

# **2008 Marine Firefighting Symposium Final Report**

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## **Executive Summary**

Over a year of planning went into preparing for the 2008 marine firefighting symposium held May 5-7, 2008. Based on the attendee evaluations from the 2005 symposium and the combined knowledge and experience of the symposium coordinators and local stakeholders we designed an agenda that we thought would meet the needs of this year's attendee's. As previously mentioned we engaged local stakeholders early on in the planning process as their participation was essential in many of the training sessions.

As usual the United States Coast Guard (USCG) played an important role as planner and participant. At the suggestion of the Valdez USCG Captain of the Port (COTP) we included a facilitated panel discussion for the purpose of understanding how all stakeholders would react in the event of a fire aboard a tanker within Prince William Sound (PWS) and at the Valdez Marine Terminal. Although it was unsure how this type of session would resonate with attendee's outside the PWS area it turned out to be one of the highlights of the symposium. I believe this was accomplished by setting the ground rules that allowed questions from the audience to be interjected in a controlled manner and interjecting them at the right time and directed to the right panelist. The other factor adding to this session's success was the panelist. The panelists were carefully selected to provide not only a local knowledge but also relevance state wide.

Few problems arose this year due in part to the planning that went into this symposium. Because this is not the first time the coordinators have worked

on projects of this magnitude, potential problems were anticipated and contingencies were planned. These contingencies paid off as one of the most important factors of planning this symposium was securing the availability of a vessel for an exercise. This is one of the most difficult components to arrange since it is only through the generosity, sacrifice and commitment to public safety by vessel operators that we are allowed access to a vessel. Our original schedule had us delivering an exercise at the conclusion of the training sessions on the final day of the symposium. Unfortunately no vessel was expected at the terminal on that day but a vessel was available on Sunday night prior to the scheduled start of the symposium. We were able to tour the vessel on Sunday evening through the efforts of the symposium instructor cadre, the Prince William Regional Citizens Advisory Council (PWSRCAC) project manager and his team, Polar Tankers and the crew of the Polar Endeavor. This schedule change fit seamlessly into the rest of the schedule and turned out to be a great start to the rest of the symposium.

By any measure, the 2008 marine firefighting symposium was a tremendous success. Aside from the “spot on” curriculum, I was impressed by the attendees’ professionalism and involvement in the training. We provided two tracts of training, an operations tract and a command tract. The attendees were asked to follow the tract that best fit the needs of their department. The split between the two tracts was perfect and all attending remained engaged throughout the symposium providing excellent and relevant questions. Good instructors will size up the attendees and raise or lower the level of instruction they provide to best meet the needs of those attending. I can tell you that as instructors, everyone raised their level of instruction to better meet the needs of

the attendees. I can also say that the entire instructor cadre felt this symposium was extremely rewarding, in part because of the level of knowledge and participation of those in attendance.

### **Observations**

Although it isn't surprising to me that so much hard work goes into planning an event like this I am always amazed at the cooperation extended by so many people and organizations. I think it appropriate to identify some of those people and entities that assisted in the success of this year's symposium.

I'd like to thank the **PWSRCAC** for their continued support of this valuable training. Without the PWSRCAC taking the lead and hosting this event it would not have occurred and that would be to the detriment of all involved. I think it only appropriate to acknowledge the project manager, **Chris Jones**, and his very efficient team for all the hard work making sure all the "i's" were dotted and the "t's" crossed allowing for training to be the main focus for everyone else. Special thanks to **Denise Schanbeck** for her organizational skills and keeping all the records straight. Whatever was needed, Denise knew how to get it and from whom.

Other acknowledgements for outstanding community partnership must go to **Conoco Phillips Marine Polar Tankers, Inc.** for providing us with an incredible training opportunity by allowing us access to the vessel Polar Endeavor for our ship tour. The vessel tour was an eye opener for those who participated and I believe focused their attention to the complexities of responding to a fire aboard a vessel of this type. Thanks also need to go to

**Alyeska** for their participation and allowing us access to the terminal. Without this access we could not have taken the vessel tour.

Special thanks also go to **Southwest Alaska Pilots Association (SWAPA)** for their continued support of this training. By providing us unlimited access to the pilot boat Emerald Isle we are able to deliver a realistic “hands on” exercise which is always one of the highlights for those attending.

**Petro Star** allowed for a walk thru of their facility as part of one of the training sessions. This provided an opportunity for the attendees to see what had been discussed in the classroom and reinforce the lessons learned.

For the second time the **American Salvage Association (ASA)** provided a representative to participate in discussions involving the inclusion of private responders into a response plan. At this symposium **Ted Hosking** from **T and T Marine Salvage** was that representative. Ted made himself available for whatever we asked and provided unmatched expertise in his field.

We also had support and participation from entities representing local, state and federal interests. The **City of Valdez** continues to support this training. Much is asked of the city in preparation for the symposium and this year we were able to thank them at a city council meeting. The **State of Alaska** recognizes the value of this training and again provided funding assistance for travel expenses. The **State Fire Marshall** was also in attendance as was other representatives from his office. Their involvement as panelists and attendees did not go unnoticed or unappreciated by the firefighters in attendance. The **United States Coast Guard** was involved in all aspects of this year’s symposium from planning to delivery.

This year we had tremendous involvement from many entities and I don't want to leave anyone out as everyone's involvement is necessary for a successful symposium. The following entities have provided invaluable assistance to the success of the 2008 marine firefighting symposium: **Joint Pipeline Office, Sea River, Tesoro, Crowley, SERVS, ADEC and Prince William Sound Community College.**

As mentioned in the opening remarks of the symposium, this symposium is a perfect example of a private/public partnership. The benefit of private\public partnerships was one of the messages that we tried to convey and being able to show that as part of the successful planning of the symposium was helpful in illustrating that point.

This year we had 45 firefighters attend representing 14 fire agencies, the state of Alaska and the USCG. We also had an undetermined number of industry attendee's. Attendance was limited, to some degree, by the amount of financial support available for travel. What was impressive was the effort some firefighters took to be able to attend. Some drove for hours rather than fly to get to the symposium and others roomed 3 to a room in order to minimize the expense. This is a testament to the value the fire service places on this training. With additional financial support we could have increased attendance as more firefighters wanted to attend but could not due to funding.

### **Considerations for Future Symposiums**

In planning the 2008 Marine Firefighting Symposium we looked at the information received from the 2005 symposium, specifically the evaluation from the attendees and the recommendations provided in the final report. It was clear

after the 2005 symposium that we needed to make some small changes as to how much training we could provide in the time allowed. We needed to slow the pace down but still make good use of the time we had. I believe we accomplished that and exceeded every ones expectations. With that being said it is still clear that the attendees feel that more days would be beneficial. When we were planning the 2003 symposium we decided on a 3 day symposium for a number of reasons. We felt at the time that the firefighters would find it difficult to commit to more than 3 days but we found out that this was not the case as the evaluations at that time suggested that we extend the symposium. That was a common suggestion from the attendees of both the 2005 and 2008 symposiums as well. Another reason we initially limited the symposium to 3 days was cost. I'm not sure what can be done to alleviate this obstacle but I need to mention it as we discuss considerations for future symposiums. I did hear some discussions regarding a larger state involvement or perhaps an alternating annual schedule to provide a symposium in Valdez one year followed by a symposium in Juneau the next year. These are all good suggestions and ones that should be further discussed.

The dual tract training provided this year turned out to be very successful and should be considered in some form for future symposiums. This allowed a positive experience for those attending by providing relevant training regardless of the attendee's position and responsibility within their department. We provided something for everyone which was our plan.

### **Recommendations to Participants**

We continue to urge all agencies to seek out partnerships both public and private that will enhance their ability to respond to an incident should one occur



in their jurisdiction. As discussed at the symposium, the best way to succeed in the mitigation of a large scale marine incident is to leverage all available resources and that includes all private resources. The only way this can work is if everyone is included in the planning process and helps to identify the unknowns prior to an incident.

I also recommend that all fire agencies become familiar with the proposed USCG regulations on marine firefighting and salvage. As mentioned at the symposium these regulations are due to be implemented soon and could have an effect on the local fire service if we choose to participate. Remember, there are potential benefits to participating and the only way to know what is best for you is to explore the possibilities. Information on these regulations can be found at [DMS.DOT.GOV](https://www.dms.dot.gov) (docket #3417). If you would like my input on this issue or have a question please contact me at [jeff.johnson@ci.vancouver.wa.us](mailto:jeff.johnson@ci.vancouver.wa.us) and I'll be happy to share what I know.

### **Evaluation Comments**

The following is a sample of the comments received from those who attended. Each attendee was asked to fill out a class evaluation at the conclusion of each of the nine sessions. The evaluations consisted of two parts, a section using the Likert scale of 1-5, 5 being the best and a section that requested written answers to four symposium related questions.

Evaluation information for each session is provided below. I took the first portion and averaged the point totals for each session. For the second portion I've provided a sampling of responses to the questions posed to the attendees.

**Vessel Tour:**

**General Evaluation**

Overall Evaluation = 4.809

Instructor(s) = 4.809

Presentation Effectiveness = 4.857

Course Material = 4.736

Facilities / Environment = 4.761

**Course Program Content**

Identification of objectives and expectations = 4.857

Sequence of Material = 4.761

Quality of Material = 4.857

Time allocated to cover material information = 4.761

**Instructor(s)**

Knowledge of program and/or system theory = 4.761

Presentation of Learning Objectives = 4.761

Response to Questions = 4.850

Provision for Participant Input and Participation = 4.850

**1) What did you like best about the class?**

Good introduction to large ships

Being able to go to so many of the spaces on the ship

Fire control plan

Instructor's wide breadth of knowledge

Networking with instructors and other students

Excellent instructors assigned to each group

The instructors

**2) What specific improvement would you recommend for this program?**

None

More time aboard

No change

**3) Subject areas that you would like to see added or improved upon?**

See more

None

More time

More on suppression systems

Use other ships and exercise

**4) General Comments:**

Excellent tour

Very impressive

Impressed with amount of time spent on vessel

Great

Thanks to Alyeska and Polar Tankers

Do a Program in Juneau

Appreciate this tour  
Speaker was very knowledgeable  
Great training  
Best tour I've been on  
Good to see all the firefighters from different areas

**Shipboard Firefighting Basics:**

**General Evaluation**

Overall Evaluation = 4.695  
Instructor(s) = 4.652  
Presentation Effectiveness = 4.521  
Course Material = 4.478  
Facilities / Environment = 4.565

**Course Program Content**

Identification of objectives and expectations = 4.434  
Sequence of Material = 4.478  
Quality of Material = 4.521  
Time allocated to cover material information = 4.521

**Instructor(s)**

Knowledge of program and/or system theory = 4.739  
Presentation of Learning Objectives = 4.434  
Response to Questions = 4.652  
Provision for Participant Input and Participation = 4.608

**1) What did you like best about the class?**

Very interesting, good info  
Interaction and videos  
Experience  
Easy to follow and understand  
Discussion of GM  
The entire class  
Good info. for large and small vessels  
The way the instructor handled the class  
Clear objectives, good explanations  
Excellent use of video and slides  
Great approach to learning new material

**2) What specific improvement would you recommend for this program?**

Nothing  
More hands on  
Have name tags with affiliation  
Increase pace of class  
More time

**3) Subject areas that you would like to see added or improved upon?**

Everything was very good  
More emphasis on alarm/suppression systems  
Dewatering and stability

Tactics for container ships and barges  
Specific role of responding firefighters to tanker fires

**4) General Comments:**

Very good presentation  
Create e-mail list of attendee's for networking  
Good training  
Excellent presentation  
Great speakers

**Panel Discussion:**

**General Evaluation**

Overall Evaluation = 4.400  
Instructor(s) = 4.400  
Presentation Effectiveness = 4.300  
Course Material = 4.250  
Facilities / Environment = 4.100

**Course Program Content**

Identification of objectives and expectations = 4.300  
Sequence of Material = 4.100  
Quality of Material = 4.200  
Time allocated to cover material information = 4.300

**Instructor(s)**

Knowledge of program and/or system theory = 4.600  
Presentation of Learning Objectives = 4.300  
Response to Questions = 4.500  
Provision for Participant Input and Participation = 4.500

**1) What did you like best about the class?**

Making sure everyone was clear on roles and responsibilities  
Great discussion on "what if" fire scenarios  
To see a plan that the players actually know and seemed to have practiced  
Discussion venue

**2) What specific improvement would you recommend for this program?**

Distribution of the plan to all participants  
Post agenda  
Sound system  
Hand outs with overview of PWS response plan  
Add cruise ship representative to panel

**3) Subject areas that you would like to see added or improved upon?**

More global view of fire protection state wide vs. PWS only

**4) General Comments:**

Great forum for information exchange  
Opened up a lot of ideas for development of similar S.E. effort  
Great discussion, excellent panelists

Great exchange of information

**Fire Plans and Vessel Familiarization:**

**General Evaluation**

Overall Evaluation = 4.583

Instructor(s) = 4.583

Presentation Effectiveness = 4.363

Course Material = 4.333

Facilities / Environment = 4.250

**Course Program Content**

Identification of objectives and expectations = 4.416

Sequence of Material = 4.416

Quality of Material = 4.333

Time allocated to cover material information = 4.250

**Instructor(s)**

Knowledge of program and/or system theory = 4.583

Presentation of Learning Objectives = 4.583

Response to Questions = 4.583

Provision for Participant Input and Participation = 4.500

**1) What did you like best about the class?**

Hands on plans review

Good assortment of plans

Seeing pictures in relation to fire plans

Knowledge of instructor

Extremely informative

Good practice with plans

Simple and well done

Visual aids - relating material to local area

Instructor's attitude

**2) What specific improvement would you recommend for this program?**

More on smaller boats

Target equipment to local department

More time

**3) Subject areas that you would like to see added or improved upon?**

More case histories

**4) General Comments:**

Excellent class

Good pictures of various solutions for onboard firefighting

Great to have several sets of the same plans for multiple groups

Very good overall

Learned a lot for my first marine class

Expand beyond tankers

Great class, great instructor

**Small Boats and Marinas:**

**General Evaluation**

Overall Evaluation = 4.727  
Instructor(s) = 4.727  
Presentation Effectiveness = 4.727  
Course Material = 4.545  
Facilities / Environment = 4.727  
**Course Program Content**  
Identification of objectives and expectations = 4.727  
Sequence of Material = 4.727  
Quality of Material = 4.727  
Time allocated to cover material information = 4.545  
**Instructor(s)**  
Knowledge of program and/or system theory = 4.727  
Presentation of Learning Objectives = 4.727  
Response to Questions = 4.727  
Provision for Participant Input and Participation = 4.636

- 1) **What did you like best about the class?**  
Instructor had experience for all examples  
The instructor  
Visual - good relation to local departments  
Everything, excellent content  
Good information  
Good discussion and learned about tactics  
Great class, opens up your eyes
- 2) **What specific improvement would you recommend for this program?**  
More hands on  
More time
- 3) **Subject areas that you would like to see added or improved upon?**  
Marinas
- 4) **General Comments:**  
Extend symposium to include more hands on  
Need more time  
Awesome class, lots of information  
Great practical application  
Gave us a lot to think about

**Cruise Ship Awareness:**

**General Evaluation**  
Overall Evaluation = 4.666  
Instructor(s) = 4.666  
Presentation Effectiveness = 4.666  
Course Material = 4.466  
Facilities / Environment = 4.466  
**Course Program Content**

Identification of objectives and expectations = 4.600  
Sequence of Material = 4.533  
Quality of Material = 4.466  
Time allocated to cover material information = 4.400  
**Instructor(s)**  
Knowledge of program and/or system theory = 4.666  
Presentation of Learning Objectives = 4.600  
Response to Questions = 4.666  
Provision for Participant Input and Participation = 4.466

**1) What did you like best about the class?**

Instructor  
Video examples and case studies  
Great video  
Excellent faculty  
Very informative  
Great information

**2) What specific improvement would you recommend for this program?**

More time  
Need more time and more specific fire incidents  
Better-detailed illustrations

**3) Subject areas that you would like to see added or improved upon?**

No responses submitted from attendee's

**4) General Comments:**

Great class  
More emphasis on cruise ships with practical exercise  
Instructor had good experience but slides were general and non-specific  
Instructor was very knowledgeable on subject  
Good information  
Thank you

**Tank Farm:**

**General Evaluation**

Overall Evaluation = 4.800  
Instructor(s) = 4.800  
Presentation Effectiveness = 4.700  
Course Material = 4.600  
Facilities / Environment = 4.700

**Course Program Content**

Identification of objectives and expectations = 4.700  
Sequence of Material = 4.600  
Quality of Material = 4.600

Time allocated to cover material information = 4.700

**Instructor(s)**

Knowledge of program and/or system theory = 4.800

Presentation of Learning Objectives = 4.700

Response to Questions = 4.800

Provision for Participant Input and Participation = 4.800

**1) What did you like best about the class?**

Good introduction to tank farms

Brief and to the point

Good overview of tank farm

Learning to fight tank fires

Input

**2) What specific improvement would you recommend for this program?**

More depth, was a quick overview

Less reading off PowerPoint

None

**3) Subject areas that you would like to see added or improved upon?**

None

BLEVE and boil over

**4) General Comments:**

More visuals on actual fire attack

Good presentation

Great class

**Fire Plans and Ships Crew Coordination:**

**General Evaluation**

Overall Evaluation = 4.636

Instructor(s) = 4.545

Presentation Effectiveness = 4.454

Course Material = 4.545

Facilities / Environment = 4.363

**Course Program Content**

Identification of objectives and expectations = 4.454

Sequence of Material = 4.636

Quality of Material = 4.545

Time allocated to cover material information = 4.000

**Instructor(s)**

Knowledge of program and/or system theory = 4.636

Presentation of Learning Objectives = 4.545

Response to Questions = 4.636

Provision for Participant Input and Participation = 4.636

**1) What did you like best about the class?**

Helped me by giving me a different perspective

Hands on with ship plans

Handouts, scenario, working with groups



**2) What specific improvement would you recommend for this program?**

More time  
More hands on

**3) Subject areas that you would like to see added or improved upon?**

More hands on including more ship visits

**4) General Comments:**

Great class  
Very useful information  
Thank you

**Politics of a Marine Incident:**

**General Evaluation**

Overall Evaluation = 4.833  
Instructor(s) = 5.000  
Presentation Effectiveness = 4.666  
Course Material = 4.583  
Facilities / Environment = 4.833

**Course Program Content**

Identification of objectives and expectations = 4.666  
Sequence of Material = 4.833  
Quality of Material = 4.833  
Time allocated to cover material information = 4.166

**Instructor(s)**

Knowledge of program and/or system theory = 4.916  
Presentation of Learning Objectives = 4.750  
Response to Questions = 4.916  
Provision for Participant Input and Participation = 4.916

**1) What did you like best about the class?**

Information  
Insight & info on administrative aspects not normally cover in other classes  
Instructor knowledge was good  
Ability to relate to subject  
Real life experience  
Lessons learned from instructors and participants  
Knowledge of instructor

**2) What specific improvement would you recommend for this program?**

More time, more time, more time  
No change

**3) Subject areas that you would like to see added or improved upon?**

Provide material outline

**4) General Comments:**

Bring symposium to S.E.  
More time to complete subject  
Good section but required more time  
Good discussion but needed more time  
Great training!  
Would like to see symposium extended to 5 days  
Information was very helpful  
Excellent!

**Conclusion**

The 2008 Marine Firefighting Symposium exceeded our expectations and has set the bar even higher. As you can see after reading this final report, and digesting the evaluations provided by those who attended, this symposium was well received and appreciated. Each session and each instructor received high marks and the training will impact those attending and the departments they represent.

As always we listen to the comments made by the firefighters either in passing or on the evaluations and use those comments to help guide us in planning future events. We used the evaluations of previous symposia when planning the 2008 symposium and clearly it paid huge dividends as attested to by the evaluations provided this year. The expectations of those in attendance were clearly met and exceeded.

A common request throughout the symposium was that this training also be delivered in Southeast Alaska. We also heard discussion of including additional sponsors to help broaden the reach of the symposium. We support all ideas that help provide quality training to the fire service and continue our commitment to help expand this opportunity to include a larger audience.

In closing, this has been a productive and positive symposium. It is our hope that the training doesn't end with the symposium. We look to those in attendance to take the lessons learned back to their departments and build on them. We stressed this message at the symposium. As always, the instructors are available to provide assistance and guidance as needed. We have included our e-mail addresses and welcome any questions.

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