

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide background information on concepts of operation for responding to oil and hazardous material releases statewide. The concepts presented in this document are designed to be applied to spill incidents, regardless of nature, severity, or location. Although they are flexible in nature, acceptance and application of the concepts should be viewed as a critical success factor in the ability to control, organize, and manage incident response operations. The concepts contained in this document provide for all necessary actions to protect the public, environment, and private personnel and assets.

This document has been developed for use by public and private agencies to fully coordinate response efforts during a significant oil or hazardous materials release. While the roles of the government organizations may vary from directing the response, augmenting the response, or providing regulatory oversight, the intent of this document is to foster a common understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all responding agencies to ensure a safe, effective response.

The information and organizational approach depicted in this Alaska Incident Management System (AIMS) Guide for Oil and Hazardous Substance Response is meant for the use of the Alaska response community. As a public document, agencies and industry are invited to use any or all of this guide without concern for copyright infringement. ***Nothing in this guide is mandatory for response plan holders or regulatory in nature. The Federal and State On-Scene Coordinators will work with a response organization established by the responsible party that effectively addresses the functions and concepts described in this guide.***

The appendices contained in this document provide additional details as follows:

- **Appendix A:** Overview of the Organizational and Management Principles of the Incident Command System
- **Appendix B:** AIMS - Position Descriptions
- **Appendix C:** AIMS Knowledge/Training Guidelines
- **Appendix D:** IMT Meeting Guidelines
- **Appendix E:** General Purpose and Description of ICS Forms

- **Appendix F:** Incident Situation Display – Status Boards
- **Appendix G:** Glossary of AIMS Acronyms

## **1.2 INCIDENT VERSUS CRISIS RESPONSE OPERATIONS**

**Incidents** are any events or situations that require the conduct of emergency and/or crisis response operations by incident response personnel. Incidents generally happen unexpectedly and interrupt or interfere with normal operations. Most incidents generate emergency response operations directed at protecting human health and safety, minimizing damage to property, and maximizing protection of the environment.

Incidents also have the potential to precipitate **crises**. Crises arise when incidents impact, or have the potential to impact, the viability, operability, or credibility of those involved, or pose, or have the potential to pose, a significant environmental, economic, or legal liability.

## **1.3 GOAL AND OBJECTIVE OF INCIDENT RESPONSE OPERATIONS**

The goal of incident response operations is the restoration of normal operations while minimizing impacts to people, property, and the environment. To achieve this goal, incident response organization personnel, at all levels, must be able to move from a reactive to a proactive mode of operations by establishing and maintaining command and control over the situation in a cooperative and coordinated effort. For emergency response operations, this objective should be addressed by observing standard operating procedures that allow response personnel to rapidly and efficiently determine and communicate effectively about: (1) the problem, (2) its potential, and (3) what is being done to address the problem and its potential.

During crisis response operations, crisis managers should address this objective by analyzing the information generated by emergency response personnel and determining the implications of the incident. The analysis should focus on safety, health, environmental protection, economic issues, stakeholder support and services, resource availability and use, legal issues, and external affairs issues attendant to, but separate from, those more properly addressed by emergency response personnel.

## 1.4 RESPONSE PLANS

The Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90), the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP), the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA), and Alaska statutes and regulations require the development of spill response plans by industry (*for regulated vessels and facilities*), federal, State, and local governments.

The oil industry in Alaska prepares oil spill contingency plans (C-Plans) for regulated vessels and facilities to meet federal and State requirements. Spill response incident management procedures are an integral part of these C-Plans.

The Alaska Federal/State Preparedness Plan for Response to Oil and Hazardous Substance Discharges/Releases (the Unified Plan) provides basic response guidelines for federal and State response agencies. Ten joint federal/State subarea plans supplement the Unified Plan and provide subarea-specific response guidance.

At the community level, local emergency response plans are required by Alaska statutes and EPCRA. These plans outline the local response organization and procedures.

The overall guiding principle is to maintain consistency between the federal, State, local, and industry plans.

## 1.5 THE THREE TYPES OF SPILL RESPONSE

Within the State of Alaska, three types of responses are generally recognized by the spill response community. These are as follows:

**Responsible Party-Led Response:** Under this type of response, the Responsible Party (RP) assumes responsibility and actively engages in response and cleanup activities. The RP (*either directly or through a spill cooperative*) activates the C-Plan (*if the incident involves a regulated vessel or facility*), and staffs the incident response organization. The federal and State entities assume an oversight role to monitor the adequacy of the RP's efforts, perform required regulatory functions (*investigation, damage assessment, cost recovery, etc.*), and jointly develop response objectives.

**Responsible Party Augmented Response:** In certain circumstances (*e.g., a catastrophic spill event or an RP with limited capabilities*), the RP may require additional assistance from the federal and/or State governments to launch an adequate response and sustain a cleanup operation. The lead federal and State agencies may augment the RP's efforts as necessary, including staffing of the incident response organization and providing additional spill response resources. The federal and State authorities will also continue with their regulatory functions as well.

**Government-Led Response:** In the event of a non-responsive, incapable, or unknown RP, the federal government [U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) or Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)] or the State [Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC)] (*dependent upon jurisdiction over the incident*) will take the lead and manage the response and cleanup operation. In doing so, the government agency(s) will staff the response organization and direct the response and cleanup operation (*which may be delegated to federal and/or State response contractors*).

***End of Section 1***