# REGIONAL RESPONSE TEAM III (RRT3)

Environmental Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Oil Spill Response in Regional Response Team 3 (RRT3) Coastal Zone

BMPs for Oil Spill Response

# Appendix 9-A6

December 2023.1

# RECORD OF CHANGES

The Regional Response Team III (RRT3) Executive Committee approved the RRT3 Environmental Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Coastal Zone Oil Spill Response on December 6, 2023. Maintenance of this plan is the responsibility of the RRT3 Consultation, Natural Resources, and Damage Assessment (CNRDA) Workgroup. Minor changes may be made periodically, and an update and review will be conducted at least once per year, at a minimum, to validate points of contact. The most current version of the plan will be posted on the RRT3 Website under the Regional Contingency Plan (RCP) Appendix 9 and the USCG District 5 District Response Advisory Team (D5 DRAT) Sharepoint site.

**DECEMBER 2023 EDITION**

| Change Number | Date of Change/Review | Person & Agency Making Change | Description of Change/Update |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2023.1 | 09JAN2024 | Elisha Cook, USCG | Updated Tri-State Bird Rescue to 24/7 contact info. |
| 2023.2 | | | |
| 2023.3 | | | |
| 2023.4 | | | |
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# USE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL BMPS FOR OIL SPILL RESPONSE IN THE COASTAL ZONE

Regional Response Team III (RRT3) is committed to implementing measures to reduce and avoid potential impacts on federally listed and managed species, designated critical habitat, Essential Fish Habitat (EFH), and cultural/historical resources. The RRT3 has compiled the following collection of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to avoid and/or minimize impacts to trust resources under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), to serve as recommendations under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7 consultation regulations to avoid and minimize effects to endangered and threatened species and critical habitat, to minimize and avoid adverse effects on identified categories of EFH under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), and to avoid and minimize effects to cultural and historic resources under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106.

## Background and Purpose

**The purpose of this document is to provide recommendations and guidance to the Federal On-Scene Coordinator (FOSC) to avoid and minimize impact to fish, wildlife, and cultural/historic resources during a response to an oil spill.**

All BMPs are provided as recommendations and guidance, developed in coordination with Department of Commerce National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and U.S. Department of the Interior's (DOI) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), to avoid and minimize impact to fish and wildlife resources during a response to an oil spill. These agencies are referred to as "the Services." State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) input for cultural/historic resource considerations during oil spill response operations is also included within this guidance document.

This document is not intended to cover all possible scenarios or every individual species. The BMPs provided in this document are general in nature for oil spill response actions and enable the FOSC to quickly implement BMPs for response actions at the onset of a response. Due to area, environmental, and situational differences amongst potential operation areas, the RRT3 maintains this list of BMPs as an appendix to the Regional Contingency Plan and will update and revise the list as additional BMPs are developed, and/or updated information becomes available regarding the effectiveness and feasibility of implementing the BMPs. Incident specific BMPs may need to be developed to account for incident specific variances based on spilled products, species or location specific concerns, and types of response actions utilized and/or considered.

### Direction to USCG Fifth District Units

The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Fifth District units will take these BMPs into consideration when carrying out oil spill response operations. This guidance will be used to cover oil spill and/or hazardous substance response actions within the Fifth Coast Guard District coastal zone, which includes Delaware, District of Colombia, Maryland, portions of New Jersey, North Carolina, portions of Pennsylvania, and Virginia.

The regional NOAA SSC and/or DOI Regional Environmental Officer **shall** be informed whenever the FOSC engages in emergency consultation with the Services. The SHPO **shall** be notified for NHPA consultations.

U. S. Coast Guard (USCG) District Incident Management and Preparedness Advisors (IMPAs) and District Response Advisory Teams (DRATs) are excellent resources to consult with regarding application of BMPs.

The USCG IMPA and DRAT are available 24/7 via District Command Centers.

**Note:** *This is a guidance document only. Units are encouraged to suggest modifications to this document to the RRT3's Consultation, Natural Resources, and Damage Assessment (CNRDA) Workgroup.*

# ENVIRONMENTAL BMPS FOR COASTAL OIL SPILL RESPONSE

## General Response Operations

☐ Response personnel may not attempt to scare, herd, disturb, or harass any protected species to encourage them to leave the area. Coordination with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Scientific Support Coordinator (SSC), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and/or National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Stranding Coordinator, or appointed point of contact, may result in authorization for these actions.

☐ Report stranded, injured, sick, trapped, entangled, or dead wildlife to the Incident Commander (IC) and Environmental Unit as soon as possible to ensure appropriate agency notifications are made. *Utilize the 'USFWS Wildlife Spill Response Survey' within the Survey123 app if available and being utilized for incident* ArcGIS Survey123 Downloads (esri.com)*.The USFWS species are preloaded into the Wildlife Spill Response Survey, however any species including NMFS species can be recorded in the app.*

☐ If a sea turtle is stranded, injured, or sick, and actively moving, it should be retained onboard a vessel or if on land, responders should remain with the turtle until the stranding/rehabilitation personnel provide guidance on what action should be taken, which could include transferring the turtle to a designated stranding/rehabilitation facility.

☐ If a sea turtle is stranded, injured, or sick but unresponsive (doesn't move its head or flippers when handled), you should follow the handling and resuscitation guidelines after you have called the NOAA hotline at 866-755-NOAA (6622). Do not assume that an inactive turtle is dead. The onset of rigor mortis and/or rotting flesh are often the only definite indications that a turtle is dead. Releasing an unresponsive turtle into any amount of water may drown it. Unresponsive sea turtles may recover following resuscitation.

- For your and the turtle's safety, always pick it up by the shell and keep your hands away from the head. Sea turtles have been known to revive up to 24 hours after resuscitation procedures have been followed. In accordance with Sea Turtle Resuscitation Regulations (50 CFR 223.206(d)(1)), steps for resuscitation can be found at https://media.fisheries.noaa.gov/dam-migration/sea_turtle_handling_and_resuscitation_measures.pdf.

☐ Handling live sturgeon should be minimized and used only when necessary. Sturgeon should be supported by a sling or net when being moved. Live sturgeon must never be held vertically by the tail or gills and should never be tied by the tail. Sturgeon should be kept in water to the maximum extent possible to reduce stress.

- For a non-responsive or overly stressed sturgeon, personnel must allow the animal to recover in floating net pens or in well-aerated onboard live tanks and shielded from direct sunlight. Alternatively, the sturgeon may be immersed in clean river water and moved back and forth to aid water passage over the gills.
- The sturgeon should be released as soon as possible when it has recovered. At water temperatures <7°C (44°F) and >27°C (80°F), holding time of a recovered sturgeon must not be greater than 30 minutes. A spotter should watch the fish as it is released making sure it stays submerged and does not need additional recovery immediately after release.
- Sturgeon are extremely sensitive to chlorine and other sanitizing solutions. Use care when using any of these products around sturgeon.

☐ If any impacted sea turtle, sturgeon, or marine mammal (or their parts) are observed, NMFS should be contacted for collection protocols. If a Wildlife Branch is stood up, coordination for response and collection should be communicated through the NMFS representative in the Wildlife Branch. NMFS may authorize collection by spill response personnel if species specific responders are not available (and delegation authority is allowed under the appropriate permit) and will provide instructions on proper handling and disposition. For impacted marine mammals and sea turtles, call the NMFS Regional Marine Animal Hotline: 866-755-NOAA (6622), Option zero to speak with NMFS staff. For sturgeon, reports should be made to NMFS Protected Resources Division by phone (978-281-9328) and e-mail (nmfs.gar-sturgeon-salvage@noaa.gov) as soon as possible.

- Do not dispose of any federal trust resource marine mammal or turtle parts until examination and documentation is conducted. Disposal will not take place until federal trustees (NOAA/USFWS) give final approval.
- Wildlife operations present some unique challenges to evidence handling requirements that often must be resolved early in response. Important data and samples are collected during oil spill response that ultimately may be used to assess exposure of species to oil and injuries resulting from that exposure. This information and material ultimately may be used for legal purposes including both criminal and civil proceedings. The potential for litigation associated with an oil spill requires specific measures when collecting, handling, and transferring samples and data. Coordinate with federal trustees (NOAA General Counsel's Office and the DOI Office of the Solicitor) to ensure chain of custody (CoC) protocols are followed. The CoC record should include the names of sample collectors, sample identification numbers, date and time of sample collection, location of sample collection, and names and signatures of all persons handling the sample in the field and in the laboratory. The documents provided below provide chain of custody information:
    - Guidelines for Oil Spill Response and Natural Resource Damage Assessment: Sea Turtles at https://media.fisheries.noaa.gov/dam-migration/opr-61_final.pdf.
    - NOAA Pinniped and Cetacean Oil Spill Response Guidelines at https://repository.library.noaa.gov/view/noaa/10479.
    - Additional chain of custody forms for other NOAA resources can be found at https://www.diver.orr.noaa.gov/field-forms-and-templates.

☐ Human Safety Considerations:

- Prior planning, training, and protective equipment should be provided for responders that may need to engage directly with marine mammals.
- Zoonotic pathogens are another risk of handling marine mammals.
- Safety perimeters around pinniped colonies should be established.

## Vessel Operations

☐ All response vessel operators and crew must watch for and avoid collision with species protected under the ESA and MMPA (sea turtles, manatees, seals, dolphins, whales, Atlantic and short-nose sturgeon). The Environmental Unit can provide an updated list of protected species in the response area. When available a dedicated wildlife observer should be assigned for each response area.

☐ All response vessels shall maintain minimum distances specified below for specific species:

- 1,500-ft distance (500 yards) from North Atlantic right whale.
- 300-ft, as practicable, from all other marine mammals (i.e., dolphins, other whales, seals/pinnipeds, and porpoises):
  - Seal colonies will likely flush (i.e., move away from) from haul outs into the water at greater distances than 300-ft. Consideration should be given to the potential presence of pups on haul outs in certain seasons. A biologist associated with an authorized marine mammal stranding response program experienced in marine mammal/protected species identification should be onboard to advise location of boom deployment distances when possible.
- 300-ft from waterfowl /seabird aggregation sites. Large numbers of sea birds and waterfowl winter in coastal waters bays and tributaries, with flocks of up to 5,000 individuals. Boat operations must maintain a minimum distance from waterfowl / sea bird aggregation sites.
- 150-ft from sea turtles.
- 50-ft from manatees (rare in RRT3). All in-water operations, including vessels, must be shut down if a manatee comes within 50 ft of the operation. Activities will not resume until the manatee(s) has moved beyond the 50-ft radius of the project operation, or until 30 minutes elapses if the manatee(s) has not reappeared within 50 ft of the operation. All on-site project personnel are responsible for observing water-related activities for the presence of manatees. Animals must not be herded away or harassed into leaving.
- 100-ft from all other protected species not already listed above. Stop operating mechanical equipment, including response vessels, immediately if any protected species is observed within a 100-ft radius and resume after the species has departed the area of its own volition.

☐ All response vessels should:

- If marine mammals, sea turtles, or bird colonies are observed within the response area, report to Environmental unit via Wildlife Hotline and/or USFWS Wildlife Spill Response Survey in Survey123 (if established). If Environmental Unit is not yet established, report to the Operations Section. If there is the potential for damage to marine resources, it is recommended that an Environmental Unit be established. Reports should be submitted by the end of the current operational period.
- When sea turtles, dolphins, or whales are sighted while the vessel is underway (e.g., bow-riding), attempt to remain parallel to the animal's course. Avoid excessive speed or abrupt changes in direction until they have left the area.
- Report if a whale is observed within the envelope of the NOAA spill trajectory for the next 48 hours.

- Any vessel collisions with and/or injury or impacts to any protected species (sea turtles, manatees, dolphins, whales, etc.) shall be reported to the Wildlife Hotline immediately. Likewise, report any stranded, injured, trapped, entangled, or dead protected species to the Wildlife Hotline as soon as possible for further guidance on what action should be taken.
- Mariners shall check various communication media for general information regarding avoiding ship strikes and specific information regarding North Atlantic right whale sightings in the area.
  - Vessels 65 ft in length or longer must comply with the Right Whale Ship Strike Reduction Rule (50 CFR 224.105), which includes reducing speeds to 10 knots or less in Seasonal Management Areas.
    - Reduce speed to 10 knots or less when a right whale sighting is reported, mother/calf pairs, or groups of marine mammals are observed, when safety permits.
    - Secure all materials on vessels to prevent inadvertent loss overboard.

☐ All response vessels will follow marked channels and/or routes using the maximum water depth whenever possible.

☐ All response vessels shall operate at "Idle Speed/No Wake" at all times while in water depths where the draft of the vessel provides less than a 4-ft clearance from the bottom, and after a protected species has been observed in and has departed the area or adjacent to sensitive/environmentally important shorelines.

☐ Avoid vessel grounding, prop and bow/keel/skeg scarring, and prop washing in tidal marsh, seagrass, oyster reef habitats, and archaeological sites or other historic properties.

☐ Avoid/minimize anchoring and spudding on tidal marsh, seagrass, and oyster reef habitats; anchor and spud on bare sand and mud bottoms, while avoiding archaeological sites or other historic properties. As soon as practically possible, consult with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) to determine proximity of archeological/historic sites and specific best management practices for those areas.

☐ Avoid/minimize shading of seagrasses with large vessels and barges for more than a few days; move large vessels and barges from over seagrasses onto bare sand or mud substrates when not undergoing active operations (such as in barge staging areas).

☐ Where equipment or crews must gain access across tidal marsh, seagrass, or oyster habitats, use shallow draft vessels to minimize disturbance, as applicable.

☐ Identify pinniped colonies in the response area as soon as possible and avoid disrupting the group as much as can be reasonably achieved. A response vessel should have a biologist experienced in marine mammal/protected species identification to observe and direct the response team to minimize impacts to groups of seals.

☐ If manatees are present, all water-based work and vessel operations must be in accordance with USFWS Standard Manatee Conditions for In-Water Activities (fws.gov). All response personnel shall be instructed about the presence of manatees and the need to avoid collisions with and injury to manatees. Advise all response personnel that there are civil and criminal penalties for harming, harassing, or killing manatees. Notify USFWS if manatees are observed.

## On-water Mechanical Operations

*(On-water Containment, Recovery, Protection)*

☐ A biologist experienced in marine mammal/protected species identification or dedicated crew member is required for all skimming, booming, burning, and dispersant operations, with responsibility for avoiding marine mammals, sea turtles, birds, and reporting distressed or deceased animals.

☐ Stop operating mechanical equipment, including response vessels, immediately if a protected species is observed within a 50-ft radius and resume after the species has departed the area of its own volition.

☐ Entanglement:

- All in-water equipment (including hard and sorbent booms) must be properly secured with materials that reduce the risk of entanglement of marine species. Booms, lines, and other equipment must be made of materials that reduce the risk of entanglement of marine species. Keep all in-water lines (rope, chain and cable, including the lines to secure boom, buoys, anchors, etc.) stiff, taut, and non-looping. Floating line should be used as appropriate.
- Where feasible, the use of equipment with breakaway capabilities is advised to prevent or minimize the risk of entanglement of marine species.
- The Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network (STSSN) should be contacted if sea turtles are entangled or entrapped during offshore operations.

☐ Entrapment:

- In-water equipment (including hard and sorbent boom) must be placed in a manner that does not entrap species within the work area or block access for them to navigate around the work area.
- If protected species become entrapped in an enclosed area, notify NMFS immediately. If observers note entrapped animals are visually disturbed, stressed, or their health is compromised, then activities may cease so the animal can either leave on its own or be moved under the direction of NMFS.
- The Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network (STSSN) should be contacted if sea turtles are entangled or entrapped during offshore operations.

## On-water Chemical Countermeasures

*(Dispersants, Solidifiers, Herding Agents, Elasticity Modifiers)*

☐ A biologist experienced in marine mammal/protected species identification or dedicated crew member is required for all skimming, booming, burning, and dispersant operations, with responsibility for avoiding marine mammals, sea turtles, birds, and reporting distressed or deceased animals.

☐ Where approved, dispersants should not be used within a 3-nautical mile radius of marine mammal species (e.g., whales, dolphins, seals, sealions, and manatees). The radius should increase to 10-nautical miles if North Atlantic right whales are observed in the area.

☐ Where approved, avoid dispersant applications near bird concentration areas and minimize bird exposure from wind drift of applied dispersant.

## Other Countermeasures

*(In-situ Burn, Bioremediation)*

- ☐ A biologist experienced in marine mammal/protected species identification or dedicated crew member is required for all skimming, booming, burning, and dispersant operations, with responsibility for avoiding marine mammals, sea turtles, birds, and reporting distressed or deceased animals.
- ☐ Watch for and avoid marine mammals while operating vessels or aircraft involved directly or in support of in-situ burn operations. Marine species observers on the ignition vessel will monitor 3 areas prior to the burn (the area in front of the tow boats, oil concentrated in the boom, and any oil trailing behind the boom). A survey should be conducted in the burn area after the burn is complete and any distressed or dead marine mammals should be counted and reported to the Environmental Unit immediately.
- ☐ Avoid burning near bird concentration areas and minimize bird exposure from wind drift of smoke.
- ☐ Avoid burning near archaeological sites or other historic properties, particularly when these are not completely submerged.

## Aircraft Operations

*(Airplanes, Helicopters, Drones/Unmanned Aircraft Systems)*

☐ Prior to operating Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) coordinate with respective land managers to get specific UAS limitations.

☐ UAS flights should be limited to 100 feet above ground level (AGL) above resting birds on land or water (i.e., not in flight). Rotary aircraft should limit elevations to 300-400 feet AGL. If hazing/disturbances occur, increase altitude and report adjusted height to the Environmental Unit.

☐ Fixed-wing aircraft should follow NOAA marine mammal aerial survey protocols for speed (100 mph preferred), height (1000 feet AGL), and dwell time and for aircraft choice.

- For flyovers for identifying animals in the area are best done from aircraft that can fly low and slow and remain in an area for an extended period.

☐ Aircraft must stay >1,000 feet above bird nesting and aggregation sites and limit repetitive passes to minimize disturbance.

☐ Where deemed applicable, wildlife observers may be deployed on aircraft to report and record sightings of ESA species and/or other wildlife.

## Vehicle Operations

*(All-Terrain Vehicles, Automobiles/Trucks Heavy Equipment)*

- ☐ Prior to vehicle operations, a biologist experienced in shorebird species identification is required to evaluate beaches for use by shorebirds (nesting, fledgling) each day.
- ☐ Prior to vehicle operations, the SHPO and THPO (if applicable) should be consulted to avoid disturbance of archaeological sites or other historic properties.
- ☐ Generally, preference is given to operations during daytime periods to minimize impacts to sea turtles and nesting shorebirds. Prior to any nighttime operations, it is highly recommended to consult with the Services for guidance.
- ☐ Utilize a lightweight vehicle with low tire pressure (10 psi), such as an All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) or Mule whenever possible to reduce sand compaction and/or rutting.
- ☐ Utilize the same trackline for vehicle operations to minimize disturbance to multiple areas.
- ☐ Power wash vehicles prior to operating on beach areas to prevent spread of invasive species (e.g., Asian sand sedge).
- ☐ Enter the beach only at designated access points and proceed directly to the hard-packed sand near or below the high tide line. Stay below the tide line when driving if no oil is present and it is safe to do so.
- ☐ Do not drive in dune habitat.
- ☐ Avoid driving over the wrack line or areas of dense sargassum (otherwise known as seaweed), which may contain sea turtle hatchlings or newly hatched birds.
- ☐ Do not enter posted sea turtle or shorebird nest sites and minimize time spent around these sites. Most of these will be marked with posts and signs, but not all.
- ☐ Drive slowly. Travel should be slow enough to observe any bird eggs, chicks, or sea turtle hatchlings in the vehicle's line of travel. Be aware that bird chicks often feed along the water's edge. They may freeze in place rather than run away when ATVs or other vehicles approach.
- ☐ Check under and around vehicles and heavy equipment parked in shoreline areas before they are moved. Shorebirds (piping plover and red knot) are especially vulnerable when they are roosting at night, and extra care should be taken at these times. However, by this time of year, it is likely that these two federally threatened shorebird species have departed the area.

## Shoreline Response Operations

*(Protection/Containment: Pre-impact Debris Removal, Deflection/Protection Boom, Barriers/Berms, Flooding; Shoreline Treatment / Cleanup: Natural Recovery, Washing/Flushing, Physical Removal, Vegetation Cutting/Removal, Vacuum)*

- ☐ In shallow nearshore areas with sensitive habitats, consider land-side access from roads, bulkheads, or other developed areas for operations.
- ☐ Avoid and minimize response disturbance to sensitive shoreline habitats and in particularly sand dunes and wetlands. Of particular concern are areas with Federally listed species in dune habitats such as tiger beetle, seabeach amaranth, and nesting birds. Contact the Environmental Unit to identify updated locations with these listed species in dune habitats.
- ☐ Where equipment or crews must access areas across tidal marsh, seagrass, or oyster habitats, use shallow draft vessels or specialized equipment with low pressure/flotation tires, equipment mats, walk boards, or other comparable methods to minimize disturbance, as applicable.
- ☐ Keeping clean wrack in general proximity is ideal, but it is not necessary to move it a substantial distance and back—use reasonable judgment.
- ☐ Following response work on beaches, return the beach to its original profile at the end of each day.
- ☐ Do not enter sites where birds are nesting or roosting and maintain a buffer of at least 300 ft from these sites. If birds are flushed, move away from the area, and observe a larger buffer distance to avoid and minimize disturbance.
- ☐ When working in or near bird migratory/wintering areas, work crews should be limited to the minimum number of personnel and equipment required to complete response activities in an efficient time frame and as is feasible to minimize disturbance.
- ☐ Be aware of the potential for sea turtle nesting activity if any operations are planned on Atlantic Ocean-facing sand beaches. Nests, eggs, and hatchlings may be present from May through November.
- ☐ Adult sea turtles, crawls, nests, eggs, hatchlings, and critical habitat should be protected during response activities on sea turtle nesting beaches, including hatchling turtles as they emerge from the nest and crawl to the sea. If a sea turtle nest is inadvertently excavated during assessment or response activities, all work shall cease in that area immediately and the Environmental Unit should be contacted.
- ☐ Upon locating any dead, injured, or sick sea turtle, birds, or marine mammals, or if eggs or nests are disturbed during response activity, initial notification must be made to the Environmental Unit as soon as possible. The Environmental Unit will make further notifications to the appropriate agency contacts.
- ☐ Contact the Unified/Incident Command (UC/IC) and Environmental Unit prior to conducting any response efforts that require substantial ground disturbance as additional SHPO coordination may be required. Federally recognized tribes with interest in the area and the THPO may be contacted if applicable.
- ☐ Cease all activities involving subsurface disturbance and immediately contact the UC/IC and Environmental Unit if prehistoric/historic artifacts, such as pottery or ceramics, projectile points, dugout canoes, metal implements, historic building materials, or any other physical remains that could be associated with Native American, early European, or American settlement are encountered at any time (and leave all artifacts in place). The SHPO and/or THPO must be notified. Response activities

shall not resume without verbal and/or written authorization from the UC/IC in consultation with the designated Historic Preservation Specialist (HPS) and document decisions; if there is no designated HPS then the UC/IC should receive guidance from the SHPO and/or THPO. If unmarked human remains are encountered during response activities, stop all work immediately and report to the UC/IC and Environmental Unit through your chain of command.

## Staging Areas / Support Facilities

☐ Equipment and material staging areas must be located outside of areas of natural/native vegetation and known endangered species habitats, including federally threatened plant(s) that may be present in dunes. Areas proposed for equipment and material staging should be determined in consultation with the SHPO and/or THPO to avoid disturbance of archaeological sites or other historic properties. Contact the Environmental Unit (if established) for assistance.

☐ Use existing beach access areas and trails only.

☐ All trash resulting from the response should be removed from the area as appropriate or disposed of properly in covered wildlife-proof trash receptacles.

## Waste Management

☐ All trash resulting from the response should be removed from the area as appropriate or disposed of properly in covered wildlife-proof trash receptacles.

## Grounded or Displaced Vessel Response/Removal Operations

- ☐ Avoid and minimize response disturbance to sensitive benthic and shoreline habitats including tidal marshes, oyster reefs, seagrasses, sand beaches, and dunes.
- ☐ Contact the Environmental Unit prior to conducting any response efforts that require significant ground disturbance as U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and/or State permits may be required. Additionally, substantial ground disturbance beyond the initial disturbance caused by the grounding may require additional SHPO coordination for historic sites and/or THPO for tribal coordination.
- ☐ Contact the Environmental Unit if significant sediment disturbance is anticipated, as further coordination with USACE may be required.
- ☐ Contact the Environmental Unit if filling of wetlands or surface waters or dredging that creates or expands surface waters is anticipated, as emergency permitting from State Agencies may be required.
- ☐ Turbidity control measures may be implemented if significant turbidity increases are expected during response actions. Such control measures include:
    - Install floating turbidity barriers with weighted skirts that extend to within 1-ft of the bottom around all work areas that are in, or adjacent to, surface waters, if heavy turbidity is expected.
    - Use these turbidity barriers throughout vessel removal to control erosion and siltation and ensure that turbidity levels within the project area do not exceed background conditions (i.e., the normal water quality levels from natural turbidity).
    - Position turbidity barriers in a way that does not block species entry to or exit from designated critical habitat.
    - Monitor and maintain turbidity barriers in place until the authorized work has been completed and the water quality in the project area has returned to background conditions.
- ☐ Avoid response vessel grounding, prop and bow/keel/skeg scarring, and prop washing in tidal marsh, seagrass, oyster reef habitats, and archaeological sites or other historic properties.
- ☐ Avoid/minimize anchoring and spudding on tidal marsh, seagrass, and oyster reef habitats; anchor and spud on bare sand and mud bottoms, while avoiding archaeological sites or other historic properties. Consult with the SHPO and/or THPO to determine proximity of archeological/historic sites.
- ☐ If spudding on seagrasses cannot be avoided, fill spud holes to grade with clean sand, as feasible, to minimize impacts. Consult the Environmental Unit for any remediation requirements.
- ☐ Avoid/minimize shading of seagrasses with large vessels and barges for more than a few days; move large vessels and barges from over seagrasses onto bare sand or mud substrates when not undergoing active operations (such as in barge staging areas).
- ☐ Prior to hoisting, refloating, or repositioning grounded or displaced vessels, work crews should evaluate the immediate area and determine an ingress/egress path that will have the least impact to tidal marsh, seagrass, oyster reef habitats, and archaeological sites or other historic properties. Contact the Environmental Unit for assistance.
- ☐ Temporary stakes/buoys should be used to mark the ingress/egress path, if applicable, to assist in staying on course and to avoid the areas of greatest tidal marsh, oyster reef, and seagrass habitat extent and quality.

- ☐ In shallow areas with sensitive shoreline and bottom habitats, consider land-side access from roads, bulkheads, or other developed or disturbed areas for response operations, where feasible.
- ☐ Where equipment or crews must access grounded or displaced vessels across tidal marsh, seagrass, or oyster habitats, use shallow draft vessels or specialized equipment with low pressure/flotation tires, equipment mats, walk boards, or other comparable methods to minimize disturbance, as applicable.
- ☐ Avoid pulling grounded or displaced vessels or other items across or onto tidal marsh, seagrass, and oyster reef habitats - items should be hoisted or refloated if possible. Use of lift bags, rollers, equipment mats, and other methods should be evaluated to minimize impacts, such as rutting and keel scarring.
- ☐ Avoid digging, jetting, excavation, and similar methods in tidal marsh, seagrass, oyster reef habitats, and archaeological sites or other historic properties to refloat or reposition displaced vessels.
- ☐ If the above suite of habitat based BMPs cannot be applied, further USACE and State permits (see above) and Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation may be required.

**For further guidance and assistance with Best Management Practices (BMPs) during a response/incident, please contact the Environmental Unit (if established). BMPs that are utilized should be documented by the FOSC via the RRT3 ESA/EFH Biological Evaluation Guidance & Form for USCG Fifth District Coastal Zone.**

# ENVIRONMENTAL POINTS OF CONTACT

## Primary Environmental Agencies / Organizations

If the Environmental Unit is not stood up, the key points of contact for environmental, wildlife, and historic preservation concerns during an oil spill response are provided below.

***U.S. Coast Guard Fifth District Response Advisory Team (DRAT)***

- David Pugh, david.e.pugh1@uscg.mil, 757-373-4133 (cell)
- Elisha Cook, elisha.fs.cook@uscg.mil, 757-630-1430 (cell)

***National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Scientific Support Coordinator (SSC)***

- Frank Csulak, frank.csulak@noaa.gov, 732-371-1005

***U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Response Coordinators***

- Sarah Shaeffer (NJ, NY, DE, Eastern PA/Delaware Watershed), sarah_scheaffer@fws.gov, 609-833-1476
- Jo Ann Banda (MD, Western PA, VA, WV, DC), joann_banda@fws.gov, 804-824-2413 (office), 804-694-7647 (cell)
- Brian Spears (NC), brian_spears@fws.gov, 251-284-5295 (cell), 251-928-9765 (office)

***Department of the Interior (DOI)***

- John Nelson, john_nelson@ios.doi.gov, 215-597-5012 (office), 215-266-5155 (cell)
- Joyce Stanley, joyce_stanley@ios.doi.gov, 404-331-4524 (office), 404-852-5415 (cell)

***Tri-State Bird Rescue and Research***

- 1-800-261-0980, oilprograms@tristatebird.org, https://tristatebird.org/oil-spill-response/

## Report a Stranded or Injured Marine Mammal or Sea Turtle

Northeast Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Stranding and Entanglement Hotline, 866-755-NOAA

***New Jersey***

- Marine Mammal Stranding Center, 609-266-0538, https://mmsc.org/

***Delaware***

- MERR Institute, 302-228-5029, https://www.merrinstitute.org/

***Maryland***

- Maryland Marine Animal Reporting Hotline, 800-628-9944
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources Cooperative Oxford Laboratory (Dead animals only), https://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/Pages/oxford/stranding.aspx
- National Aquarium in Baltimore, Marine Animal Rescue Program, https://www.aqua.org/Support/BLUEprint/animal-care-and-rescue-center

***Virginia***

- Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Center, 757-385-7575, https://www.virginiaaquarium.com/research-and-conservation/stranding-response

***North Carolina***

- NOAA Fisheries Southeast Marine Mammal Stranding Hotline, 877-WHALE-HELP
- NOAA Fisheries Southeast Sea Turtle Stranding/Salvage Network Hotline, 844-SEA-TRTL
- Sturgeon Salvage Network, 844-STURG-911
- Giant Manta Ray Reporting, 727-824-5312, manta.ray@noaa.gov
- North Carolina Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network Hotline, 252-241-7367
- North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries, 252-241-5119
- University of North Carolina–Wilmington Marine Mammal Stranding Program, 910-515-7354

## State Historic Preservation Office Contacts

For the most current list of SHPO contacts please see the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers website at ncshpo.org/directory/.

***New Jersey SHPO; Department of Environmental Protection, Historic Preservation***

- Kate Marcopul, kate.marcopul@dep.nj.gov, 609-633-2397; http://www.state.nj.us/dep/hpo/

***Pennsylvania SHPO; PA Historic Preservation Office***

- Casey Hanson, chanson@pa.gov, 717-772-0923; http://www.phmc.pa.gov/Preservation
- Andrea MacDonald, amacdonald@pa.gov, 717-787-4215

***Delaware SHPO; Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs***

- Gwen Davis, gwen.davis@delaware.gov, 302-736-7410; http://history.delaware.gov/
- Sarah Carr, sarah.carr@delaware.gov, 302-736-7431

***West Virginia SHPO; Division of Culture & History***

- Susan Pierce, Susan.M.Pierce@wv.gov, 304-558-0240; http://www.wvculture.org/

***Maryland SHPO; Maryland Historical Trust***

- Susan Langley, susan.langley@maryland.gov, 410-697-9564 (office), 410-353-8777 (cell); https://mht.maryland.gov/
- Troy Nowak, troy.nowak@maryland.gov, 410-697-9577 (office), 240-291-1267 (cell)

***Washington D.C. Historic Preservation Office***

- David Maloney, david.maloney@dc.gov, 202-442-8800; http://planning.dc.gov/historicpreservation
- Steve Callcott, steve.callcott@dc.gov, 202-741-5247

***Virginia SHPO; Department of Historic Resources***

- Julie Langan, julie.langan@dhr.virginia.gov, julie.langan@dhr.virginia.gov, 804-482-6087; http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/
- Stephanie Williams, stephanie.williams@dhr.virginia.gov, 804-482-6082

***North Carolina SHPO; Division of Archives and History***

- Darin Waters, darin.waters@ncdcr.gov, 919-814-6636; https://www.ncdcr.gov/state-historic-preservation-office
- Ramona Murphy Bartos, ramona.bartos@ncdcr.gov, 919-814-6583

# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| Abbreviation | Definition |
|---|---|
| **AGL** | Above Ground Level |
| **ATV** | All-Terrain Vehicle |
| **BMPs** | Best Management Practices |
| **CFR** | Code of Federal Regulations |
| **CNRDA** | Consultation, Natural Resources, and Damage Assessment |
| **CoC** | Chain of Custody |
| **D5** | District 5 *(U.S. Coast Guard)* |
| **DC** | District of Colombia |
| **DE** | Delaware |
| **DOI** | Department of the Interior |
| **DRAT** | District Response Advisory Team |
| **EFH** | Essential Fish Habitat |
| **ESA** | Endangered Species Act |
| **ENVL** | Environmental Unit Leader |
| **FOSC** | Federal On-Scene Coordinator |
| **ft** | Feet *(unit of measurement)* |
| **GIS** | Geographic Information System |
| **IC** | Incident Commander |
| **IMPA** | Incident Management Preparedness Advisor *(U.S. Coast Guard)* |
| **MBTA** | Migratory Bird Treaty Act |
| **MD** | Maryland |
| **MERR** | Marine Education, Research, & Rehabilitation |
| **MMPA** | Marine Mammal Protection Act |
| **mph** | Miles per hour *(measurement of speed)* |
| **MSA** | Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act |
| **NC** | North Carolina |

| | |
|---|---|
| **NHPA** | National Historic Preservation Act |
| **NJ** | New Jersey |
| **NMFS** | National Marine Fisheries Service |
| **NOAA** | National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration |
| **NOAA SSC** | NOAA Scientific Support Coordinator |
| **NY** | New York |
| **PA** | Pennsylvania |
| **psi** | Pound per square inch *(measurement of pressure)* |
| **RCP** | Regional Contingency Plan |
| **RRT3** | Regional Response Team III |
| **SHPO** | State Historic Preservation Office |
| **STSSN** | Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network |
| **THPO** | Tribal Historic Preservation Office |
| **UAS** | Unmanned Aircraft System |
| **UC** | Unified Command |
| **USACE** | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers |
| **USCG** | U.S. Coast Guard |
| **USFWS** | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| **VA** | Virginia |
| **WV** | West Virginia |