately, agency and organization participants were prepared to fill the hardware gap by bringing and extensively using personal laptops. Documents created using these laptops were compiled to form the Incident Action Plan (IAP) and attachments, including but not limited to the Site Safety, Volunteer Management, Medical, and Demobilization Plans.

Participants appropriately used the websites and other software available to them. The Joint Information Team used Pier and simulated the monitoring of Facebook and Twitter. WebMap and GIS were used to gain resource information and to communicate the trajectory of the spill. Word processing software, such as Microsoft Office and Excel, were used to compile the IAP, communicate the situation status, and track resource requests and sourcing.

Printers were rented to manage the documents developed throughout the response, but they were not sufficient to keep up with all of the documents (and player requests for copies) developed throughout the incident.

Lesson Learned/Best Practice:

Lesson Learned

Today's society is extremely dependant on electronic means of communication. This is no less true in the world of oil spill and hazardous materials response. The importance of having access to and the capability to use technology designed to communicate efficiently internal and external to the ICP is highlighted each time the Coast Guard responds to such incidents. Coast Guard responders should not be required to bring personal equipment to agency responses.

Recommendation:

Coast Guard Headquarters, specifically Telecommunications and Information Systems Command (TISCOM), should develop a process for Units with response authority to purchase deployable hardware, in addition to providing support/replacement for hardware when it becomes obsolete. Incident Management Teams should arrive to a response with "go-kits" containing the following items, at a minimum:

- Laptop
- ICS Forms (hard copy and loaded onto laptops)
- Print Capability (anticipate and address early-on based on the number of IMT members)
- Agency specific Incident Management handbooks
- Routers and Wi-Fi Capability
- Charts/Maps
- USB Chargers
- Surge Protectors
- Administrative items (pens, pencils, paper, tape, push-pins)
- Other items determined critical (according to the member agency/organization)

Comment:

Title	Pirate's Cove GRS Deployment
Recommended Action	Recommend follow-on action Unit
Type of Contingency	OIL AND HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCE RESPONSE
ICS Category	1 OPERATIONS SECTION
Core Component	Protection/Countermeasures
Recommended Action Area	Plans

Observation:

This objective of demonstrating the ability to deploy adequate response equipment for one Geographic Response Strategy (GRS) from the Subarea Contingency Plan assessing adherence to safety principals for the responders and the public, effective activation of USCG assets, and effective use of appropriate recovery methods was **performed with challenges**.

Discussion:

Responders tested a modified version of the Pirates Cove Geographical Response Strategy (Pirate Cove, GRS SE05-03) on Thursday, April 23, airdropping boom to the site. Upon arriving on-scene by small boat at 0900, the boom was deployed at 1100 by AIR STATION Sitka in two (2) sling loads just before mean low tide. It was apparent that tactics outlined in the GRS and utilized would not sufficiently protect the Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA). It was not possible to determine if the GRS could have been implemented by the response resources indicated in the written strategy due to the tide conditions. A total of 750 feet of harbor boom was deployed in two sections by USCG Sector Juneau personnel assisted by tribal and state port partners. One hundred and fifty (150) ft of harbor boom was deployed on foot near area EX02b. High cliffs and rolling breakers would have made deploying all 500 feet at the mouth of 026 unworkable at low tide, and challenging at high tide. Six hundred (600) ft of boom was also deployed near area EX02a across to the headland directly adjacent. Boom was towed across and anchored to the shoreline by a Tribal Resource Protection Department small boat and both sections of boom were monitored during the incoming tide.

The test included the air lifting of 1200 feet of boom in two sling loads, familiarization between USCG AIRSTA SITKA, USCG SECTOR JUNEAU, D17 DRAT, ADEC and Tribal liaisons and the effective use of communications.

Lesson Learned/Best Practice:

Airlifting the boom was a success but required lengthy preparation. Sling loads were considered very light for the helicopter and AIR STATION personnel were concerned that the loads could become unstable in poor weather conditions. Additionally, access to the Cove was difficult at low tide due to the presence of eelgrass and rocks. Ideally the lift should be done as near to high tide as possible for this GRS, but few landing sites would be available for responders to use. During low tide there is a sandy beach but it floods almost to the tree line during high tide. Manpower was sufficient to deploy the boom, but more would be required to deploy it in a timely manner and maintain it during a real-world response. In calm weather, this area was easy to boom. Unfortunately, due to the rockiness of the mouth of the Cove and the surf observed in calm weather, the GRS might prove impossible to protect in rough weather. Additional

protection strategies need to be developed and additional prevention controls considered/required until response capability meets the needs for protecting this sensitive area from a spill or release.

Recommendation:

The Sub-Area Contingency Plan and Pirate's Cove GRS should be updated to address the Lessons Learned during the 2015 PREP Exercise. Work in the Pirate's cove area should be done with experienced boat captains who have good area knowledge as there are lots of underwater pinnacles, rocks and eelgrass in the area. While eight (8) responders can do the job, the estimate on the GRS (4 boats with 10 Persons each) is more accurate to deploy and maintain the sections of boom in a timely manner. While it is feasible for the Air Station to conduct the prep work on their own, GRS deployment should not occur until Sector IMD or DRAT are available to identify and make ready the appropriate equipment.

Comment: