



# Coping With Technological Disasters: A User Friendly Guidebook

FOR:

- Community Groups & Counselors
  - Individuals & Families
  - Local Governments
  - Local Businesses
  - Volunteers

Prepared by:

Prince William Sound  
Regional Citizens' Advisory Council

Part 1 of 2

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## ◆ PREFACE

The Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council (RCAC) is an independent non-profit corporation whose mission is to promote environmentally safe operation of the Valdez Marine Terminal and associated tankers. Our work is guided by the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 and our contract with Alyeska Pipeline Service Company. RCAC's 18 member organizations are communities in the region affected by the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill, as well as commercial fishing, aquaculture, Native, recreation, tourism and environmental groups. The member entities are listed below:

Alaska State Chamber of Commerce  
Alaska Wilderness Recreation & Tourism Association  
Community of Chenega Bay  
Chugach Alaska Corporation  
City of Cordova  
Cordova District Fishermen United  
City of Homer  
Kenai Peninsula Borough  
City of Kodiak  
Kodiak Village Mayors Association  
Oil Spill Region Environmental Coalition  
City of Seldovia  
City of Seward  
Community of Tatitlek  
City of Valdez  
City of Whittier

Having experienced the Exxon Valdez disaster first-hand, the citizens of RCAC wanted to fill a large gap in technological disaster planning – addressing the human impacts. In addition to drawing upon the personal experiences of RCAC's members, RCAC consulted experts in the field of socioeconomic and technological disaster research to help in the development of this guidebook. The results of years of work are contained in the following pages of this guidebook.

RCAC would like to thank the following former and present RCAC volunteers for their vision, experience, and leadership in making the “Coping with Technological Disasters” guidebook and appendices a reality:

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Prince William Sound Science Center  
Cordova District Fishermen United  
Eyak Village  
Sound Alternatives  
Cordova Family Resource Center  
Cordova City Council

Cordova Mayor's office  
Cordova Fisherman's Claims Office

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To all these, and to others we may not have mentioned, RCAC owes their appreciation for helping to develop this guidebook.



## ◆ FOREWORD

The purpose of the “Community Response to Technological Disasters” guidebook is to help community officials and individuals throughout a region affected by a technological disaster recognize, identify and mitigate the adverse psychological effects associated with these events. Although natural disasters occur more often, technological, or man-made, disasters tend to have a greater, more profound emotional impact on people.

Technological disasters can disrupt an ecosystem for many years and tend to disrupt the psychological well being of communities for long periods of time.

Technological disasters, such as the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill, disrupt communities on multiple levels. The most obvious and tangible disruptions occur when the flow of goods, routine services, and jobs are adversely impacted. These visible disruptions can be measured and monitored and usually goods and services can be restored in a fairly reasonable length of time. However, there are other often ignored, poorly defined, poorly understood, intangible adverse impacts stemming from a technological disaster. These include initial negative mental health impacts and chronic long-term psychological and physical impacts.

Long after the initial response has ended and the local government has returned to routine day-to-day operations, adverse psychological impacts associated with disaster continue to erode the social fabric of the community. Results of Exxon Valdez oil spill studies indicate that mental health impacts still persist 10 years post-spill. These impacts include disruption of family structure and unity, family violence, depression, alcoholism, drug abuse and psychological impairment. The extent of chronic mental health patterns appears to be correlated to the extent that a community is dependent on its natural resources for survival. As such, Native and non-Native fishing and subsistence-based communities are at higher risk for elevated levels of chronic psychological stress associated with technological disasters.

It is hoped that this guidebook will become an assessment tool and road map. It enables communities and individuals alike to understand what a technological disaster is, how it differs from a natural disaster, what to expect during the disaster, and in the years following the event. This guidebook tells you where to find help.

## ◆ INTRODUCTION

The events of March 24, 1989 abruptly changed the lives of many Alaskans, their families, and their communities. The heavily laden oil tanker Exxon Valdez had run aground spilling millions of gallons of North Slope crude oil into Prince William Sound. To make matters worse, an inability to mount an adequate response resulted in oil quickly spreading along 1,500 miles of coastline from Prince William Sound to the Kenai Peninsula, Cook Inlet, Kodiak Island, and the Alaska Peninsula. For perspective, if the spill had happened on the East Coast, oil would have spread from Cape Hatteras to Cape Cod, coating the shorelines of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, including Chesapeake Bay, and North Carolina.

A cascade of human, corporate and agency error had resulted in the massive oil spill that fouled Alaska marine waters and shoreline. Subsequent massive cleanup activities sometimes added to the damage of coastal habitat. Oil had fouled rocky intertidal zones, beaches, tidal flats and river beds along with hundreds of thousands of mammals, birds, fish and other marine organisms. Ten years post-spill much of the ecosystem and many of the people have yet to recover fully. Oil persisting on beaches and in intertidal sediments continued to contaminate nearshore habitat and biota.

Commercial fish stocks, intertidal flora and fauna, sea birds and marine mammals, impacted by the spill, had not yet returned to pre-spill population levels. Losses incurred in 1989 and 1990 by commercial fishermen have been estimated at more than \$225 million. Economic loss continued to mount through subsequent years of poor fisheries and declining markets.

For many, the memory of this tragic event has begun to fade. Community leaders, whose political agendas are numerous and administrative plates more than full, have moved away from the spill and on to more timely issues. Left in the wake of the spill are those who have continued to suffer economically, socially and psychologically. These people have not yet recovered from the disaster that abruptly ended their livelihood, disrupted community functions, destroyed family units, and shattered traditional ways of living. These are the people who have and continue to suffer the effects of chronic psychological stress. Studies suggest that the most adversely impacted sub-populations appear to be subsistence users and renewable resource community fishermen in the spill-affected region.

The purpose of this guidebook is multi-fold. As long as oil flows through the pipeline, and tankers transport oil in Alaska's waters, the threat of another massive oil spill is real. The 1989 Exxon spill will not be the last human-induced disaster to befall coastal Alaska, let alone the rest of the world. Community leaders and the general public will benefit by familiarizing themselves with this guidebook. Knowing what to expect during and post-disaster, whom to contact for information, support and relief will expedite the mitigation process, reduce stress and allow the community to move forward toward routine conditions as quickly and as painlessly as possible.

## ◆ CHAPTER ONE: WHAT HAPPENS IN A TECHNOLOGICAL DISASTER - DEFINING THE EVENT

*“Of all the things that we have lost since non-Natives came to our land, we have never lost our connection with the water. The water is our source of life. So long as the water is alive, the Chugach Natives are alive.*

*"It was early in the springtime. No fish yet. No snails yet. But the signs were with us. The green was starting. Some birds were flying and singing. The excitement of the season had just begun. And then we heard the news: Oil in the water. Lots of oil. Killing lots of water. It is too shocking to understand. Never in the millennium of our tradition have we thought it possible for the water to die. But it is true."*

-- Walter Meganack Sr.

Village Chief, Port Graham, Alaska, June 26, 1989

Reduced to the simplest clinical terms, technological disasters are catastrophic events caused by humans which result in toxic contamination of the environment. Analyzed, expanded, understood, a technological disaster reaches into the very essence of the people it affects, as so eloquently stated by Chief Walter Meganack Sr.

Natural disasters normally conform to a pattern which includes: warning, threat, impact, rescue, inventory, remedy, recovery and rehabilitation. Victims of technological disasters have skipped the warning and threat stages and have to deal immediately with the impact stage. Then they become trapped at that stage with few resources for rescue, inventory, remedy, recovery and rehabilitation. For more detail regarding the differences between natural and technological disasters, see Appendix K in the accompanying Appendices.

In a natural disaster, communities throughout the United States can expect federal, state and local agencies to lead a coordinated response to rescue and support victims while also allocating massive resources to rebuilding.

In a technological disaster, with its human cause and principal responsible party, no such help can be counted upon from emergency agencies. In the past, rescue organizations such as the Red Cross and government disaster agencies have shown reluctance to assist with technological disasters offering the explanation that responsible parties should incur the costs related to recovery. A volunteer organization that depends on charitable contributions shouldn't have to be asked to assist when there is a large multi-national corporation with extensive resources available and responsible for costs attached to a disaster.

Victims of technological disasters face long-term, recurring impacts that produce a variety of secondary disasters. Secondary disasters are indirect consequences of technological disasters that produce continuing social conflict, disruption and intensify stress for residents of impacted communities. These secondary disasters can include a flood of media, a flood of

attorneys, dueling scientists, supply and housing shortages, conflicts among politicians and government agencies, even job and career losses.

Natural disasters create what can be called a therapeutic community where activities are focused, intense and include governmental mandates for fostering a return of the community to pre-disaster state. As people pull together to place sand bags on dikes against floods, help neighbors with homes destroyed in hurricanes, individuals, families and communities bond for the good of the whole.

Technological disasters, conversely, tend to produce a corrosive community characterized by unusually high levels of tension, conflict, ongoing litigation and chronic psychological stress. In a technological disaster there is an entity at fault, often a corporation with no tangible representative. This entity may choose to deny or minimize harmful effects on the environment or to the well-being of the individual and community. Fear of continued toxicity in the environment, of enduring threats to physical health, of long-term threats to traditional food sources and occupations, all lead to chronic problems difficult to understand, difficult to diagnose, and difficult to treat. The futility of clean up efforts and the helplessness of individuals combined with misunderstanding of the personal effects of the disaster make these problems worse. All of these can work to produce that corrosive atmosphere which delays the community's return to pre-disaster conditions. Often those affected by a technological disaster are reluctant to seek mental health services, or might not even be aware they need and could use these benefits.

Some members of the community may have a clear claim against the responsible party while others may not. For example, if a fishery closes due to the disaster, a fisherman can demonstrate he lost income. However, the supplier who sells the fishermen their nets and gear is not a direct victim and may not be able to recoup losses from the decline in business.

Perhaps the most perplexing differences between natural and technological disasters are certain long-term effects of the technological disaster, particularly lack of closure. After the hurricane or flood passes through, residents pick up the pieces, begin rebuilding and soon resume their pre-disaster ways of life. Ecosystem-wide effects of the technological disaster may linger for years causing physical and mental health problems, affecting livelihoods and food sources and infecting entire communities with undercurrents of loss, sadness, anger and helplessness.

Those involved in mitigation efforts must understand they may never reach every one of the victims, nor for those they reach can their efforts be expected to bring about full recovery. Experience with the 1989 oil spill in Prince William Sound and through the subsequent years indicates the region and its people have changed forever, if not demonstrably provable, at the very least in perceptions.

After all if, "the water has died," who can bring it back?

## ◆ CHAPTER TWO: COMMUNITY GROUPS AND COUNSELORS - HELPING OUT

*“There’s no question that people are frustrated, angry, depressed, and anxious... What will the long-term effects be? What do the people need? If I could answer these questions, I’d deserve a gold star”*

-- Prince William Sound mental health professional, 1989

### **How Community Groups and Counselors can Help**

Groups within the community can be a vital asset in mitigating the psychological effects of a technological disaster. As described in the Forward and Chapter One, these effects can include immediate and long-term high levels of chronic stress, fear, tension, conflict, and depression. Most government and private relief agencies are not set up to or will not address mental health needs especially the chronic elements that linger long after the immediate response effort has ended. The responsible party most likely will not even acknowledge this element of the disaster.

This chapter outlines outreach strategies that community groups and counselors can implement to help mitigate the immediate and long-term psychological effects. Outreach should include activities that help residents understand the nature and kinds of stress reactions they are experiencing and provide information and resources to assist them in coping with the effects of the disaster.

In the community information and resources need to be available for the entire population. Education programs should involve local organizations and attempt to bring residents together to address and respond to problems at the broader-based community level. The programs can include community-wide resources for education distributed through the various local media and through meetings with invited public speakers and literature to provide a wide distribution of information and materials. Any opportunity to reach the broader audience should be used, including booths at public gatherings.

Established social and civic organizations already have their group dynamics in place and with some training and guidance can reach broad segments of the population. They may also make physical space available such as lodges and club houses for meetings and counseling. Some organizations that may be able to help include (but are not limited to):

- Churches
- Professional groups like commercial fishing organizations
- Moose, Elks, Eagles
- Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts
- Parent Teachers Association

- Tribal or other Native American associations
- Rotary and Kiawanis
- Trade unions

Native American and other ethnic groups within the community may have special needs and may prove to be a special resource. Outreach materials may have to be tailored to meet the cultural needs of specific ethnic groups. Within the cultural groups, any social organizations, tribal councils, or corporations can be consulted to review and administer the programs.

Chronic patterns of severe stress require the use of outreach strategies that connect with individual residents throughout the impacted community. Outreach efforts should address two levels of both the immediate and the long-term effects: the collective community and the individual.

The following includes effects on communities as a whole that have been observed in technological disasters:

- Watching outsiders descend on the community and take over
- Feelings of frustration by the sheer magnitude of the circumstances
- A lack of trust about the responders and their long-term goals
- Threats to public health
- Threats to significant local resources (a village may rely on a single resource)
- Communications needs: People want to know what's going on and how they can help.
- Suspended or overwhelmed normal business functions
- Employment disruption, low-end workers leaving to work on the response.
- Excess demands on public services.
- Where do people volunteer, what training do they need?
- Concerns for the future financial stability of the community
- Feelings of loss of power and control
- Feelings of collective anger, hopelessness and depression
- Varying viewpoints in the community may cause divisiveness

While communities and groups within them can't be expected to have everything in place at the beginning, and materials might be developed to fit local needs, there are materials later in this chapter and in the appendices that can be used to begin the healing process.

The impacts of community-wide effects of the disaster will be felt at the individual level as well (for a more detailed discussion regarding the individual, see Chapter Three). Outreach workers understanding this can apply the materials in the Appendices using the following list of goals as a guideline.

At the individual level, major goals include:

- Identify and make contact with victims
- Assist in identifying problems and needs
- Provide support services for victims
- Provide education and training for problem-solving and coping
- Provide tangible information and resources to assist other individuals in the recovery process.
- Monitor and/or refer for professional services.

The individual often may not understand the personal level of stress, or realize the necessity for, or seek intervention. The most difficult item on the above list may be identifying the problems and victims at the individual level. Most likely he or she will not know where to find relief.

While mitigation efforts may relieve some of the psychological suffering and stress, the vivid image of the technological disaster and its ecological damage remains.

#### *“Growing Together,” A Community Education Program*

This program was developed through an approach that maximized community participation for identification of outreach activities. Program materials resulted from a feasibility study conducted in Cordova, Alaska, in the fall of 1994, five years after the Exxon oil spill in Prince William Sound. The study included interviews with Alaska Native organizations; commercial fishing groups; city government (particularly health and safety agencies: police, fire, emergency medical technicians); business and scientific organizations; the clergy, and local mental health professionals. Results of the interviews indicated that community and individual impacts existed five years after the spill and there were few or no intervention programs readily available.

The feasibility study itself provided an initial opportunity for community residents to become involved in activities that would help initiate a pattern of personal and community recovery. Residents learned active participation in development and implementation of such a program could increase awareness of chronic social impacts and maximize knowledge and skills for coping with the impacts. Although the program was developed five years after the Exxon spill, it was designed to be implemented immediately following a disaster and to sustain efforts throughout the chronic stages as long as needed.

#### *Community Participation Model*



The “Growing Together” community education program was organized after careful study of technological disasters and the increased demands they place on mental health services. Table 1 outlines the four major activities of the Community Participation Model.

Table 1. Community Participation Model for Developing Program Activities

<p>I. Needs Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Survey</li> <li>• Focus Groups</li> <li>• Mental Health Service Data</li> </ul>
<p>II. Data Presentation and Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback</li> <li>• Verification</li> <li>• Clarification</li> </ul>
<p>III. Program Materials Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback</li> <li>• Acceptability</li> <li>• Effectiveness</li> </ul>
<p>IV. Program Implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteer Participation</li> <li>• Feedback</li> <li>• Evaluation</li> </ul>

The initial activity, Needs Assessment, used data from Cordova to identify and define the nature and types of chronic symptoms experienced by residents. The assessment identified high risk groups, diagnosed predominant psychological symptoms, and provided a general profile of community impacts. From that information, the "Growing Together" program was developed. The program, including a generic community survey format, radio and television message formats, community brochures, a protocol for conducting focus group interviews, and other materials are located in the Appendices. Additional actions or considerations should include:

- Local mental health professionals and volunteers conduct a Needs Assessment for the local area and specific disaster.
- Develop focus groups with representatives from various segments of the population to address specific problems.
- Develop resources for copying, retrieving and analyzing survey information.
- Identify, recruit and train intervention volunteers.
- Bring in outside mental health professionals who will not be immersed in the corrosive community.

### Community Participation Model for Developing Program Activities

As collecting and analyzing information for developing a program can take a long time and a considerable amount of money, a model program developed for Cordova, Alaska following the Exxon oil spill is included in the Appendices. This can provide the affected community with a program while research into local conditions is under way. The data collection in the community of Cordova is described in Appendix J of the Appendices.

Once information has been gathered and analyzed, the results should be presented to the community. This is critical for verifying accuracy of the information and for expanding a collective understanding within the community of what chronic symptoms persist. Community verification of symptoms from the Needs Assessment analysis should include a discussion of appropriate response activities in order to establish a direct link between symptoms and the content of outreach activities.

The study and resultant analysis can be time consuming and complex and needs to be done by professionals. The results may be good for science, for litigation and for mental health professionals; however, needs of the community and individuals have to be addressed immediately. While this work is proceeding, communities can follow the examples of others who have experienced technological disasters.

After the outreach program has been developed from the collection, analysis and verification phases, the materials should be reviewed by community residents.

## Outreach Activities

In the Cordova program, major outreach activities were identified during the initial phases, resources identified and programs were developed to support those activities. They are listed in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Outreach Activities for the Growing Together Community Education Program

OUTREACH ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	STRATEGY	IMPACT OR TARGET POPULATION
Community Education Newspaper Series	Nine articles on technological disasters, their impacts and coping skills	Run series in local newspaper	Community
Community Education Radio Series	Program on coping skills	Five-part program broadcast on local radio	Community
Community Education Leaflet Distribution	Coping skills information contained in nine leaflets	Distributed at locations throughout community	Individual Level
In-service Training Program	Mental health workers, teachers, clergy, law enforcement personnel – provided training in appropriate intervention strategies	Identify organizations, develop schedule, implement	Individual Level
Peer Listener Training Program	Volunteers trained and provided materials for support counseling	Solicit volunteers, develop schedule, train, implement, monitor	Individual Level
Talking Circle	Alaska Native and other community members participate in talking circle oriented toward Exxon Valdez oil spill disaster	Organize through traditional facilitators and invitation to villages within Prince William Sound	Alaska Native Community and other community members

Newspaper Articles

Initial outreach activities identified topics and experts who could provide the necessary information. Titles for the articles are:

- *Technological Disasters: Why Are They Different?*
- *Three Mile Island: A Continuing Disaster*
- *Understanding Anger from Technological Disasters*
- *Letting Go of Chronic Depression*
- *Chronic Stress and Alcohol Consumption*
- *Talking to Children in Stressful Situations*
- *The Mood-Food Connection and Stress*
- *Chronic Stress and Cancer: Is There a Link?*
- *Coping With Technological Disasters*

A tenth article could be developed locally to address physical properties, specific chemistry and dangers of the immediate technological disaster.

The articles developed for the Cordova “Growing Together” program are included in Appendix B.

Table 3. Newspaper Articles as Outreach

OUTREACH STRATEGY	RESOURCE – APPENDIX B
Utilize local newspaper for publication of education materials for community residents	Articles on technological disasters, impacts, coping skills, and recovery
PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact newspaper editor and arrange meeting</li> <li>• Make arrangements to run newspaper articles as public service contributions or purchase space if necessary.</li> <li>• Notify community organizations to announce forthcoming series.</li> <li>• Bind articles and distribute to members of high-risk groups.</li> </ul>	

Radio Programs

If a station is available in the area of the disaster, radio broadcasts provide an important outreach vehicle. The “Growing Together” effort resulted in five 30-minute programs involving experts in technological disasters and psychological stress informally discussing technological disasters and psychological stress including symptoms and coping skills. The titles of these radio programs are:

- *What are Technological Disasters*
- *Community Recovery*
- *Depression*
- *Anxiety and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder*
- *Substance Abuse and Anger*

Transcripts and tapes of these broadcast programs are included in Appendix C.

Table 4. Radio Programs as Outreach

<p style="text-align: center;">OUTREACH STRATEGY</p> <p>Utilize local radio station to air education programs on technological disasters</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">RESOURCE – APPENDIX C</p> <p>Radio series produced on technological disasters, impacts, coping skills, and community recovery</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contact manager of local radio station</li><li>• Make arrangements to air radio programs as a public service contribution or purchase air time if necessary</li><li>• Review and determine appropriate times for maximum audience reception</li><li>• Advertise radio programs through promotional tape, local newspaper and scanner announcements</li><li>• Organize call-in opportunities with local experts following the airing of the program</li></ul>	

Community Information Leaflets

To increase circulation of information regarding the chronic effects of technological disaster, a series of leaflets on various subjects can be developed and tailored to the needs of the community and the nature of the disaster. In Cordova, intervention workers designed and distributed eight leaflets with the following titles:

- *Growing Together: A Community Education Program*
- *Plain Talk about Domestic Violence and Abuse*
- *Plain Talk About Managing Anger*
- *Plain Talk About Depression*
- *Plain Talk About Post Traumatic Stress Disorder*
- *All About Alcohol: Just for Kids*
- *Plain Talk About Alcohol*
- *Plain Talk About Helping Children Cope With Disaster*

Leaflets can be mailed to a general list of individuals, made available at public offices such as hospitals, government buildings, occupational organizations, and any kind of fairs, celebrations, meetings or community social gatherings.

The leaflets developed for Cordova are provided in Appendix E. In addition, the appendix includes a list of organizations and agencies that may provide informational materials relative to the disaster.

Table 5. Leaflet Distribution as Outreach

OUTREACH STRATEGY Distribution of leaflets	RESOURCE – APPENDIX E Leaflets with educational information on technological disasters
<p style="text-align: center;">PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review leaflets for style and content, revise or modify if necessary</li> <li>• Distribute leaflets via local mental centers, community organizations, local hospitals, etc.</li> <li>• Distribute leaflets at community festivals, fairs, and other events</li> <li>• Obtain mailing lists and mail leaflets to community residents</li> </ul>	

### In-Service Training

Certain occupational groups within the community offer particular skills to reach various segments of the population. In Cordova, professionals in occupations trained to deal with the public were identified, trained by mental health professionals, assigned subject matter and given their target audiences.

Table 6. In-Service Training Assignments

OCCUPATION	TARGET AUDIENCE	SUBJECT
Teachers	Children	Identifying and supporting children experiencing chronic family stress situations
Law enforcement	Adult community	Alcohol and substance abuse, domestic violence
Clergy	Adult community	Positive response for coping with prolonged economic hardships, family and marital stress
Mental Health	Adult and children	In-service, refresher, disaster specific training

In-service training for those identified were designed as two-hour presentations on the following subjects:

- What Are Technological Disasters?
- Symptoms of Chronic Stress
- Responding to Depression
- Alcohol Abuse

Mental health professionals with specific experience in technological disasters also should be brought in to support and supplement the efforts of local workers.

Table 7. In-Service Training as Outreach

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>OUTREACH STRATEGY</b></p> <p>Provide in-service training programs to caregiver occupational groups (teachers, clergy, law enforcement)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>RESOURCE – APPENDIX D</b></p> <p>Materials for three in service training programs</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review in-service training materials – delivery of materials takes about one and a half hours, so a two-hour window is required</li> <li>• Contact school official, police chief, and church representatives to arrange times for training sessions</li> <li>• Identify community professionals and/or recruit outside expertise for delivery of program</li> <li>• Provide learning aids for participants of in-service programs</li> <li>• Solicit feedback on in-service programs</li> </ul>	

Materials used for each subject of in-service training in Cordova are included in Appendix D.



## Peer Listener Training

Many people affected by technological disasters are reluctant to use traditional mental health services. Often those affected might not even be aware they could use such services. Research has shown traditional mental health services may not be effective in dealing with the long-term effects of disasters. One method for addressing these difficulties is the use of informal social support networks with trained peer listeners.

Properly trained peer listeners can provide a number of services to the community, from serving as an available ear to assisting in problem solving to providing referrals to professionals.

Peer listeners drawn from the community are more likely to be trusted than outsiders because they possess an understanding of the community and its relationship to the disaster. They may work with local church and community groups, directly with mental health organizations or individually with family and friends.

The “Growing Together” program in Cordova drew volunteers from several high-risk groups for training. After recruiting and screening by local mental health professionals, selected listeners participated in a two-day training session. Supervision and support continued through the program with a follow up contact about seven months after the initial training. Developers found the program, while intended to deal with the effects of the oil spill, became an ongoing resource for mental health intervention.

Appendix F contains an outline for a two-day training session as well as materials for distribution during the training. The training was conducted by a sociologist specializing in technological disasters and a clinical psychologist specializing in traumatic stress; however, any properly trained mental health professional should be able to provide the training.

Additionally, RCAC has prepared a four part video peer listener training series that can be used in addition to the materials found in Appendix F. Please contact the RCAC for information on obtaining the video series.

Table 8. Peer Listener Training as Outreach

OUTREACH STRATEGY	RESOURCE – APPENDIX F
Peer listener and support skills training program	*Peer listener training materials *Video Series – contact RCAC for ordering information
<p style="text-align: center;">PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify volunteers representative of various community groups</li> <li>• Identify local or external professional expertise to conduct two-day training sessions</li> <li>• Conduct training sessions</li> <li>• Organize monthly meetings of peer listeners</li> <li>• Monitor peer listener activities and encourage retention of volunteers</li> <li>• Gather feedback and information on program effectiveness</li> </ul>	

The Talking Circle

Culturally distinct groups within a community may require special intervention based on unique needs of tradition, language and religion. To address this in Cordova following the Exxon spill, the “Growing Together” program worked closely with the Alaska Native community through representatives of Eyak Village, a local Native Alaskan organization. Together they developed a program of Talking Circles based on traditional Native custom. The circle was organized by the Native group and involved a number of spiritual leaders and facilitators. While the three-day meeting covered many subjects listed in previous sections, it also was designed to fit the Native community with such activities as traditional healing ceremonies on the shores of Prince William Sound at the beginning and end of the session.

The talking circle program in Cordova proved a success and led to on-going social programs sponsored by local Alaska Native organizations addressing chronic social issues in the community. Surveys and analysis of the talking circle program in Cordova are included in Appendix H.

Appendix G provides information on Alaska Native culture organizations, but on a broader scale, to address specific needs of culturally distinct groups, a community in disaster would need to assess what groups are present and locate appropriate representatives to design a program specific to those groups.

Table 9. Cultural Activities as Outreach

OUTREACH STRATEGY	RESOURCE – APPENDIX G
Culturally-appropriate activity	Information on Talking Circles and Alaska Native organizations and consultants
PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contact representatives of local cultural group(s)</li><li>• Develop consensus for culturally-appropriate activity</li><li>• Identify spiritual leaders for ceremonies</li><li>• Distribute information to local community regarding participation</li></ul>	

### Town Meetings

Town meetings where citizens can express their concerns and questions to government, responsible parties, agencies and to other members of the community, offer individuals the opportunity to receive accurate information and let others know their difficulties and perhaps even solutions to problems. In separate forums, experts in the fields of both the chemistry and physical properties specific to the disaster and response, and in the delivery of understanding and care should be recruited for town meetings. They should attempt to resolve as many issues as possible right there in the community forum. Town meetings offer an opportunity to disperse accurate information to the community as well as allowing community members to vent and speak directly to representatives of the responsible party and government.

### ◆ CHAPTER THREE: THE INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY - WHAT ABOUT US

*“As a victim, I can tell you that after they have hurt you, you are on your own...As a wife, I hope the fighting and the sacrifices my husband has had to experience will become like other injuries, leaving only a faint scar. And as a person, I hope that all the suffering and hardships we have faced as a family because of the oil industry will not have been for nothing.”*

--Homer resident, 1989

Unlike government, or other organizations, the individual most likely has no formal structure with which to face a technological disaster. Yet, at the individual level is where much long-term damage can be expected.

Events in a major technological disaster can become overwhelming almost immediately. So much happens in such a short period of time that often the individual is overlooked in the crush of activity in the response. Alone, many victims have to deal with a confusing situation that threatens to affect all aspects of their lives. Problems, questions and what seem to be overwhelming feelings begin almost immediately and become so numerous and intense as to seem insurmountable. These questions include:

- What is really happening here?
- Why am I so angry?
- Who is going to help me?
- When is it going to end?
- Is this threatening my health or that of my family?
- How will I ever be able to live here now?
- Media stampede, how do I deal with it? Is it safe to talk to the press?
- Food and shelter, if threatened where do I go?
- What about my children? What are the effects on them? Where can I find day care?
- What about my job, my spouse, my business?
- Who is going to pay? Will I be compensated?
- What about lawsuits? How long will they take?
- My financial stability and where has it gone?
- Profiteering. Do I envy or resent those making money from the disaster?
- Should I work for the responsible party or not (moral choices, guilt)
- Who's got the power here ? (intimidation, harassment) Who's in charge?
- What can I do in the face of overwhelming circumstances?
- Survivor guilt. Why did I survive and my friend did not?
- What can I do to help my family?
- What can I do to help my community?

From the beginning, it needs to be understood that all these feelings are normal. Other people in other disasters have felt the same things. Neighbors, friends and business associates are all feeling the same things right now. This has been documented in previous disasters. Appendix J shows surveys and results from the Exxon Valdez spill in Cordova, Alaska. Those results confirm the above list of questions an individual may be experiencing at one point or another during the onset and resulting chaos of a disaster.

Following an initial period of intense public attention, concerns for individual victims of technological disasters tend to disappear into the greater concerns of cleanup and litigation. Individual concerns may even be ignored purposely by the responsible party (or at least it may seem so). Yet the individual may suffer significantly long after the disaster. Ten years after the Exxon oil spill in Prince William Sound, fishermen and their families still spoke of the disaster in muted tones of sadness, anger and terms of loss, not just economic loss but, in a sense, almost spiritual. Something intangible was taken away besides the decline of fisheries and the oil on the beaches. In terms of both immediate and long-term effects, the individual often is the least likely to seek help.

Effects on individual victims of technological disasters include:

- Sense of fear, worry
- Sense of helplessness in terms of working to attack the effects of the disaster
- Disruption of home routine
- Feeling one's lifestyle threatened
- Loss of financial stability
- Witnessing death, injuries, pain, and human induced ecosystem degradation and resource loss
- Feeling out of control of something threatening to life's basics: food, shelter, clothing
- Feeling cut off from services
- Becoming separated from loved ones
- Having a sense of mortality and helplessness
- Concern for children and their new roles in the family that may result
- Feeling "survivor guilt"
- Long-term unresolved litigation
- Distinct fear about the future
- Fear of loss of lifestyle for the children based on the loss of a traditional livelihood.
- The elderly: Retirement can be affected. For example, unable to fish, a fisherman may lose his boat and his permit, meaning sizable amounts of money that would have been available for retirement.

- Acceleration of an already occurring negative trend may prevent economic recovery. For example, with the curtailment of salmon fishing for two years in Prince William Sound, farmed fish from other sources filled market vacuums.
- Anniversaries: Five and ten years later memories and traumas return to the surface with increased attention on the effects of the disaster.

Keep in mind that all of these effects and feelings about them are normal. Someone experiencing this is not the exception, but the rule.

### **The Path to Healing: What Can I as an Individual Do?**

Where can I seek help and what can I do to help myself?

Most important is to acknowledge and understand your feelings. Dr. Kai Erikson, a Yale University sociologist who studied technological disasters, writes:

"First, accept parts of the disaster will stay with you. Second, recognize you have reason to be angry about it and your feelings are valid. Third, you don't have to forgive or forget, you can decide not to let it preoccupy you. You lost control over some things, but you can exercise control over other areas of your life."

You can read more about coping with your feelings in the newspaper articles, radio program transcripts, and leaflets contained in Appendix B, Appendix C, and Appendix E respectively.

Activities that individuals can engage in to help themselves include (many more activities are outlined in the appendices):

- Seek to understand why a technological disaster may be different from a natural disaster (see Chapter One).
- Let go of all-consuming anger by acknowledging you have no control over those who caused the disaster.
- Share your fears, experiences, and pains with others. Don't isolate yourself.
- Establish a regular routine of sleeping, and exercising.
- Eat regular, healthy meals.
- Monitor negative thinking, focus on solutions not problems.
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine.
- Learn how to talk about the event with your children. Helpful information on this topic is found throughout the Appendices.
- Learn to recognize the signs of depression and seek help if you need it. More information on depression can be found throughout the appendices.
- Consider seeing a professional counselor or talk with your spiritual advisor.

One way to begin the healing process is to reach out to others. Even the smallest act of kindness can be the first step to collective healing.

Examples include:

- Engage in community service.
- Encourage community groups of which you are a member, to initiate programs as outlined in the previous chapter.
- Volunteer your time to these programs once initiated. You can distribute leaflets, or become a peer listener for example.
- Become a volunteer with other established programs in your community.
- Visit shut-in elders.
- Spend time with a child.



## ◆ CHAPTER FOUR: LOCAL GOVERNMENT - PREPARING AND RESPONDING

*"Coming in at 8:00 a.m. when Exxon demanded a meeting...I'll never forget it...I was already frustrated because the council hadn't had a quorum and hadn't adopted the budget and all this work I was trying to do in the middle of the whole mess, basic city work wasn't being taken care of and that's what I mean: the whole city operation came to a standstill..."*

-- Kodiak city official, 1989

### **Preparedness Before the Disaster**

One important aspect of technological disasters to understand is that they are unpredictable. Even tornadoes and hurricanes sometimes allow weather forecasters a chance to warn residents of potential disaster, but a technological disaster because it is caused by an accident of human behavior, cannot be predicted. Therefore the community that has taken some time to prepare for a technological disaster will have a much better chance of surviving such a disaster should it occur. Proper planning can provide local authorities and citizens a structure to understand and deal with a technological disaster.

The very first step is to develop an overall community emergency response plan. This guidebook is meant, among other goals, to provide insight into developing that plan. As the exact circumstances of a technological disaster cannot be predicted, planning for a specific type may not provide a full picture, however a survey can be made to determine what potential disasters exist in the area. More important is establishing a community structure to respond to the needs of government and citizens should a disaster occur. Structure and protocols should include but not be limited to:

#### **Establish a Command Structure**

Establish a command structure and a chain of command. It is vital that the head of the local government (mayor, city manager, village administrator) be in command. Other officials such as police or fire chief, village public safety officer, public works director should be assigned specific tasks relating to a community response.

#### **Establish an Organization**

Establish an organization and chart it with specific persons assigned to specific tasks within the organization. Tasks can correspond to normal jobs within the government. Remember that the disaster will disrupt normal government functions and personnel can be overwhelmed very quickly.

## The Incident Command System

A local government might consider studying and applying an Incident Command System, which was developed to manage responses to large wild fires and has since been adopted by many industry and government agencies to manage any kind of emergency situation such as a technological disaster. Information on the Incident Command System can be obtained from: Unified Plan Volume 1: The Alaska Federal and State Preparedness Plan for Response to Oil and Hazardous Substance Discharges and Releases, Annex B. (This plan is available at most local libraries, from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, the United States Coast Guard, as well as from the Alaska Regional Response Team Website at [www.akrrt.org](http://www.akrrt.org)) An Incident Command System organizational chart is included at the end of this chapter.

- Assign one person to speak for the city government.
- Prepare the city attorney, as most often technological disasters eventually involve lengthy litigation.
- Prepare and train social service agencies for the types of impacts expected in a technological disasters.
- Predetermine physical office requirements and archive programs. A technological disaster can be expected to generate an enormous amount of paperwork. Because of the continued potential for financial accountability and legal action, all records should be kept and archived. Also, it will serve the government better to coordinate the disaster response from a separate office and leave existing office space for the normal functions of the government.
- It is important to keep in mind that responses to technological disasters always go through a number of phases. The two most important of these are: Immediate emergency response, then a change to a long-term, project-managed operation. Meeting the demands of the first phase effectively prepares the organization for the long-term project phase recovery.

In Alaska, local governments may sign an agreement with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) for cooperative responses to oil and hazardous substance spills. The agreements aim to promote coordinated and effective spill responses by allowing DEC to reimburse a city for its costs if it assists in responding to a spill at the state's request.

These agreements help stretch resources throughout the state by enlisting local support in cleanup activities. Responses to oil and hazardous spills are more effective if the state can draw upon local community and government resources, and the experience and knowledge that local residents bring to spill incidents. To begin the process of establishing an agreement, further information is available through DEC Juneau, 907 465-5009.

## How To Respond

Despite all the precautions that might be in place and the assurances of industry and regulatory agencies, technological disasters occur and the local organization that prepares and functions efficiently during the disaster is the one that can help the community endure and survive the experience. Steps need to be taken immediately upon notification of a disaster. If the community response starts in chaos, it most likely will function with chaos throughout. This chapter outlines steps to take to prevent confusion, establish an organization to meet the demands of the disaster and allow officials not only to function in the emergency mode but allow the local government to perform its normal obligations as well. Much of the following was learned from officials who experienced the Exxon Valdez oil spill and through other regional disasters including the collapse of Alaska's Bristol Bay fish runs in 1997 and 1998. Every community is different and every disaster is different. The following are tactics that have worked in other communities. You may find you need to tailor your own unique response.

### Who Is In Charge

- It is vital that the chief operating officer of the local government be in command, and it is critical that this person remain in charge. There must be a single point of authority and a visible entity to direct the community response. Preparation through the implementation of the Incident Command System would identify and empower this person immediately.
- The next step is to establish a chain of command through which persons in responsible positions and those who work within specific areas report to the chief operating officer. This again is formulated in the incident command system. Within this chain of command, assignments should include:
  - Identify the person responsible
    - to answer media questions
    - to authorize financial expenditures
    - to hire additional personnel
    - to issue purchase orders and requisitions
    - to review correspondence relating to the disaster
    - to manage delivery of normal government services
- Identify one person who will speak for the government and establish lines of communication so information about the disaster and the city response is readily available and reliable. Nothing will undermine public confidence more than an uncoordinated effort that results in providing conflicting information about an event.

- Recognize that the disaster will disrupt normal operations and establish a separate office with necessary equipment including phone, fax and modem lines and assign personnel to that office for the sole purpose of managing the city response to the disaster. If necessary, assign city employees or hire extra help to staff this office specifically to handle the local response. For a short period immediately following the beginning of the incident, this office may need to be staffed 24 hours a day.

### Public Relations

- Develop a single channel through one office to coordinate all media requests and arrange interviews and make sure everyone involved in the response directs information requests through that office. Depending on the news worthiness of the event, media may appear from all over the world, with deadlines in every time zone so, at least at first, this office may have to be staffed 24 hours a day. Make every attempt to provide that official with all information available. This can be accomplished by routing all correspondence, meeting schedules, minutes and any other information to that office. It is vital that this person be fully informed.
- Be prepared to provide details about the locality both for media information and responders who may need local services to support the response effort. The details should include: maps, population, job market, accessibility, accommodations, medical facilities, airport facilities, fuel availability and storage, warehousing and storage yards, loading facilities, heavy equipment availability, local contractors, portable storage.
- Prepare for angry constituents. Plan how to deal positively with hostile community members in private and public meetings. Remember these are the people you represent.
- Publish as much information as is possible including daily or weekly updates, with news bulletins or public posting of up-to-date occurrences. Particularly in communities without radio, television or newspaper, establish a place for public postings and keep it current with incident developments, changes and offerings in city services, meeting schedules and general information about the disaster and its response. In the first days of a disaster this could take a full-time person to maintain. Make sure the location is easily accessible and will not create congestion as this likely will become a gathering place for those persons interested in the disaster.
  - In Cordova during the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill response, a committee was created comprised of local leaders from various groups, including a city council member, a fishing representative, a fishing processor representative, a hatchery representative, and a local business representative. This committee met, planned for, and implemented systems to provide and receive information to and from the media, the community members, Exxon, the State of Alaska, and the United States Coast Guard. They created and published a Cordova Fact Sheet to distribute this information (see Appendix H for an

example of the sheet). This committee along with staff hired to help them, allowed the city to get back to the day-to-day business of running the town. The head of local government could then delegate spill responsibilities to the committee. The recommendations of the committee were referred to the city council for action.

- Designate a person and office and implement a system to receive input from the community, carry that input forward to the proper person or office and report back to the community any results or answers from that input. This liaison should be a person trusted in the community and a good listener and must remain accessible and visible. This official should have a direct link to the highest levels of the command.
- In the confusion of the immediate disaster, it is easy to be consumed by the event itself and to be influenced by the responsible party. Always keep in mind that you represent and work for the citizens of your community and it is their welfare that is at stake.

### Meetings

Formal established groups as well as disaster-related ad hoc groups will form in response to a technological disaster. Committees and task forces will be established to address various aspects of the disaster and the response to it. As these groups develop, the following list should be considered in guiding the conduct of meetings:

- Alaska state law requires that all meetings of all municipal bodies be open to the public, with certain exceptions for executive sessions, and that there be reasonable public notice prior to the meeting. Informal meetings also are covered by the law. A copy of Alaska's Open Meetings Act AS 44.62.310-312 is included at the end of this chapter.
- Keep accurate, detailed minutes and records of any meetings of a public body that operates under local government. These can include city council or assembly, task groups, committees, any group organized under the local government umbrella.
- Notify the public of every governing body meeting.
- Plan for a town meeting as soon as possible after the incident to explain the nature and extent of the disaster and outline both responsible party and government response. If possible, bring in experts not associated with the responsible party to explain the nature and potential effects of contaminants.

### Record Keeping

Record keeping is one of the most vital aspects of a community's response to a technological disaster, yet it is one that most often comes up lacking in the final analysis. The party responsible for a technological disaster most likely will be billed for extraordinary city expenses related to the response and most often this and other aspects of a disaster can lead to

lengthy litigation. For any entity to make its case for remuneration from a responsible party or disaster relief from government agencies, the entity must document actual costs associated with the event.

Detailed records also provide a wealth of information for any number of interests. For example, this guidebook might not be possible if it were not for records kept during the Exxon Valdez oil spill. It is also vital to make records of conversations and meetings and archive them. To recover costs in a technological disaster, very precise and accurate records must be produced. For example, it is not enough to say six extra people were hired. All activities must be documented and justified for each hiring. Total personnel costs must be recorded accurately as costs are incurred. It will be almost impossible to reconstruct records after the fact. Reconstructed records will be challenged and most often result in non-payment of claims. To recover costs for fiscal impacts to local government, all costs must be detailed from the use of a desk drawer to office space, phone lines, copy machines, postage and all the routine office costs associated with the effort.

Often in the first days of a disaster, many promises are made and then when calmer conditions prevail, accountants and lawyers withdraw or contradict the original verbal statements. Records of all communications become vital.

The following is a list of records that must be kept following a technological disaster:

- Phone calls: log all calls with date, time and participants. Include topics discussed, actions agreed to, etc.
- Keep all financial costs associated with the response separate from normal city accounts. Establish an accounting system so all costs directly related to the disaster can be identified.
- Keep all personnel costs separate, including those regular city employees who are dedicated to the response. When hiring personnel specifically for the disaster, including those who might replace city employees who have been delegated to disaster jobs, detail the hiring and separate all associated costs. Prepare a separate payroll if possible.
- Personnel on salary should keep detailed records of time spent in meetings and all other related tasks.
- Establish an area to keep all disaster-related records and appoint one person responsible and accountable for all financial activities. If possible, appoint one person for all clerical record keeping.
- Be prepared to establish a cost accounting system that details all costs to operate during the disaster, including line item expenditures.

- Keep detailed, accurate records of meetings including: committees, task groups, city council or assembly meetings; in essence, any meetings of a public body that operates under local government, particularly correspondence or conversations with officials of the responsible party.
- Community leaders and governing body members should keep consistent and precise daily logs of activities associated with the disaster.

### Other Considerations

No one can predict the exact nature of a technological disaster. Each will be unique unlike natural disasters where certain aspects are common, say, to all hurricanes. As a result, effects of the disaster cannot be predicted. The following list includes a number of considerations, any or all of which could develop in a technological disaster.

- Prepare to receive, send and archive a large volume of correspondence.
- Establish a center for volunteer referral with a volunteer coordinator as described in chapter six of this guidebook.
- Prepare to organize community involvement. This can include:
  - Task groups
  - Committees with specific interest areas
  - Public hearings and informational meetings
  - Publications including newsletters, flyers, short bulletins, public postings
- Expect conflicts among individuals and groups. Conflict resolution or mediation may be necessary.
- Promote mental health by not overloading individuals with work. Remain aware of expressed, denied or buried stress. Remain in touch with mental health professionals. Chapters two and three directly address mental health.
- Local citizens may wish to volunteer to work in the response. While this should be encouraged and facilitated, often the work involves very specialized training. Refusal by the responsible party to use volunteers can lead to frustration and anger.
- Local citizens can also be useful volunteering in non-response areas, such as within their own churches, or other civic organizations. There may even be a volunteer referral agency within your community.
- Expect employees to abandon jobs in order to obtain higher-paying jobs in the response. This will leave government and local businesses short of help.
- An influx of job-seekers hoping for work in the response will stress local facilities such as public and private campgrounds, and waste management systems.

- Often the responsible party will attempt to assuage concerns of local businesses by purchasing as many supplies locally as possible. In remote areas, this can cause significant shortages of vital supplies, particularly food and fuel.
- If the response is large enough, employees and contractors for the responsible parties may occupy most of the available hotels, motels, B&Bs and rooms in private homes, creating a shortage of accommodations.
- Expect visits by dignitaries whose accommodation will interfere with the normal course of business. Prepare for them, in particular, information packets making clear to them what the issues are and what they may be able to do to help.
- Be sure to enforce local fees, licensing and taxes on businesses that come to town to work on the response and any new businesses that may form because of it. These often are overlooked in the heat of the immediate response.



Alaska Open Meetings Act

Sec. 44.62.310. Government meetings public.

(a) All meetings of a governmental body of a public entity of the state are open to the public except as otherwise provided by this section or another provision of law. Attendance and participation at meetings by members of the public or by members of a governmental body may be by teleconferencing. Agency materials that are to be considered at the meeting shall be made available at teleconference locations if practicable. Except when voice votes are authorized, the vote shall be conducted in such a manner that the public may know the vote of each person entitled to vote. The vote at a meeting held by teleconference shall be taken by roll call. This section does not apply to any votes required to be taken to organize a governmental body described in this subsection.

(b) If permitted subjects are to be discussed at a meeting in executive session, the meeting must first be convened as a public meeting and the question of holding an executive session to discuss matters that are listed in (c) of this section shall be determined by a majority vote of the governmental body. The motion to convene in executive session must clearly and with specificity describe the subject of the proposed executive session without defeating the purpose of addressing the subject in private. Subjects may not be considered at the executive session except those mentioned in the motion calling for the executive session unless auxiliary to the main question. Action may not be taken at an executive session, except to give direction to an attorney or labor negotiator regarding the handling of a specific legal matter or pending labor negotiations.

(c) The following subjects may be considered in an executive session:

(1) matters, the immediate knowledge of which would clearly have an adverse effect upon the finances of the public entity;

(2) subjects that tend to prejudice the reputation and character of any person, provided the person may request a public discussion;

(3) matters which by law, municipal charter, or ordinance are required to be confidential;

(4) matters involving consideration of government records that by law are not subject to public disclosure.

(d) This section does not apply to

(1) a governmental body performing a judicial or quasi-judicial function when holding a meeting solely to make a decision in an adjudicatory proceeding;

(2) juries;

(3) parole or pardon boards;

(4) meetings of a hospital medical staff;

(5) meetings of the governmental body or any committee of a hospital when holding a meeting solely to act upon matters of professional qualifications, privileges or discipline;

(6) staff meetings or other gatherings of the employees of a public entity, including meetings of an employee group established by policy of the Board of Regents of the University of Alaska or held while acting in an advisory capacity to the Board of Regents; or

(7) meetings held for the purpose of participating in or attending a gathering of a national, state, or regional organization of which the public entity, governmental body, or member of the governmental body is a member, but only if no action is taken and no business of the governmental body is conducted at the meetings.

(e) Reasonable public notice shall be given for all meetings required to be open under this section. The notice must include the date, time, and place of the meeting and, if the meeting is by teleconference, the location of any teleconferencing facilities that will be used. Subject to the publication required by AS 44.62.175 (a) in the Alaska Administrative Journal, the notice may be given by using print or broadcast media. The notice shall be posted at the principal office of the public entity or, if the public entity has no principal office, at a place designated by the governmental body. The governmental body shall provide notice in a consistent fashion for all its meetings.

(f) Action taken contrary to this section is voidable. A lawsuit to void an action taken in violation of this section must be filed in superior court within 180 days after the date of the action. A member of a governmental body may not be named in an action to enforce this section in the member's personal capacity. A governmental body that violates or is alleged to have violated this section may cure the violation or alleged violation by holding another meeting in compliance with notice and other requirements of this section and conducting a substantial and public reconsideration of the matters considered at the original meeting. If the court finds that an action is void, the governmental body may discuss and act on the matter at another meeting held in compliance with this section. A court may hold that an action taken at a meeting held in violation of this section is void only if the court finds that, considering all of the circumstances, the public interest in compliance with this section outweighs the harm that would be caused to the public interest and to the public entity by voiding the action. In making this determination, the court shall consider at least the following:

(1) the expense that may be incurred by the public entity, other governmental bodies, and individuals if the action is voided;

(2) the disruption that may be caused to the affairs of the public entity, other governmental bodies, and individuals if the action is voided;

(3) the degree to which the public entity, other governmental bodies, and individuals may be exposed to additional litigation if the action is voided;

(4) the extent to which the governing body, in meetings held in compliance with this section, has previously considered the subject;

(5) the amount of time that has passed since the action was taken;

(6) the degree to which the public entity, other governmental bodies, or individuals have come to rely on the action;

(7) whether and to what extent the governmental body has, before or after the lawsuit was filed to void the action, engaged in or attempted to engage in the public reconsideration of matters originally considered in violation of this section;

(8) the degree to which violations of this section were willful, flagrant, or obvious;

(9) the degree to which the governing body failed to adhere to the policy under AS 44.62.312 (a).

(g) Subsection (f) of this section does not apply to a governmental body that has only authority to advise or make recommendations to a public entity and has no authority to establish policies or make decisions for the public entity.

(h) In this section,

(1) "governmental body" means an assembly, council, board, commission, committee, or other similar body of a public entity with the authority to establish policies or make decisions for the public entity or with the authority to advise or make recommendations to the public entity; "governmental body" includes the members of a subcommittee or other subordinate unit of a governmental body if the subordinate unit consists of two or more members;

(2) "meeting" means a gathering of members of a governmental body when

(A) more than three members or a majority of the members, whichever is less, are present, a matter upon which the governmental body is empowered to act is considered by the members collectively, and the governmental body has the authority to establish policies or make decisions for a public entity; or

(B) the gathering is prearranged for the purpose of considering a matter upon which the governmental body is empowered to act and the governmental body has only authority to advise or make recommendations for a public entity but has no authority to establish policies or make decisions for the public entity;

(3) "public entity" means an entity of the state or of a political subdivision of the state including an agency, a board or commission, the University of Alaska, a public authority or corporation, a municipality, a school district, and other governmental units of the state or a political subdivision of the state; it does not include the court system or the legislative branch of state government.

Sec. 44.62.312. State policy regarding meetings.

(a) It is the policy of the state that

(1) the governmental units mentioned in AS 44.62.310 (a) exist to aid in the conduct of the people's business;

(2) it is the intent of the law that actions of those units be taken openly and that their deliberations be conducted openly;

(3) the people of this state do not yield their sovereignty to the agencies that serve them;

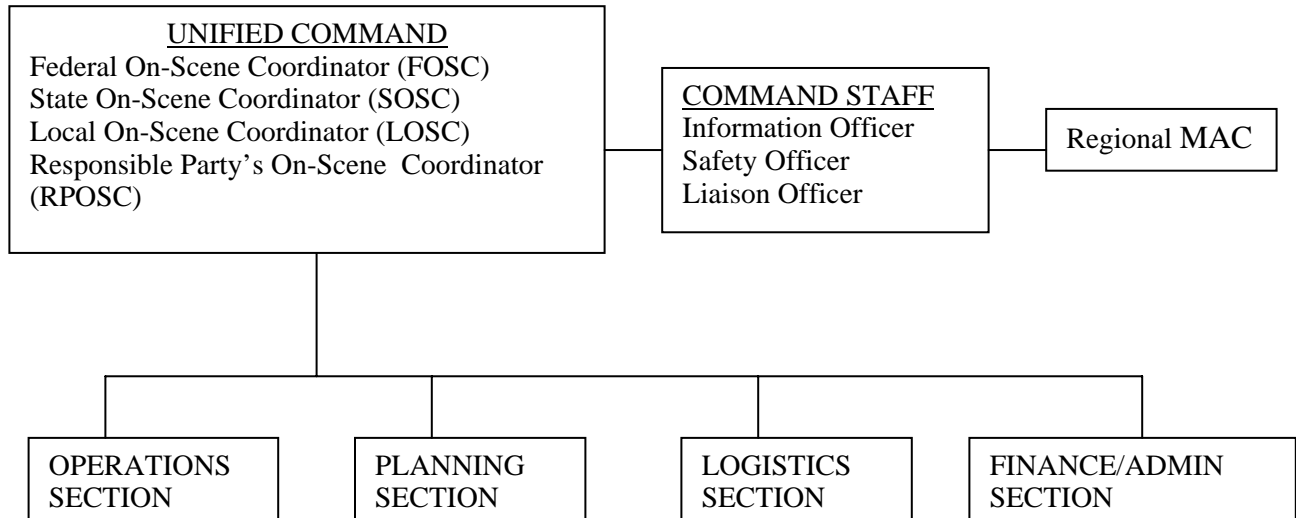
(4) the people, in delegating authority, do not give their public servants the right to decide what is good for the people to know and what is not good for them to know;

(5) the people's right to remain informed shall be protected so that they may retain control over the instruments they have created;

(6) the use of teleconferencing under this chapter is for the convenience of the parties, the public, and the governmental units conducting the meetings.

(b) AS 44.62.310 (c) and (d) shall be construed narrowly in order to effectuate the policy stated in (a) of this section and to avoid exemptions from open meeting requirements and unnecessary executive sessions.

**Figure 1. Oil and Hazardous Substance Response Incident Command (ICS) Structure<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> Unified Plan Volume 1: The Alaska Federal and State Preparedness Plan for Response to Oil and Hazardous Substance Discharges and Releases, Annex B.

## ◆ CHAPTER FIVE: LOCAL BUSINESSES – PREPARING AND RESPONDING

*"[The fishing season of] 1989 was projected to be the opportunity of a lifetime: big volume, big prices. Then the oil spill hit...no herring season, no fishing season. Everybody left to work the oil spill; your employees left to work the spill. Then the people who made big money working the spill left the following winter after the spill. So, businesses were all inventoried up, all dressed up for the party which didn't come..."*

--Cordova business owner, 1989

### **Expectations and Preparations For Small Businesses**

Local small businesses can expect large impacts from a technological disaster. One way a responsible party may attempt to assuage local feelings is through purchasing locally as many supplies as possible. A large influx of response workers also can strain local supplies. This leaves shortages on the shelves and a lack of supplies for those community members who depend on local merchants. Employees may go to earn more money working on the response abandoning their jobs and leaving the store owner without adequate help. Meeting the new demands of the responsible party, maintaining adequate supplies for the community and finding enough help to deliver the supplies can become overwhelming very quickly. On the other hand, some businesses may experience a loss of customers, resulting in inventory surpluses, due to response activities. Some planning can help identify and address problems.

#### Questions and Difficulties

- My shelves are empty. Where do I find more supplies?
- How do I keep adequate supplies in stock?
- How am I going to supply necessities to my regular customers?
- Where am I going to find employees?
- Profiteering. Can/should I raise prices?
- Where will all these people sleep and eat?
- Who is going to help me?
- When is it going to end?
- What about the wage earner/spouse/small business?
- Who is going to pay?
- Financial stability and where has it gone?
- Should I supply the responsible party or not ? (moral choices, guilt)
- Who's got the power here (intimidation, harassment)

- How will I get rid of my inventory?
- I can't afford to get rid of my inventory.

Groceries, hardware stores, hotels, bed and breakfasts, heavy equipment suppliers, storage yard operators, transportation suppliers, small telephone, power and other utility companies, clothing stores, drug stores, restaurants, even taverns and gift shops can all expect an overwhelming business and resultant shortages during a technological disaster. A responsible party with large resources may even place demands on normal wholesale suppliers and they, too, may encounter shortages. Until the suppliers can refill warehouses, shortages may go well beyond the resources of local businesses. In addition, transportation for incoming supplies itself may be in short supply; and while necessities exist, the means for bringing them into the community may be unavailable.

One lesson learned during the Exxon spill in 1989 was that the resourceful person could find supplies, though the costs might be higher, particularly for transportation. One example: A vessel lost its outdrive and a caller to the local supplier was told there were no such drives on the whole West Coast. Three calls later one was located in New Jersey. It was placed on an airplane and delivered to a remote village in Prince William Sound within 24 hours. A database of phone numbers of alternate suppliers at greater distances can help locate shortage items quickly during emergencies. Most items are only a phone call and an airplane flight away, if one is willing to pay the price. Below is a list of some measures a local business can take toward preparation for a technological disaster.

### Preparation Measures

- List items, particularly necessities, that might be in short supply.
- Develop a list with current phone, fax and e-mail numbers of alternate commodities suppliers, no matter how far away.
- If possible, stockpile non-perishables.
- Develop a list with current phone, fax and e-mail numbers of alternate transportation suppliers.
- Enlist alternate workers, including relatives, friends or anyone who might step in to help.
- Establish communications with the local and state employment services to import workers if necessary.
- Establish a line of credit for increased "up front" expenses.
- Be prepared to negotiate contracts with the responsible party.
- Document all extra costs as incurred dealing with the responsible party.
- Accurate records will help keep track of any issues that could end up in litigation .

## Dealing With Supply Fluctuations and Employee Shortages

*"They didn't pay for my inventory, because I still had it. But I couldn't sell it and couldn't pay for it. I lost my line of credit and now I can't order in advance in time to get merchandise when I need it, because it takes so long to ship goods in."*

--Cordova business owner, 1989

### Expectations and Actions

- Prices will rise with increased transportation costs
- Ways to work with or compete with the responsible party for supplies
- Deliveries can take longer because of competition for transportation
- Alternate suppliers
- Alternate transportation
- Finding workers
- Freeing cash for increased up-front expenses.
- Listen carefully to customers and watch stocks to learn what necessities are in demand
- Suppliers to industries closed by the technological disaster may end up with excessive inventories. A responsible party may not honor these as direct expenses of the disaster and refuse to compensate for the loss of business.
- Business may experience a loss of regular patrons because they have been called away to respond to the disaster. This, in turn, can result in supply surpluses rather than shortages.



## ◆ CHAPTER SIX: VOLUNTEERS – A PART OF THE RESPONSE

*"I cleaned otters for a day...just ran a hair dryer to warm them after they were cleaned. Then they came in and told us they didn't want volunteers any more. What can we do? This was my Eden."*

--a Valdez volunteer

One basic tenet of response in a disaster is to give people something to do, no matter how trivial. An occupied person feels a contribution is being made and the job itself helps take the mind away from those feelings of helplessness and ineffectiveness. During the 1989 Exxon spill in Prince William Sound, many people attempted to volunteer and were used at first, then turned away. Some were refused at the outset; others could not find a place or organization that could use their services. This led to even greater frustration on top of that the event itself generated. A well-developed plan for employing volunteers effectively, such as the one outlined at the end of this section can go a long way toward neutralizing those feelings and having a positive influence on both volunteer and response effort.

There are perhaps hundreds of jobs volunteers could fill quite well if given the opportunity, attention, administration and training. To do this requires a coordinated effort on the part of local authorities and it takes the cooperation of the responsible party, at least in those areas directly related to the technological disaster. One frustration in 1989 was the responsible party let it be known volunteers were not welcome and that all workers were hired through contractors. Those people who maintained their regular occupations but had a few hours a day to volunteer, were not allowed to participate in the clean up.

Remember, there may also be a place for volunteers within the community to give service. Local citizens can be useful volunteering in non-response areas, such as within their own churches, or other civic organizations. There may even be a volunteer referral agency within your community.

**BE WARNED:** A volunteer program, while at first glance seems to be a positive necessity, can have its down side. Organizers must understand what a volunteer program can do but also must be fully aware of the pitfalls and dangers inherent in dealing with a volunteer program. A volunteer program requires a certain amount of responsibility and financial support to make it work.

- Each at-risk community must have a volunteer coordinator who has intimate knowledge of the community, threats, services, needs and logistic challenges.
- Who is responsible for hiring a volunteer coordinator for each at risk community (estimated salary \$ 35,000 to \$50,000 a year)? This may be billable to the responsible party but it should be verified, and only for costs incurred during the disaster.
- Insurance and liability are serious issues that need to be reviewed on a local basis.

- Enthusiastic, off-the-street volunteers do get under foot during a crisis. Their enthusiasm will not make up for their lack of expertise and lack of understanding of chains of command or protocols.
- Care has to be taken in identifying and placing volunteers in responsible positions. Protocols established for hiring in certain occupations need to be followed. For example, day care volunteers need to be screened, hired and placed according to industry and governmental regulatory guidelines for persons caring for children.
- The chronic nature of a technological disaster creates a long-term necessity for workers. Volunteers may grow weary or lose interest after a time.
- Creating and regularly updating a volunteer database is critical.

For those localities that might be unable or unwilling to take on a volunteer coordination program, organizations such as village or tribal councils or even the state may be able fill that capacity.

Keeping the above reservations in mind, a coordinated, well-managed volunteer program can help in many ways to alleviate the effects of a disaster, from the basic task of simply filling necessary positions to giving people some sense of contribution and thus fulfillment that they did their part.

What follows is a volunteer coordination plan developed for the Kodiak area and modeled on a similar plan developed for the Kenai Peninsula Borough.

## **Volunteer Coordination Program**

### **A. VOLUNTEER COORDINATION**

Local volunteers can play an important role in a technological disaster, and this is especially true in remote areas, where there is a wealth of local knowledge pertaining to wildlife populations, currents, tides and other environmental phenomena. During an emergency, it is likely that large numbers of local community members will arrive on scene, eager to participate in response activities.

A volunteer coordination plan is necessary to effectively manage and direct volunteer activities such as recruitment, training, communications and referral. This plan addresses such issues for all unaffiliated volunteers, or volunteers who are not already affiliated with a response organization. Affiliated volunteers should work through their respective agencies.

#### **1. Organization and Activation**

A Volunteer Manager may be appointed by the Incident Commander to manage all aspects of the volunteer program, including communications, recruitment, training and referral. The Volunteer Manager (VM) will report directly to the Logistics Section Chief.

The VM will operate a Volunteer Referral Center (VRC) which will refer volunteers to appropriate Incident Command System units or activities where they can apply their skills and interests. The VRC will provide initial screening, skill and training identification, and orientation. Additional screening, training and supervision will be provided by the ICS unit to which the volunteer is referred.

The facility selected to serve as the VRC may be co-located with the Command Center, or may be located nearby in a school, church, recreation center, community building, or other such facility. The facility should provide easy public access, enough room for reception and training areas, and some communication capabilities. The VRC should have basic office equipment, such as computers, telephones, fax machines, copiers, and office supplies.

## 2. Insurance and Liability

While the law of Alaska provides some immunity for volunteers who are sued for their actions while assisting local or state governments in an emergency, the extent of that immunity depends upon the type of action involved and should not be simply assumed. Similarly, the extent to which volunteers are protected for injuries under Worker's Compensation depends upon the particular coverage in effect at the time the volunteers do their work. Local communities should seek advisory opinions in advance of an emergency as to liability and Worker's Compensation coverage so as to be able to adequately advise volunteers.

The Volunteer Referral Center will act only as a referral agency and will not directly supervise the volunteers, with the exception of those volunteers working in the Referral Center. Effective screening, training and supervision will help to limit what liability may exist from the assigning of volunteers.

## 3. Training, Screening and Skill Identification

As potential volunteers contact the referral center, they will be screened and referred to Incident Command System units based on their skills, training and certification, and availability. During response and recovery activities, response agencies or the responsible party may contact the Volunteer Referral Center and submit requests for volunteers.

Training, screening and skill identification will be accomplished by using the following:

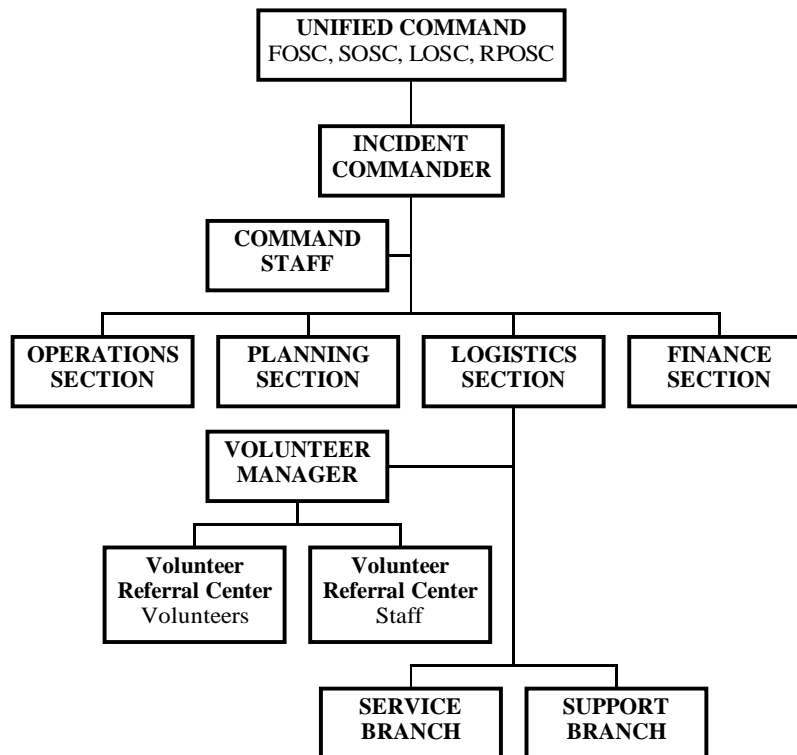
A training module which covers basic orientation to the applicable contingency plan, ICS organizations and functions (both general section divisions and specific unit tasks), and basic safety and communications procedures.

A database which identifies which volunteers have completed training, additional skills and certifications (Hazwoper, wildlife hazing, etc.), and individual preferences and availability.

## B. VOLUNTEER MANAGER RESPONSIBILITIES and DUTIES

The Volunteer Manager is responsible for the implementation and management of the Volunteer Coordination Plan. It is the Volunteer Manager's responsibility to recognize and anticipate the potential role of volunteers in a disaster response, to coordinate needs and available resources, and to manage the Volunteer Referral Center in recruitment, identification, training, and placement of volunteers during a response.

The Volunteer Manager will report to the Logistics Section Chief. All volunteer referral center staff and volunteers will report to the Volunteer Manager (see diagram).



The Volunteer Manager's duties may include the following:

- Serve as a liaison with the IC and Unified Command via the Logistics Section Chief to coordinate volunteer needs.
- Serve as the principal contact for all volunteers and all units/agencies needing volunteers.
- Establish and manage the VRC to include registration, orientation, placement, recruitment, training, and referrals.

- Establish a communication system, including a toll-free phone number, fax lines and fax machines, phones, and a link to the Command Center.
- Coordinate with the Public Information Officer (or Joint Information Center) to provide notification to the media regarding types of volunteer jobs available and procedures for volunteering.
- Provide safety training as necessary for all volunteers to ensure they are properly trained and equipped and in compliance with federal, state and local safety regulations.
- Coordinate with response agencies and the Responsible Party to provide additional volunteers as needed and to coordinate referrals.
- Maintain records of volunteers, training and certification, hours worked, and their assigned activities.
- Provide volunteer recognition.

## C. VOLUNTEER REFERRAL CENTER

### 1. Facility

The VRC should provide:

- Easy public access
- Room for training and orientation
- Basic communications capabilities and office equipment
  - Telephones
    - 2-3 phone lines, one of which is toll free incoming only
  - Fax machine and 2 dedicated fax lines (incoming & outgoing)
  - Communication link to Command Center
  - Access to news & information releases to media and local government in order to advertise volunteer needs and toll free number
  - Computers and printers
  - Copier
  - Maps, flip charts, bulletin boards, pens, tape, markers
  - Paper, pens, pencils, stapler and other general office supplies

### 2. Establishment

In setting up the VRC, the Volunteer Manager should consider the following:

- Arrange space to allow for foot traffic and to maximize wall space.
- Face tables and chairs so that information can be viewed easily.
- Allow enough space, pens, clipboards, etc. so that volunteers can fill out registration materials.
  - Clearly identify the reception desk/area.
  - Provide seating.

- Post signs directing potential volunteers to the building/room.
- In the event of a large disaster response where sufficient staffing is available at the VRC and volunteer needs are extensive, set up stations for each major class of work, such as:
  - administrative
  - communications
  - shoreline operations
  - on-water operations
  - wildlife recovery/rehabilitation
  - repair/construction
  - logistical support
- Assign early volunteers to staff the Referral Center and to be couriers to bring information about volunteer needs from the Command Center to the VRC.
- Set aside time and space for training and orientation.
- Set up an information bulletin board. This area may serve as an informal information and referral area.

Early volunteers should be used to supplement staffing of the VRC. Staffing needs at the VRC will include:

- Receptionist: answers questions, phones, gives out forms & directions
- Data Entry Clerk: enter personnel information into database
- File Clerk: files, copies, sends & receives faxes
- Intake and Referral Personnel: conducts initial screening, matches volunteers with needs
- Communications: compiles updates of volunteer needs, maintains bulletin board
- Training: coordinates/conducts general training & orientation for all volunteers
- Facility Support: maintains equipment, cleanliness, order
- Transportation: assist with transportation as needed
- Courier: serves as go-between for VRC and command center

It is essential that all volunteers are routed through the Volunteer Referral Center. Volunteers arriving on scene who have not first checked in at the Referral Center must be referred back to the VRC for assignment.

#### D. NEEDS ASSESSMENT and RECRUITING

During response and recovery operations, the following process will be used to identify needs and recruit and place volunteers:

- Designate Volunteer Manager and establish VRC as soon as Incident Command is mounted.

- Establish and publicize toll free phone number.
- Distribute volunteer request forms to ICS Section Chiefs (through Command Center).
- In cooperation with Public Information Officer, distribute volunteer information to local newspaper and radio.
- As volunteers contact the referral center, screen and refer them to agencies/organizations/ICS units based on their skills, training and availability.

The Volunteer Request Form (Located at the end of this section) should be copied and distributed to responders via the Command Center as early as possible. Responding agencies, contractors, organizations, or ICS unit leaders will use these forms to identify volunteer needs.

Convergent volunteers (volunteers arriving at the VRC or on scene) will be directed to the VRC and directed to fill out a Volunteer Registration Form (located at the end of this section.).

#### E. TRAINING and SKILL IDENTIFICATION

Training will be provided to all volunteers assigned to jobs during a response. If, in the future, a pre-emergency volunteer coordination program is implemented, volunteers may receive ongoing training and be added to a permanent volunteer roster. This would aid in quickly identifying qualified volunteers in an emergency. State funding may be available for this training. This process would facilitate initial activation of trained volunteers.

Training sessions for volunteers should include:

- Basic orientation to the applicable contingency and unified plans
- ICS structure, organization, and general and specific job requirements
- Site-specific hazards
- Environmental and cultural concerns related to the response
- Safety and security procedures
- Proper attire and safety equipment
- Safety training
- Liability
- Limitations on non-professionals

Training may also be provided for bird and wildlife rescue and treatment, shoreline cleanup, food distribution, check-in procedures and other response activities.

The initial volunteer training (conducted at the VRC) may be supplemented by additional position-specific training provided once the volunteer is assigned to a job.

##### 1. Safety Training



Safety training for volunteers should address the following policies and procedures:

- Workers' compensation
- Drug and alcohol policies
- Firearms
- Equipment use
- Limitations for non-professionals
- Hazwoper
- General safety procedures (buddy system, safe lifting, etc.)
- Evacuation procedures
- Potential hazards of work environment
- First Aid
- Accident Reporting Procedures

#### F. IDENTIFICATION and RECORD KEEPING

It is important to track volunteers and recognize and reward their efforts. The following are suggestions for volunteer identification, record keeping and recognition:

- Develop and maintain a database of current interested volunteers and skills using appropriate computer software.
- Develop and distribute an after-action newsletter or report to all volunteers who participated in a disaster response.
- Issue identification badges to all volunteers as they are assigned to specific jobs.

Ensure that all volunteers register at the VRC before placement in a job. Encourage unit leaders or agency personnel to document volunteer hours worked.

#### G. COORDINATION WITH THE RESPONSIBLE PARTY

If a Responsible Party directs the disaster response, volunteer coordination may proceed according to the responsible party's approved contingency plan. This plan has been designed to facilitate volunteer coordination and promote positive community involvement during all phases of a disaster response. If vessel or facility operators have not developed individual volunteer management plans, they are encouraged to incorporate this plan by reference into their own state-approved contingency plans.



**Sample Volunteer Registration Form**  
VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (day): \_\_\_\_\_ (eve.) \_\_\_\_\_ (fax) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Present employer: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you currently affiliated with any response organization/volunteer group? which? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you certified in any of the following? \_\_\_\_\_ Certification Type/Agency \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Bird Rescue/Wildlife Hazing/Rehab: \_\_\_\_\_

Hazmat/Hazwoper: \_\_\_\_\_

First Aid/CPR: \_\_\_\_\_

Coast Guard licenses: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Placement Preference: \_\_\_\_\_ Bird or Wildlife Rescue/Rehab  
\_\_\_\_\_ Shoreline/Beach Clean Up  
\_\_\_\_\_ Administrative/Clerical  
\_\_\_\_\_ Basic Needs/Logistics  
\_\_\_\_\_ On-Water operations  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other

Emergency Contact - Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (day & eve): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Waiver: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Training completed? \_\_\_\_\_ Date completed \_\_\_\_\_

Initials \_\_\_\_\_

Placed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_

## Quick Reference Sheets

The following sheets are designed to be quick reference sheets. They provide some broad-level contact information for assistance. It is expected that the user will fill in local contact information as it pertains to the specific incident or need.

# What Can We Do?

## Community Groups

Many tools for dealing with the aftermath of a technological disaster have been provided to your community's local disaster officials and mental health agencies. These tools should be implemented to help local residents deal with the many stresses associated with the disaster, including emotional distress, financial losses, childcare issues, family relationship strain, and physical health concerns to name a few.

In the initial days of a disaster, community officials may be so absorbed with responding to the initial emergency, that less tangible needs of the community may be neglected at first.

If your group calls and asks, you will be able to get some of these tools up and running quickly - and your group can make a positive difference in the way the disaster affects you, your family, and your community by taking action. You can get information on where to get help and how to connect with others in your community who may be suffering the same ways as you.

### Who do we call?

- There is a **NEWSPAPER SERIES** in this guidebook on **HOW TO DEAL WITH A DISASTER** like this one. Ask your local newspaper to run one of its columns every week!

Call Your Local Newspaper at 907-\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_. Ask them to run the series!

- There is a **LEAFLET SERIES** on **HOW TO DEAL WITH A DISASTER** like this one. It is included in this guidebook. Distribute the leaflets throughout your community.

- There is a RADIO PROGRAM in this guidebook called "GROWING TOGETHER" that provides additional suggestions for avenues toward healing and relief during this time.

Call Your Local Radio Station(s) at 907-\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_.

Call Your Local Radio Station(s) at 907-\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_.

*Ask them to run these broadcasts daily!*

- TRAINING for TEACHERS, CLERGY, and LAW ENFORCEMENT...

Contact \_\_\_\_\_ at 907-\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_  
for the following training programs:

- What Are Technological Disasters?
  - Symptoms of Chronic Stress
  - Responding to Depression
    - Alcohol Abuse

- PEER LISTENER TRAINING...

Contact \_\_\_\_\_ at 907-\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_  
for the following training sessions:

- Disasters and Mental Health
  - Communication Skills
  - Dealing with Anger
  - Common Concerns
  - Support Seeking

**Or: contact PWSRCAC for information on how to order the Peer Listener Video Training series.**

These tools were developed by the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council to help communities and individuals recover from the devastating personal impacts of the *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill. We hope they will help your community. If you would like more information, or copies of any of these tools, please contact us at 1-800-487-7221. Or, check out web site: [www.pwsrcac.org](http://www.pwsrcac.org)

# What Can I do?

## Individual and Family

Although it may seem like it now, you are not alone, and you can make a difference in spite of all that has gone wrong!

Many tools for dealing with the aftermath of a technological disaster have been provided to your community's local disaster officials and mental health agencies. These tools should be implemented to help local residents deal with the many stresses associated with the disaster, including emotional distress, financial losses, childcare issues, family relationship strain, and physical health concerns to name a few.

In the initial days of a disaster, community officials may be so absorbed with responding to the initial emergency, that less tangible needs of the community may be neglected at first.

If you call and ask, you will be able to get some of these tools up and running quickly - and you can make a positive difference in the way the disaster affects you, your family, and your community by taking action. You can get information on where to get help and how to connect with others in your community who may be suffering the same ways as you.

### Who do I call?

- If you need to talk with a **COUNSELOR** about feelings of sadness, stress, loss, anger, fear or for any other reason.....

Call \_\_\_\_\_ at 907-\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_.

*They can direct you to someone who can help!*

- Don't forget to think about calling a **FRIEND**, or your local **CLERGY**.

- There is a **NEWSPAPER SERIES** in this guidebook on **HOW TO DEAL WITH A DISASTER** like this one. Ask your local newspaper to run one of its columns every week!

Call Your Local Newspaper at 907-\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_. Ask them to run the series!

- There is a **RADIO PROGRAM** called "GROWING TOGETHER" that provides additional suggestions for avenues toward healing and relief during this time.

Call Your Local Radio Station(s) at 907-\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_.

Call Your Local Radio Station(s) at 907-\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_.

*Ask them to run these broadcasts daily!*

- **VOLUNTEER** your time to help **OTHERS....**

Contact \_\_\_\_\_ at 907-\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_ for volunteering information

- For help with **CHILDCARE** when everyone is out trying to clean-up the oil (put out the fire, bag the river, etc.)....

Call \_\_\_\_\_ at 907-\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_

Many of these tools were developed by the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council to help communities and individuals recover from the devastating personal impacts of the *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill. We hope they will help your community. If you would like more information, or copies of any of these tools, please contact us at 1-800-487-7221. Or, check out web site: [www.pwsrccac.org](http://www.pwsrccac.org)

- Another resource is the State of Alaska, Department of Health and Social Services....

Visit web site at: [www.hss.state.ak.us](http://www.hss.state.ak.us)



# What Can We do?

## Local Government

Your city offices are flooded with demands, requests, and complaints, once a technological disaster strikes your community. You do have resources available to assist in the management of the short-term and long-term response.

### What do we do now? \*\*

- **Implement disaster plan if you have one for technological disasters. This guidebook is a starting point.**
- **Establish local command structure.**
- **Designate local information officer.**
- **Document, document, document every disaster related duty taken by local government employees.**

\*\*This is a short list. More detail is contained in the following chapter of this guidebook.

### Who do we call?

- **For EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE, call the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management...**

**Call at 907-428-7000.**

**Or visit their web site...**

**[www.ak-prepared.com](http://www.ak-prepared.com)**

- **For general ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION, one resource is the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development...**

**Call at 907-465-2500**

**Or visit their web site...**

**[www.dced.state.ak.us](http://www.dced.state.ak.us)**

- For up-to-date SPILL RESPONSE INFORMATION ...

Call the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council  
at 1-800-478-7221  
or visit web site at [www.pwsrccac.org](http://www.pwsrccac.org)

Call the Joint Information Center at 907-\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_.

Visit the Unified Command Web site at \_\_\_\_\_.

# What Can I do?

## Small Business Owner

As a small business owner, you may be faced with labor shortages and empty shelves during a major technological disaster response.

### Who do I call?

- For help with **LABOR SHORTAGE** when everyone is out trying to clean-up the oil (put out the fire, bag the river, etc.)....

Call State of Alaska, Department of Labor, Alaska Employment Service at 907-\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_. [Insert local number or nearest regional number]

Or visit web site at...

[www.labor.state.ak.us](http://www.labor.state.ak.us)

- For help with **FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES**...

Call Small Business Administration at 907-271-4022.

Or visit web site at...

[www.sba.gov/regions/states/ak/](http://www.sba.gov/regions/states/ak/)

- For information on **ECONOMIC ISSUES**, one resource is the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development...

Call at 907-465-2500

Or visit their web site...

[www.dced.state.ak.us](http://www.dced.state.ak.us)