

***NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE WESTERN REGION SUPPLEMENT 10-2004
APPLICABLE TO NWSI 10-518
OCTOBER 15, 2010***

***Operations and Services
Public Weather Services, NWSPD 10-5
Non-Weather Related Emergency Products Specification, NWSI 10-518
SUPPORT FOR OIL AND HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCE RELEASES IN
COASTAL AND INLAND WATERWAYS***

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SUMMARY OF REVISIONS: This supplement supersedes Western Region Supplement 10-2004, dated September 21, 2006. This revision includes removal of the section “Air Releases” (addressed in updated NWSI 10-518). The title of this Supplement has been changed to reflect the focus on coastal and inland waterways.

Signed

10/01/10

Vicki Nadolski

Date

Regional Director, Western Region

<u>Table of Contents:</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. General.....	2
2. Procedures.....	2
2.1 Regional Response Teams	2
2.2 Emergency Information Dissemination	3
2.3 Operational Responsibilities	3
2.3.1 Coastal Waters	3
2.3.2 Inland Waterways	4

1. General: In the event of an oil or hazardous substance release within the Western Region's (WR) area of responsibility, Weather Forecast Offices (WFOs) and River Forecast Centers (RFCs) may be requested to provide hydrometeorological support to agencies responsible for containment and cleanup of the substance, protection of property, or evacuation of threatened areas. Instructions covering actions to be taken when support is requested will be included in Station Duty Manuals (SDMs). If the request for services is significant and likely to continue longer than a few days, extra staffing should be considered.

All contingencies cannot be covered in a uniform set of instructions, e.g., a spill impacting both an inland and coastal area (perhaps including release of toxic chemicals into the atmosphere); a release affecting adjacent areas of responsibility (i.e. between WFOs and/or RFCs); or an inland spill requiring both meteorological and hydrological support. Each office affected must exercise sound judgment and initiative when responding to a spill incident. Actions should be coordinated with other appropriate field offices and with Western Region Headquarters, Meteorological Services Division (WRH, MSD) and/or Hydrology and Climate Services Division (HCSD).

Western Region Headquarters should be informed as soon as possible when support services during an oil (or hazardous substance) release are provided, as per WR Supplement 13-2003, "Notification of Significant Weather/Flood Related and Emergency Events and Requirements for Written Reports". At the conclusion of the incident, a summary of the events and support provided, will be forwarded to WRH (MSD and/or HCSD, as appropriate).

2. Procedures.

2.1 Regional Response Teams: Regional Response Teams (RRT) for marine and inland releases include membership from Federal, state, and local agencies. These interagency groups meet periodically to coordinate response activities and may convene during drills and/or release incidents, particularly major ones. National Weather Service MICs, HICs and possibly WR Headquarters (if needed for coordination involving multiple WFOs and/or RFCs) should attend these meetings, if possible. The NOAA representatives on the RRTs are comprised of staff from the National Ocean Service (NOS) Office of Response and Restoration, Emergency Response

Division (ORR.ERD) in Seattle, Washington. The Scientific Support Coordinator (SSC) is normally from the ERD.

2.2 Emergency Information Dissemination: WFOs are authorized to disseminate emergency response messages to the public and marine interests whenever a spill poses as immediate threat to human life and property, via all appropriate means, including NOAA All Hazards Radio. Requests for dissemination may come from the Coast Guard, RRT, SSC, ERD, or other authorized agency or official. Routine information regarding spill movement, spreading, or possible damage to the environment are not to be publicly disseminated.

2.3 Operational Responsibilities:

2.3.1 Coastal Waters: The United States Coast Guard (USCG) is the primary Federal agency responsible for cleanup of coastal and navigable water releases, and for actions necessary to minimize their threat to the environment and society. The Coast Guard designates “On-Scene Coordinator”, whose responsibility includes coordination of Federal, state, and local agency efforts in responding to the release. Coast Guard district areas of responsibility in the Western Region are:

- a. Eleventh District, Headquarters in Long Beach, CA: Mexican Border to the Oregon-California Border.
- b. Thirteenth District, Headquarters in Seattle, WA: California/Oregon Border to the Canadian Border.

Several NOAA line offices have support roles during coastal and navigable water spills and releases. The SSC is the point of contact provided by the ERD. ERD is also responsible for providing pollutant trajectory modeling services.

The NWS is responsible for providing weather forecast support to agencies involved in coastal and inland navigable water spill mitigation activities. This function is critical because of the importance of meteorological data and forecasts as input surface trajectory models and the influence of weather on spill containment actions. Aircraft and vessel operations are also a major component of spill response and mitigation activities, especially during major spills, and require specific and detailed meteorological support. Requests for NWS support will normally originate within the RRT, the SSC, or ERD.

WFOs with coastal marine or inland waterway areas of responsibility will maintain a state of operational readiness to respond to spills. Requests will typically include site-specific forecasts of wind, and wave conditions, ceiling, visibility, temperature, stability, and precipitation. Detailed wind forecasts are required as input to trajectory models. Real-time data observations (or near to real-time as possible) will likely also be requested. If the spill is likely to persist for several days, an expeditious and reliable method of communications should be established with

appropriate officials managing response operations. Forecast release times and user needs should be coordinated with these officials.

For major releases, an incident meteorologist (IMET) may be requested. The IMETs functions may include:

- a. Preparation of forecasts either working from a WFO or possibly on-scene using an All Hazards Meteorological Response System (AMRS) (depending upon which mode of operation provides the best support);
- b. Interpretation and additional refinement of weather forecasts (as needed);
- c. Provision of feedback to the supporting WFO and/or RFC;
- d. Assistance in interpreting trajectory model output based on meteorological input (if needed);
- e. Additional support (as needed) for aviation and surface vessel activities;
- f. Participation in NOAA briefings for the On-Scene Coordinator;
- g. Providing additional forecast information as needed for the safety of field workers.

The request for on-site meteorologist must originate with the Coast Guard On-Scene Coordinator, SSC, or ERD. The MIC will then administer requests for an IMET/AMRS dispatch via procedures defined in NWSI 10-402. If detailing an on-site meteorologist would have an adverse impact on the WFO operations, use of overtime is authorized, or an IMET from another WFO may be detailed to the spill site.

2.3.2 Inland Waterways: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the primary Federal agency responsible for cleanup and mitigation of hazardous spills and releases affecting lakes, rivers, and inland waterways. In these cases the EPA provides the designated “On-Scene Coordinator,” whose responsibility includes coordination of Federal, state, and local agency efforts in responding to the release.

EPA areas of responsibility in the Western Region are:

- a. Region VIII, Headquarters in Denver, CO: Montana and Utah.
- b. Region IX, Headquarters in San Francisco, CA: California, Nevada, and Arizona.
- c. Region X, Headquarters in Seattle, WA: Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.

NWS WRS 10-2004 October 15, 2010

NWS River Forecast Centers will maintain a state of operational readiness necessary to respond to requests for hydrologic services to support cleanup and other mitigation activities during inland waterway spills. These services may include assessments of current river and streamflow conditions, flow velocity forecasts (where available), as well as discharge forecasts. Streamflow information may require coordination with the appropriate agencies, such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or the Bureau of Reclamation.