

Drill Monitoring Annual Report

2005

Prepared By: Roy Robertson

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Date	Report Number	Drill Description – Author
2/23	752.431.050228	Open Water, Free Oil, and Nearshore Exercise in Port Valdez – Dan Gilson
3/16	752.431.050316	Eleanor Island/Northwest Bay Operational Readiness Exercise – Roy Robertson
5/5	752.431.050505	SERVS 2005 Spring Fishing Vessel Training Program – Roy Robertson
5/10	752.431.050510	Valdez Marine Terminal Scenario 3 Drill – Roy Robertson
5/13	752.431.050513	Current Buster and Boom Vane Exercise – Roy Robertson
5/20	752.431.050520	OVERSEAS NEW YORK Towing Exercise – Tony Parkin
6/8	752.431.050608	ConocoPhillips Response Activation and Support Tabletop Drill – Roy Robertson
6/16	752.431.050616	Port Valdez TransRec Skimmer Exercise – Roy Robertson
6/30	752.431.050630	Gold Creek Onshore Exercise – Roy Robertson
7/20	752.431.050720	S/R BAYTOWN Emergency Towing Exercise – Rhonda Williams
8/12	752.431.050812	No-Notice KRYSTAL SEA Call-Out Drill – Roy Robertson
8/23	752.431.050823	No-Notice Seal Rocks Open Water Deployment Drill – Roy Robertson
9/13	752.431.050913	Port Valdez Dispersant Exercise – Roy Robertson
10/4	752.431.050904	SERVS Fall 2005 Fishing Vessel Training Program – Roy Robertson
10/19	752.431.050904	Valdez Marine Terminal Equipment Deployment Drill – Roy Robertson
11/9	752.431.051109	Valdez Marine Terminal Scenario 5 Drill – Roy Robertson
12/8	752.431.051208	Port Valdez/Gold Creek Nearshore Exercise – Dan Gilson
12/13	752.431.051213	Cordova Nearshore Exercise – Roy Robertson

2005 Drill Summary

Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council (PWSRCAC) transitioned from contracting the drill monitoring activities to hiring a staff person to perform those duties in 2005. There were sixteen drills and exercises in 2005 that PWSRCAC staff observed and evaluated. In addition to the drills and exercises, the PWSRCAC staff also participated in and evaluated SERVS' 2005 spring and fall fishing vessel trainings. All of these reports fall into the categories described below.

Tanker Towing Exercises

SERVS normally conducts four tanker-towing exercises per year. These towing exercises are usually divided between the four shippers (SeaRiver, Polar Tankers, Alaska Tanker Company, and Seabulk) calling on the Valdez Marine Terminal. The PWSRCAC staff observed two of these exercises in 2005. Both exercises went well and no significant problems were noted. However, none of the exercises observed were conducted during any type of adverse weather conditions.

Open Water Response Exercises

In 2005, PWSRCAC staff attended four open water exercises that involved the SERVS TransRec Barges. The most significant exercise was a semi-no-notice drill conducted on August 23 requiring three of the four TransRec barges to travel to Seal Rocks. Many of the objectives of this exercise were not accomplished due to the weather conditions.

The Seal Rocks drill provided an opportunity to look at a response in weather consistent to the Realistic Maximum Response Operating Limits (RMROL). Most of the barges and all of the fishing vessels were turned around before reaching the spill scene. One key issue identified during this drill was the inability of the tugs and barges to safely launch their workboats in marginal or adverse weather. SERVS and the Response Planning Group (RPG) have been working on this workboat issue since the exercise. SERVS has implemented two programs to address the workboat issue for the short-term. The first program was to establish a one-hour response fleet of twelve bowpickers in Cordova.

SERVS must have four vessels to meet their initial operational requirements for the open water task forces. In addition to the fishing vessels, SERVS has also set up four of its workboats in the Port of Valdez to run out to work with the open water barges in the event the fishing vessels are not available.

Nearshore Response Exercises

Nearshore exercises have been a focus of SERVS during 2005. Many of these nearshore exercises were used to work on nearshore response tactics that were being discussed by the Nearshore Tactics Workgroup. The Nearshore Tactics Workgroup was established to look at the nearshore tactics of the Prince William Sound Tanker Contingency Plan. This workgroup included members of the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC), SERVS, RPG, and PWSRCAC. Newer technologies such as the Current Busters and Boom Vanes were being tested to see if they were going to be included in the

proposed amendment of the Nearshore Response Section of the Prince William Sound Tanker Contingency Plan. A shift from the standard “U” recovery formation to a “U/J” oil recovery formation was also being tested.

These exercises have demonstrated the fishing vessels need more training to become proficient in the deployment of the “U/J” oil recovery formations and that the boom vanes will be difficult to use effectively with the Current Busters.

Another focus of the nearshore exercises is the use of fishing vessel captains as Task Force and Strike Team Leaders. On June 8, 2005, ConocoPhillips sponsored a “Carpet Top” exercise that focused on nearshore task forces and Task Force Leaders. Two fishing vessel captains participated in this exercise and were assigned to lead two of the five nearshore task forces. SERVS has continued to assign fishing vessel captains to fill the role of Task Force and Strike Team Leaders during most of their field exercises. The fishing vessel captains have proven very capable of performing this role.

The landing craft KRYSTAL SEA, which was used as part of the nearshore Task Force 5, was replaced by the tug and barge combination of KRYSTAL SEA and CORDOVA PROVIDER. The new KRYSTAL SEA and barge are not dedicated to SERVS but are available to be released to SERVS within 12 hours. ADEC tested this short notice callout with an unannounced drill on August 12, 2005. The new KRYSTAL SEA was going into Whittier at the time of callout to offload shipping containers. Once the containers were offloaded, the tug and barge would be released within 6 hours to SERVS and could have been in Valdez within 15 hours of the callout.

Valdez Marine Terminal Drills

The Valdez Marine Terminal (VMT) conducted three exercises that were observed by PWSRCAC during 2005. The two tabletop drills were designed around the waste management plan for the Scenario 5 spill response from the VMT Spill Contingency Plan. The waste management section of the VMT contingency plan was revised through a workgroup process in 2004 and 2005.

Alyeska demonstrated their ability to transfer recovered liquids from the Fluor Dock to Berth 3 using one Desmi 250 pump and 4,000 feet of 6-inch pipe during the November 9 exercise. This was the first time this tactic was demonstrated in the field and Alyeska has purchase the piping and has it stored at the terminal.

Other Exercises

There were several exercises that do not fit into the categories above. These drills include an aerial and vessel dispersant exercise, an on-shore exercise in the Port of Valdez, and an exercise to test the use of Boom Vanes with Current Busters.

SERVS Fishing Vessel Training

SERVS, TCC and OSHA have combined to develop a 24-hour marine HAZWOPER training program that focuses on marine oil spill response. SERVS conducted these three-day spring fishing vessel training programs in Kodiak, Homer, Seward, Cordova,

Whittier, Chenega, and Valdez in 2005. SERVS also held a fall fishing vessel training in Cordova. More than 350 vessels and over 1,000 spill responders were trained by SERVS in 2005.

Focus of Future Drills and Exercises

There are several areas that need to be tracked in 2006. The following issues need to be addressed and tested because the Prince William Sound Tanker Contingency Plan must be resubmitted in 2007 and VMT Contingency Plan is up for review in 2008.

Initial Open Water Response

The Seal Rocks exercise in August 2005 pointed out that the workboats aboard the tugs and barges could not be safely launched during marginal weather conditions. SERVS and the RPG have addressed this problem by establishing a one-hour initial response fleet of bowpickers out of Cordova. SERVS has also set up four of its workboats in Valdez to act as backups to the system during the salmon fishing season. Both of these systems must be tested while the RPG and SERVS decide on a long-term solution for this issue.

Nearshore Tactics

The RPG is proposing to change the nearshore response tactics to incorporate some newer technologies (Current Buster and Boom Vanes) and reduce the number of fishing vessels necessary to initially deploy a nearshore task force. One of the main ways to reduce the number of needed fishing vessels in each task force is to switch to using a “U/J” oil recovery formation. The “U/J” tactic can be harder to control and requires the skimming vessel to perform many operations at one time. If this tactic is going to be effectively demonstrated and deployed the fishing vessel training will have to be increased to allow the fishermen to adjust to this type of operation.

Boom Vanes

The use of Boom Vanes has not proved to be consistently effective when used in conjunction with the Current Busters. The Boom Vanes are similar to kite that can be maneuvered in the water when enough current present. The Boom Vanes work very well in rivers but have demonstrated that they are difficult to rig and maneuver when being towed by a vessel. A lot more testing and work needs to be done before this piece of equipment is ready to be relied on as part of the nearshore task forces.

Fishing Vessel Training

As the fishing vessels and crews are asked to perform more roles each year, the training must keep up for them to be successful. The amount of training opportunities needs to be increased.

SERVS has come to rely on the fishing vessel captains to fill the roles of Task Force Leaders (TFL) and Strike Team Leaders (STL) with very little specific training to help them learn the responsibilities of these roles. Spending part of the day acting as a TFL

does not prepare them for all of the responsibilities required to perform this role during a response.

Additional exercises need to be conducted to allow the fishing vessels to become proficient in operating in a “U/J” oil recovery formation. SERVS also needs to determine which vessels can be use to deploy this tactic and which vessels should be assigned other tasks.

Tier III Fishing Vessel Program

SERVS has been working with the Prince William Sound Community College to develop its Tier III Fishing Vessel Program. This is the method that SERVS will use to train and contract with vessels of opportunity during a spill response. Instructors are being identified to deliver training to the crews of the vessels of opportunity. A drill should be conducted to test SERVS’ ability to identify available vessels and deliver quality training in the communities that SERVS will be recruiting additional vessels.

VMT Incident Command Organization and Training

The focus of the 2005 VMT drills was to test the waste management plan developed through a workgroup process. A similar workgroup process was used to develop a training tracking system to ensure that Alyeska has properly trained and qualified personnel identified to fill all of the response positions in its incident command organization. The training and tracking of personnel qualifications will be tested in 2006.

Tanker-Towing Exercises

The tanker-towing exercises are generally all scheduled during the summer’s fair weather months. While it is understandable that SERVS and the shipping companies want to avoid conducting adverse weather drills unless there is a specific need to do so, PWSRCAC staff would like to see the drills be conducted quarterly. Quarterly exercises would allow a test of the escort system in all conditions found in Prince William Sound.

Major Drills Planned for 2006

Valdez Marine Terminal

The Valdez Marine Terminal (VMT) has two drills schedule for 2006. Both are based on the Worst Case Scenario 5. The summer drill will focus on the tracking of training and qualification of the personnel to fill out the incident command organization. The fall drill for the VMT will focus on setting up and managing the staging area at the terminal.

SeaRiver Maritime Drill

SeaRiver Maritime will be conducting a two-day drill and a debriefing the following day during September 26 to 28, 2006. This exercise was postponed in 2005 due to the hurricanes along the Gulf Coast. This drill will focus on the transition of the response

organization from SERVS to SeaRiver management and the “strategic” use of dispersants.

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