ARRT Statewide Planning Committee

Contingency planning style guide

Appendix XX of the Alaska Regional Contingency Plan

**DRAFT**

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# Alaska Continency Planning conventions & Style

The Statewide Planning Committee has developed the following style protocols and recommends that all Area Committees, ARRT Committees and their work groups utilize the following conventions for consistency and to improve plan maintenance.

## Definitions & Names of Plans, supporting documents, guidance and their components

**Chapters and Sections:**

* Chapters are at the thousands level e.g., 1000, 2000, 3000 etc.
* Sections are at the hundreds level e.g., 2100, 2200, 2300, etc. and tens level 2110, 2120, 2130, etc., and below.

**Job Aid(s):** A job aid may be prepared to support expected tasks for a specific functional role. A job aid falls under the category of a tool. This are incorporated by reference and posted on the ADEC References and Tools page. Examples include:

* Templates for a Waste Management Plan, Site Safety Plan, etc.
* Agency developed job aids such as NOAA’s SCAT or Open Water Oil Identification job aids
* Protocols for the use of unmanned aerial systems (UAS) in spill response
* PIO Job Aid *Stakeholder Engagement Plan*
* Electronic ICS forms

**Plan-specific Job-Aids and Guidance:** When a committee or working group establishes protocols, job aids or other guidance to supplement the primary work product these should be considered for inclusion in the primary plan as an appendix. These can be either area specific documents (e.g. Kodiak Marine Fire Fighting Plan) or required by the NCP in a plan (e.g. Dispersant Use Guidelines for Alaska, required to be included in RCP).

The appendix can be a cover page with a direct hyperlink. It is the discretion of the committee to additionally include the job aid/guidance in its entirety in the appendix. These should also be included as a direct hyperlink on the ADEC Area Committee Website or RCP website and potentially on the ADEC References and Tools page.

## Hyperlinks and the References and Tools Page:

Planners should reduce the number of imbedded hyperlinks and the use of URL/web addresses in plans. Web addresses change frequently, and broken hyperlinks and incorrect addresses are a common error in plans.

ADEC maintains a “References and Tools” website of the references and other websites that might be either referenced by name and/or hyperlink in plans/guidance documents. The SPC recommends linking to this page and identifying the useful websites on it without hyperlinking to each website. The purpose of this is to reduce the hundreds of broken links that were common in the superseded plans. ADEC can run a broken link check on their website and can fix bad URLs without having to revise all documents referring to these bad URLs.

At the beginning of each chapter and/or section, as appropriate, insert a table like the following:

|  |
| --- |
| **REFERENCES AND TOOLS** |
| [References and Tools](https://dec.alaska.gov/spar/ppr/contingency-plans/response-plans/tools/): National and Statewide Policy, Agency Response Guides* Alaska RCP Part 1 Section C for ADEC and Alaska statutory authority
* Alaska RCP Part 1 Section H Agency roles/responsibilities
* AIMS Guide
* EPA IMH
* ADEC Disaster Response Plan
 |

When hyperlinks are preferred or appropriate, hyperlink a phrase instead of hyperlinking the written-out URL.

If the “References and Tools” boxes are not utilized, planners should consider adding a list of frequent websites to the Reference Appendix to facilitate plan-users ability to download appropriate supplemental references.

# Format & Punctuation:

* Bullet list punctuation – end each item with; or, + penultimate “and,” unless it is a complete sentence—then use period.
* Capitalize second element in a hyphenated compound—e.g., Federal On-Scene Coordinator, not Federal On-scene Coordinator
* First person—avoid use of “our” or “we”—exceptions for “we” and “our” in the general sense,
* Spacing – one space after periods ending sentences
* Section Callouts:
	+ In cross references, capitalize “Section.” Refer to an entire section as a “Chapter.”
	+ Call out other sections in this way: See Section 9408, “Resources at Risk Response Tools” for guidance on completing an ICS 232 form.
	+ Do not use “Please” or “refer to”; just use “see”
	+ For callouts to subsections in the same section as the callout, no need to provide title. Use number + “above” or “below.” E.g., for a callout in Chapter 4: “Additional information concerning staffing and function of the Environmental Unit (EU) is provided in Section 4213, below.”
	+ Only use title of section when calling out the first time in a subsection. If a section callout appears twice in the same subsection, refer to it by number only.
* Sections in regulations: use symbol § when appropriate and feasible on word processing platform, if author is unable to use symbol leave off rather than spelling out ‘section’ (example 40 CFR §300.115)
* Spelling of words/names in native languages: confirm spelling of communities and tribes on the Alaska DCRA Community Database site. Some communities have current and former names

## Responder-friendly plans style & techniques

### Avoid complex sentences. Break long sentences into shorter ones.

|  |
| --- |
| Compound: A task force was convened to develop decision-making procedures on the use of chemical countermeasures during an oil discharge response, and members submitted the draft plan to the public for input and review. |
| Simple: A task force developed decision-making procedures on the use of chemical countermeasures during an oil discharge response. The task force submitted the draft plan for public review |

### Active voice vs. passive voice. Active voice is preferred. The passive voice is often wordy and unclear.

|  |
| --- |
| Passive: When writers use passive voice verbs, it makes it difficult for the reader to determine who is the source of an action. |
| Active: Readers can better determine who is the source of an action when writers use the active voice. |

*Note: Sometimes passive voice is appropriate to vary sentence structure for readability or to draw attention to a part of the sentence.*

|  |
| --- |
| Passive: A public review period was included in the plan update process. |
| Active: Planners included a public review period in the plan update process.  |

### Use tables and bullet lists rather than paragraph narratives to facilitate scanning of the plan.

### Use single-row/single-column table instead of text boxes. Text boxes can cause formatting problems.

# Use of Acronyms and Abbreviations

Assumption: The ACPs are operations planned intended for use by trained responders and is not intended to serve as a training document. Most of the acronyms used should already be familiar to responders.

* Refraining from the practice of spelling out ‘first use’ per chapter improves the brevity and readability of the plan.
* The plan chapters are intended to serve as stand-alone guidance to each ICS Section, spelling out the first use in a previous section does not benefit a less experienced responder in determining an acronym’s meaning.

Recommendation: Develop a thorough list for beginning of plan and consider this “first use” no need to spell out in plan.

* It is acceptable to use the RCP master Acronym and Abbreviation list rather than just a list of those used in your plan.
* ACPs should use the RCP master Acronym and Abbreviation list since it will include abbreviations and acronyms.
	+ Many acronym and abbreviation are used in responses that are not used in ACPs. (*Example: In the ACP, by convention we refrain from referring to the Liaison Officer as the LOFR since not all agencies use this term. However, since it might be used in a response, it is in the Acronym list.)*
	+ *Planners should submit additions to the RCP Master List to the ARRT Coordinators.*

If a master acronym list is not used, define, and use acronym if used 3 or more times in a section. Do not use acronyms before they are defined in the text.

* + Exceptions may be made for long acronyms that appear only twice but in close succession, or for acronyms that the reader is likely to be more familiar with in their acronym form (e.g., HAZWOPER)
	+ Exceptions are businesses & corporations known primarily by acronym (example SEAPRO, CISPRI)

Refer to the following section on Terms: Recommended and Discouraged Usage for information on some acronyms and abbreviations.

# Terms: recommended and discouraged usage

* aboveground, not above ground
* act – lower case unless part of the official title (Endangered Species Act; this act, not this Act)
* Alaska State agency names, always us “A” at the beginning. Below are the most commonly used agencies (not a comprehensive list):
	+ ADEC
	+ ADMVA
	+ ADHS&EM - use ampersand
	+ ADF&G - use ampersand
	+ ADOTPF
	+ ADLaw (Department of Law)
	+ ADOL (Department of Labor)
	+ ADNR
	+ DCRA (Division of Community and Regional Affairs)
* Alaska Native. Alaska Native people are the individuals of indigenous descent. Federally-recognized tribes are the tribal governments, do not refer in plans as Alaska Native tribes.
	+ Do not use just “native(s)” – native is only used as an adjective (native languages)
		- Consider using other adjectives: traditional, indigenous
	+ Do not use Native Americans or American Indians to describe indigenous people of Alaska.
	+ Avoid use of ‘native Alaskan’ as this is unspecific and is used by some to refer to any individual born in Alaska. If necessary, specify “Alaska resident’ there is not requirement for place of birth for any state or federal laws/regulation.
* Alaska Native Village. Refrain from use of this term. See notes on ‘community’ and ‘village’
* Area Committee, not area committee, not AC
* Area of Responsibility, not Area Of Responsibility
* CANUSPAC – provide acronym even if only used once
* CANUSWEST – provide acronym even if only used once
* CANUSDIX – provide acronym even if only used once
* CANUS North – provide acronym even if only used once
* CFR not C.F.R. acceptable to never spell out, example 40 CFR Part 300, 40 CFR 300.115, or preferred: 40 CFR §300.115
* chair – lower case unless part of an official title
* cleanup (not clean-up) when used as a noun, clean up when used as a verb
* Command Post
* Command staff, not Command Staff
* community – preferred generic term from populated areas, including both organized cities and unincorporated locations
* comprise - No “comprised of.” Use “comprising” or “composed of”
* Coastal Zone: According the NCP, this is the “waters subject to the tide and all land surface, land substrata and groundwater 1000 yards inland.” This phrase is elsewhere referred to as the “extent of tide and 1,000 inland or 1,000 yards inland from the extent of tide” for a simple term. Define in Glossary
* DOC, not the DOC
* DOD, not the DOD
* DOE, not the DOE
* DOI, not the DOI
* email, not e-mail
* Environmental Unit – abbreviate as EU if appearing more than once in a section
* EPA, not the EPA, no USEPA
* extent of tide – an acceptable substitute, simplified term, to describe the area and waters “subject to the tide and all land surface, land substrata and groundwater 1000 yards inland” once the proper NCP terminology has been introduced.
* federal (lower case unless part of a title)
* federal response agency (lower case)
* federally-recognized tribes (include hyphen)
* Geographic Zone – used to describe the areas formerly knowns as subareas
* Glossary: Only define acronyms that occur three or more times within an entry.
* hazardous materials (not hazmat, unless part of an official title, or defined as HAZMAT Team); see below regarding hazardous substances.
* hazardous substances – not hazardous materials, unless referring to shipping/transportation, OHSA training, or State regulations
* HAZWOPER – provide acronym even if only used once
* Inch, not in. or “
* Incident Action Plan, not incident action plan
* Incident Command Post
* Incident Commander (not incident commander)
* Indian – don’t use it unless part of a tribe’s name. See notes on federally-recognized tribes, native, and tribe
* Indian Land – do not use it unless specifically referring to the Annette Island Reserve/Metlakatla Indian Community reservation; be specific on the intent of the plan content and land described:
	+ ANILCA land allotments to individuals, tribes and/or ANCSA corporations.
		- Native Allotments *(Note: ‘owners’ of allotments are generally treated as any other landowner; exception is for land owned by federally-recognized tribes. In some cases, allotments are in an ‘interim’ status and the legal landowner is the BLM, but the ‘interim’ landowner should also be included in any communications or coordination activities)*
	+ Traditional use areas
	+ Areas of cultural importance
	+ Note: In communities with City and Tribal Governments, the land with local jurisdiction boundary is the city’s boundary. Tribal Governments do not have jurisdictional boundaries in similar way – but may have interest in land described in above categories
* Inland Zone – the area subject to EPA jurisdiction, in Alaska it is defined as the area inland of a line 1000 yards inland of the extent of tide.
* *in situ* (italicized, no hyphen)
* it/its, not they/their, when referring to an agency or organization
* Liaison Officer, not LOFR
* Logistics Section (capitalized)
* memorandum of understanding (lower case)
* municipalities. Municipalities are only be Boroughs or Cities. There is no Village municipality classification. Tribes and ANCSA Corporations (Village/Community and Regional) are not municipalities.
* nongovernmental, not non-governmental
* nonprofit, not non-profit
* Numbers – spell out one through nine, except in measurements
* On-Scene Coordinator (with hyphen)
* on-site when used as adjective, on site when used as prepositional phrase, never onsite. E.g., “The on-site safety plan was amended”; “The responders arrived on site” (same rules for off-site)
* Operations Section, not OPS
* Planning Section (capitalized)
* potential responsible party, not Potential Responsible Party, abbreviate as RP/PRP to include responsible party (responsible party/potential responsible party)
* Region 10, not Region X, not Region Ten
* regional Hazardous Material Team (not Regional)
* responsible party, not Responsible Party, abbreviate as RP/PRP to include potential responsible party (responsible party/potential responsible party)
* RRT 10, Not Region 10 RRT
* Safety Officer; do not abbreviate SOFR
* socioeconomic, not socio-economic
* Staffed, not manned
* State or state
	+ capitalize when part of a title or state name (State of Alaska)
	+ capitalize if using in place of spelling out State of Alaska (ADEC represents the State),
	+ do not capitalize if state is used as an adjective or descriptor (state law, state legislators); unless part of a title (State OSC)
	+ do not capitalize state if describe the land/area of Alaska (much of the state of Alaska inaccessible by road)
* state names—do not use abbreviations, except in tables or addresses
* subsistence use areas – areas that for food gathering/hunting/fishing. Consider when areas can be better described as cultural or traditional use areas to include other culturally important areas, such as abandoned villages, grave areas, as well as food source areas, like fish camps. Avoid use of subsistence to serve as an umbrella term including cultural significant and food and material sourcing activities.
* superseded plan – used to describe the former subarea contingency plan and unified plan
* this plan (not this Plan)
* tribe – lower case unless part of a name or title or used in place of a full name of a specific tribe
	+ tribes not native tribes
	+ be clear in text early on that tribe refers to federally-recognized tribes, but after that ‘tribe’ can be used in place of federally-recognized tribe to improve readability/brevity
* Unified Command Post
* Unified Command system
* Unified Command, not unified command
* United States Coast Guard—abbreviate as USCG, not Coast Guard
* USC, not U.S.C. (for United States Code)
* village corporation, not Village Corporation.
* villages – Use caution to not confuse with cities and tribes. Recommend referring to an unincorporated populated area as a community to not confuse with cities and/or tribes.
	+ Village can be part of a tribes official or ‘dba’ name. Village council is typically a governing body of a tribe and not a municipal/city. (alternately, tribes can by also led by a tribal council)
	+ Do not use Alaska Native Villages
	+ There is no Village municipality classification
* web, not Web (for internet)
* website, not web site
* West Coast (not west coast)
* work plan, not workplan
* working group, not work group

# Steps for Preparing a Public-facing Document

Follow these steps for all public review and final documents

1. Accept any changes that are appropriate (especially grammatical)
2. Review Tab “No Markup”
3. Insert line number (restart numbering on each page option) for any Review Drafts.
	1. Final Documents should not have line numbers
4. Update Table of Contents, Table of Tables and Table of Footers
5. Review Table of Contents for any non-sequential numbers, missing headers, or inappropriate headers (text that should be “normal” but in heading style)
6. Check page numbers in footer, confirm chapter number is correct and no weird page number re-orders (do this is in table of contents)
7. Pictures: right click to compress picture (might use Search to find Compress Picture). Unselect ‘this picture only’ Select “delete cropped areas of pictures’ and select resolution no higher than “Print”
8. Export as PDF. – use settings to create PDF bookmarks from Word headings. 300 dpi is good
9. In PDF app, find “Optimize” within the “Reduce” tool. – DO not assume that “Reduce file” size will not create an unacceptable reduction in image resolution. Use Reduce with caution. Optimize however just removes unused bytes. – recommend doing a Save As to make reverting to original file easy.
10. Review PDF for any “oddities” (page break errors, font variations, images quality issues) that can occur during PDF process.
11. Check Bookmarks in PDF. If not there, re-PDF or insert manually.
12. Ensure that any electronic signatures cannot be saved or downloaded by ‘right-clicking’ or hovering over the signature. If this is possible in the PDF, the signature page should be exported as a graphic and re-inserted. Alternative, the page can be printed as a PDF and re-inserted.

# Example plan/ document

The Statewide Planning Committee recommends the following front material in all plans and guidance documents associated with contingency planning and response in Alaska.

* Approval Letter(s)
* Record of Changes table
* Table of Contents, including:
	+ Table of Figures
	+ Table of Tables
* Acronyms and Abbreviations list
* Emergency Contacts and/or Plan Update Contacts

Examples of these are included in the template.

For the Table of Contents, be sure to utilize the Heading section options to auto-population the table of contents and the Table of Figure (Style: ACP Figure Header) and Table of Tables

At the beginning of each chapter, there should be a “Heading 9” in hidden text with the chapter number. This is necessary the page number should be reset at each chapter (example in chapter 2, you have page numbers 2-1 through 2-34) If you do not use this, a manually entered page number will not be reflected in the Table of contents, chapter 2 would just have pages 1-34. You can see this hidden text by turning it on “File, Home, Options, Display” and select “show hidden text”.

## MS Word Styles for ACPs

*(Note turn on the “hidden text” to can see “Chapter 2” above “CHAPTER NAME”*

# Chapter Name

## 1100 – level 2, section heading

### 1140 – Level 3, subsection

#### 1110.2 Level 4, Part

##### 1110.2.1 Level 5, Subpart

* + - * 1. 1110.2.1.3 Level 6

For basic text, please use Style “body text.” Use bold or underline for key points that are not appropriate as unique headings to help improve readability during a response. Often, bullets and simple tables are preferred to long narrative paragraphs.

* This improves the ability for the plan user to quickly scan plan content.
* Bullet lists can be written as sentences (ending in a period)
* Or they can be words or phrases, with a semicolon;
* At the end of each line;
* The word and at the end of 2nd last line; and
* The last line should end with a period.

**Tables:** Fore table titles, “List of Tables” as style. Text in table should be ACP Table Heading or ACP Table Text. Shading for heading cells should be “Light Grey, Background 2”

Table 1 Example Table Title

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Name | Agency | Phone |
| example |  |  |

For Figures: Select List of Figures for the style for the figure name. For figure captions, use “ACP Caption” for style. For figure descriptions, insert either a text box or normal next below using “Body Text” Style.



1 Example Figure Citation. Adjust margins and justification as appropriate/desired

Footers: This document is set up with an example footer, but for reference:

Alaska Inland ACP 1-3 Version 1, August 2018

1000 – Introduction DRAFT, Version 1.1, Spring 2019

*No box, just for spacing reference*

## The next few pages are examples of a plan/guidance document.

The Alaska Inland ACP was used as an example. Some content has been deleted with the intention you will insert your own text, some was left

Directions on setting up a Table of Contents, Table of Tables or Tables of figures is available by type using the “Search” tool in the ribbon above and typing the type of table you would like to insert.

[insert hyperlink to .DOCX file]