

NATIONAL PLAN

NATIONAL RESPONSE TEAM POLICY



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Definitions

AMOSOC	Australian Marine Oil Spill Centre
AMSA	Australian Maritime Safety Authority
NOPSEMA	National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority
NPSCC	National Plan Strategic Coordination Committee
NRT	National Response Team
NT	Northern Territory
AIIMS	Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System
SCAT	Shoreline Clean-up Assessment Technique

Surge capability: The ability to scale up the resources available to a jurisdiction to respond to a maritime environmental emergency.

Assurance Target: The number of personnel that are available at any given time to respond as part of the National Response Team.

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of the National Response Team (NRT) is to provide a national incident management and field operations surge capacity to support Australian pollution response control agencies responding to major marine environmental incidents. This document sets out how the NRT will be maintained, managed and deployed.

The NRT is a core capability of the National Plan for Maritime Environmental Emergencies ('the National Plan').

Scope

The policy establishes the following:

- The function of the NRT within the auspices of the National Plan.
- The accountabilities of the States and Northern Territory for the provision and management of personnel that form the NRT.
- The accountabilities of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority for the development and maintenance of the NRT capability.
- Arrangements for the deployment of the NRT to emergencies.

Accountabilities

The formation, maintenance and deployment of the NRT is the shared responsibility of AMSA and State and Northern Territory Governments. It is only through each party delivering on the requirements of this policy in full that the NRT can be considered a fully functioning capability.

The National Plan Strategic Coordination Committee (NPSCC) is responsible for providing assurance that the NRT is an effective capability.

The next section defines the accountabilities of the NPSCC, AMSA and the State and Northern Territory Governments.

Table 1 – National Response Team Accountabilities

National Plan Strategic Coordination Committee	Australian Maritime Safety Authority¹	States & Northern Territory Governments
Capability assurance. Confirmation of appointments to the NRT. Confirmation of the annual training and exercising program. Approver of this policy.	National coordination and management of the NRT. Initial and ongoing training of NRT members. Exercising of the NRT. Coordination and management of NRT deployments. Reporting to the NPSCC on NRT performance.	Provision of personnel to the NRT with minimum competencies and experience. Ensuring that NRT personnel are made available for national training and exercising and deployments. Ensuring NRT members are fully equipped with personal protective equipment and other items necessary to perform their nominated function.

¹ AMSA will also deploy to an incident alongside, but separate to, the NRT.

National Response Team

The National Response Team (NRT) is comprised of personnel able to support pollution response operations around the country. The NRT is managed in cooperation with all jurisdictions; which nominate members to meet the needs of both incident management and operations.

The NRT is managed in accordance with the National Response Team Policy, approved by the National Plan Strategic Coordination Committee (NPSCC) with activation of the NRT managed by AMSA.

The purpose of the National Response Team (NRT) is to provide a national incident management and field operations surge capacity that supports control agencies to respond to major maritime environmental emergency incidents.

The NRT can perform the following functions during response operations:

- Incident Controller Advisor – appointed to advise or mentor senior officers within the incident management team (IMT or conducting field operations).
- IMT Section Officer - lead a section (planning, operations, logistics) within an IMT.
- IMT Unit Coordinator - lead a unit within the IMT (e.g. situation unit, shoreline unit).
- Field Team Leader - lead a team conducting field operations (Marine and Shoreline)
- Wildlife Advisor - advisor to IMT on wildlife management

The NRT will be formed by personnel drawn from the Australian State and Northern Territory governments. The minimum number and functions of individuals to be provided by each State and the Northern Territory are identified in [Table 2](#).

The NRT is a primary tool for IMT surge capacity in relation to oil spill response and not HNS response, which remains the responsibility of the lead control agency.

Table 2 – NRT Composition

Role	Minimum positions per State/Northern Territory	Total	Assurance Target (available at any time)**
Incident Control Advisor	N/A*	5	3
Planning Officer	1	7	4
Intelligence Officer	1	7	4
Operations Officer	1	7	4
Logistics Officer	1	7	4
Field Team Leader (Marine)	3	21	12
Field Team Leader (Shoreline)	3	21	12
Wildlife Response Advisor	1	7	4

*Incident Control Advisors will be appointed on a capability basis, rather than distributed across the States/Northern Territory.

**States/NT may nominate more than the minimum number of nominated jurisdictional personnel. The cost for participation in training and exercise for additional personnel will be at the respective jurisdictions expense.

Role Description

Incident Controller (note: The Incident Controller is not an identified position within the NRT)

The Incident Control function includes:

- Overall responsibility for the management of all activities and personnel deployed to resolve the incident
- Management of the interface with organisations and people working beyond the incident management structure, especially at the regional state levels.
- Management of the interface with organisations, communities and people affected, or likely to be affected, by the incident.

Incident Control Advisor

The Incident Control Advisor will act as a mentor to the Incident Controller. Personnel fulfilling this position will have extensive experience in emergency and oil spill management. The Incident Control Advisor will not make decisions for or on behalf of the Incident Controller.

Operations Officer

The Operations function provides support for control of the incident through:

- Implementation of strategies to resolve the incident
- Management of all activities that are undertaken directly to resolve the incident
- Management of all resources (people / equipment) assigned to the Operations Section.

Planning Officer

The Planning function provides support for control of the incident through:

- Evaluation and analysis of intelligence on the current and forecast situations, the preparation of options analysis, and development of potential incident objectives and strategies.
- Undertaking risk assessments
- Preparation and dissemination of the plans that are to be used in controlling the incident
- Provision of specialist and technical advice to the Incident Controller and the Incident Management Team
- Collection and maintenance of information about the resources that are allocated to the incident
- Provision of management support services.

Intelligence Officer

This function provides the intelligence necessary to support decision making through:

- Collection of information on the current and forecast situation
- Processing of that information in timely, accurate and relevant intelligence
- Organising and displaying the intelligence in the form of Common Operating Picture so it is relevant and accessible

Focusing these activities so that critical intelligence needs are met and a Common Operating Picture is shared to support decision making, planning and monitoring of the response.

Logistics Officer

The Logistic Function provides support for control of the incident through the obtaining and maintaining of:

- Human and physical resources
- Facilities
- Services
- Materials

Field Team Leader

Lead the operational response within the field and are responsible for:

- The safety and wellbeing of personnel in the field
- Implementing operational tasks
- Briefing and debriefing field teams
- Reporting back to the IMT

Field Team Leader will have extensive knowledge of in field operations specifically relating to pollution response.

Wildlife Response Advisor

Provide technical advice to the Wildlife Response Team during a response, including:

- Set-up of wildlife rehabilitation facility
- Rehabilitation of wildlife
- Techniques to prevent wildlife encountering pollutants
- Planning and prioritisation to inform overall response decisions

Selection of National Response Team Members

The NPSCC is accountable for the effectiveness of the NRT as a capability and therefore has a direct role in assuring that the appointed individuals are capable of performing their function. The NPSCC will perform this assurance role through an NRT Assessment Panel that will review individuals nominated to the NRT and submit to the NPSCC for confirmation. The NRT Assessment Panel will comprise of representatives from AMSA and two jurisdictions.

The States and Northern Territory will provide personnel to the National Response Team. Individuals will be nominated by the relevant State Marine Pollution Controller and will be required to meet the selection criteria (as detailed in [Appendix A](#)). These criteria include:

- Medical fitness for the performance of the function. Medical fitness will be certified by the nominating jurisdiction on an annual basis.
- Prior attainment of core competencies for the function.
- Experience attained through the deployments to emergencies or through exercises. This experience should be directly related to the function to which they are nominated.

- Certification by the State Marine Pollution Controller that the individual is suited to the function for which they have been nominated.
- Certification by the State Marine Pollution Controller that the individual will be made available for training, exercising and deployment for a three-year period².

Equivalent training and/or skills currency and ongoing assurance at State/NT level, or similar, will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Deployment

The deployment of the NRT will be conducted consistent with NP-GUI-005 Deployment of the National Response Team.

NRT Members will be required to be made available for deployment within 24hrs of activation and are to be at the worksite (IMT or field) within 48hrs of activation.

Team Members deploying with the NRT should maintain appropriate standards of a workplace, including adherence to alcohol, drug and fatigue levels in line with the National Plan guidance.

Fitness for duty

The capacity of personnel to perform their job safely and competently can be impaired by both physical and psychological factors, including fatigue, grief, mental illness as well as the use of alcohol and illegal drugs. National Response Team members must comply with the respective control agency's fitness for duty requirements.

Deployment period

The standard deployment period for domestic deployments will be for 10 days including travel time (up to 14 days for International Deployments). Extraordinary extensions to this deployment period will be considered on a case-by-case basis subject to appropriate fatigue management processes.

International deployment

The Australian Government has entered into several international agreements, such as PACPLAN, and memoranda of understanding with Indonesia, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand to provide assistance in the event of a major oil spill. The National Response Team forms part of the capability with which Australia meets its obligations under these agreements. Arrangements for international deployments are detailed in the National Emergency Management Agency International Deployment Guidelines held by AMSA.

Deployment of NRT personnel internationally will be arranged by AMSA in consultation with the Department of Foreign Affairs and the National Emergency Management Agency.

² The Policy notes that there will be reasonable circumstances where this condition cannot be met, e.g. illness, family circumstances, change of employment, unforeseen operational reasons.

Skills Currency

Responsibility

AMSA is responsible for ensuring that the NRT is trained and exercised to perform its function. Specifically, AMSA will provide training and exercising for the purpose of:

- Ensuring that core competencies outlined in **Appendix A** are attained prior to nomination to the NRT are maintained and current.
- Providing NRT specific training and skills to NRT members. This will generally be in the form of soft skills, e.g. small team leadership, mentoring etc.

Ongoing assurance to NPSCC will be undertaken by AMSA through an appropriate means.

Annual NRT training and exercise program

AMSA will publish an annual program of NRT training activities and exercises prior to the commencement of each financial year. The annual program will be endorsed by the NPSCC.

The States and Northern Territory providing personnel to the NRT will make best endeavours to ensure all NRT personnel from their jurisdiction attend to the programmed NRT training and exercising. Where members of the NRT are unable to attend national training, the State and Northern Territory will be responsible for ensuring that individual undertakes the required currency training. This training will be reported to AMSA.

AMSA will report to NPSCC on the delivery of training and attendance of NRT personnel, as part of the NPSCC capability assurance process.

Costs

Maintenance of capability

AMSA is responsible for all costs associated with the delivery of training and exercises and the travel and accommodation costs of NRT personnel only.

The Control Agency is responsible for the meeting all other costs associated with NRT personnel attending training and exercises.

Attendance at NRT training and exercises by non NRT personnel will be considered on a case-by-case basis. All travel, accommodation and subsistence costs associated with non-NRT personnel attending these events will be strictly at the cost of the nominating agency.

Preparedness

Control Agencies are responsible for ensuring that NRT personnel are appropriately equipped with personal protective equipment, information technology and telephony to fulfil their functions as a member of the National Response Team. **Appendix B** contains a list of minimum equipment requirements for NRT personnel.

Deployment cost recovery

AMSA, in collaboration and coordination with the requesting jurisdiction or company, will be responsible for reimbursing the Control Agencies for costs associated with the deployment of NRT personnel to an incident. At the conclusion of an incident the States and Northern Territory will submit a claim for costs to AMSA, including supporting documentation.

Supporting capabilities

The NRT is supplemented by several capabilities held within the Australian, State and Northern Territory Governments and the oil industry. The national deployment of these capabilities will be coordinated by AMSA in accordance with the NP-GUI-005 Deployment of the National Response Team.

Australian Maritime Safety Authority

AMSA maintains an operational capability to support response operations being conducted by Control Agencies. AMSA officers may perform specific roles, particularly in the early stages of the response, directly related to the coordination and management of national capabilities.

These roles may include:

- Liaison and advisory roles
- Functional management in Planning, Intelligence, Operations and Logistics
- Environment, Science & Technology
- Geospatial intelligence
- .

Deployed AMSA staff will be trained and provisioned to the same standards as required of the National Response Team.

Australian Marine Oil Spill Centre (AMOSC) Core Group

AMOSC, along with its Participating Companies (BP, Caltex, ExxonMobil, BHP, Chevron, Santos, Shell, Viva, Woodside) and some AMOSC Associate member companies have committed to provide mutual aid support to its members, and to the Australian, State and Northern Territory governments in the event of an oil spill. This arrangement is for the hire of trained personnel to support/assist spill response activities in both operational and incident management team functions. The personnel available under the mutual aid arrangements are known as the AMOSC Core Group.

For further information on the AMOSC Core Group refer to [Appendix C](#).

National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA)

NOPSEMA is Australia's offshore energy regulator for petroleum facilities and activities in Commonwealth waters. NOPSEMA's Environment Division has a number of personnel with extensive oil spill response experience and training. Relevant NOPSEMA personnel participate in annual National Plan training and exercises. NOPSEMA personnel are available to fulfil NRT functions during major oil spill incidents that are not associated with the offshore petroleum industry and where no conflict in its regulatory role is presented. NOPSEMA will make its personnel available to support a National Plan maritime incident response in accordance with the NRT policy on request from AMSA.

State and Northern Territory State Response Teams or equivalent

The States and Northern Territory should consider maintaining a broader capability as part of their own State Response Teams or equivalent structure. As part of the cooperative arrangements under the National Plan, these personnel can be deployed to support other jurisdictions. This includes the following functions:

- Aerial Attack Supervisors
- Finance personnel
- Wildlife Coordinator
 - IMT-equivalent roles
 - Field, reconnaissance, rescue, assessment and triage coordinators
 - Transport, logistics and facilities coordinators
 - Capture, cleaning, care, rehabilitation and veterinary specialists
 - Crew leaders for all functions
 - Administrative and team support roles.
- Equipment Operators
 - Marco Operator
 - Offshore Containment/Recovery
 - Inshore Containment/Recovery
 - Vessel-based dispersant spraying
 - Shoreline Clean-up
- Personnel familiar with Shoreline Clean Up Assessment Technique (SCAT)
- Media

Environmental advisers can also fill many roles, covering environmental, scientific and technical functions, both within the IMT (especially within the Planning / Intelligence teams) and in the field, in assessment or operations response teams.

State and Northern Territory personnel will be requested and activated by the same process as the National Response Team.

Environment, Science and Technology Network

ES&T expert response functions, roles, and positions often require diverse and significant technical capability, and may need to be sustained throughout an extended response.

Few response agencies have all the required expertise. The ES&T network has been established to provide a national support group of highly skilled and professional scientists and technicians. Network members come from government agencies across all jurisdictions, from the ports, maritime and petroleum sectors, from academia and research organisations, and from the education, commercial and consulting sectors.

Wildlife Response Network

Wildlife response is often the foremost public interest in a spill response. From contingency planning to release of rehabilitated animals, a wide variety of expertise, skills and technical capabilities are required, often well beyond the duration of the actual spill response and remotely from other spill response sites and facilities. Occasionally, the spill response creates the need for wildlife response.

No National Plan Control Agency has direct responsibility for wildlife response - all rely on external support. However, every State and the Northern Territory has an injured wildlife response system or network.

There is a commonality in the functions required. Primary wildlife response supports response activities that prevent the pollutant injuring wildlife or critical habitat. This includes specific wildlife planning and prioritization, to inform overall response decisions. Secondary wildlife response is effective techniques to prevent wildlife encountering pollutants that cannot be removed. This ranges from isolating wildlife, to hazing, to pre-emptive capture and holding, prior to injury. Tertiary wildlife response is where contaminated animals are captured, transported, cleaned and rehabilitated. The complexity and duration of these activities is often underestimated.

Effective delivery of all types of wildlife response requires effective local pre-planning and capability building, combined with local and national surge capacity. A national Wildlife Response Network is the aim of the Oiled Wildlife Working Group. This group would oversee nationally consistent training, planning, building and delivery of wildlife response capabilities. The key role in each jurisdiction is the Wildlife Division Coordinator, accountable to the IMT Operations Officer for delivery of secondary and tertiary wildlife response functions. Planning and prioritization activities also require awareness of wildlife value, impact and response operations. Many other specialist roles and functions support the overall wildlife response, many of whom are likely to be trained community volunteers.

Aviation support

The States and Northern Territory are responsible for the provision of Air Attack Supervisors and Aerial Observers to support aerial dispersant operations and oil monitoring operations. These personnel will generally be accessed through whole-of-government response arrangements which each jurisdiction has committed to implement. Where aviation specialists need to be deployed between jurisdictions, this can be coordinated either through AMSA or via the State and Northern Territory Governments disaster management arrangements.

Appendix A - NRT Selection Criteria

Availability

The individual must be certified by the State Marine Pollution Controllers as being available for:

- Annual national NRT training and exercises as agreed in the annual program.
- Deployment to a domestic marine pollution incident on a 10-day rotation or as agreed between relevant parties.

Experience

The individual has relevant practical experience in the function to which they have been nominated. This experience has been attained through deployment to an incident or exercise in a relevant function in the previous 12 months, with appropriate and specific functional task experience.

Medical Fitness

The individual is certified/verified by the State Marine Pollution Controllers as being fit for the duties being performed by the function to which they have been assigned.

Consideration of medical fitness for duty should conform to relevant Jurisdiction WHS requirements.

The certification needs to be reviewed on a 12-monthly basis.

Broad Capability Guidance

- **Leading and Supervising** - Setting direction and standards, delegating, motivating, empowering, developing others, recruiting talent.
- **Persuading and Influencing** - Making an impact, gaining agreement, negotiating, persuading, convincing, promoting ideas, managing conflict.
- **Analysing** - Analysing information, probing for clarity, producing solutions, making judgements, thinking systematically.
- **Presenting and Communicating Information** - Speaking clearly and fluently, expressing opinions, making presentations, responding to an audience, showing credibility.
- **Planning and Organising** - Setting objectives, planning, establishing contingencies, managing time, resources and people, monitoring progress.
- **Coping with Pressures and Setbacks** - Coping with pressure, keeping emotions under control, balancing work and personal life, keeping optimistic, handling criticism.

Minimum competency requirements

COMPETENCY	FUNCTION						
	Incident Control Advisor	Planning Officer	Intelligence Officer	Operations Officer	Logistics Officer	Team Leader (Shoreline)	Team Leader (Marine)
Incident Control Level 3	X						
Incident Control Level 2	X						
Planning Officer		X	X				
Operations Officer				X			
Logistics Officer					X		
Decision Making in Oil Spill Response	X	X	X	X	X	O	O
Basic Equipment Operations				O		X	X
Advanced Equipment Operations				O		X	X
Shoreline Response				O		X	O
AIIMS	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Marine Radio				O		X	X
Elements of Ship-board Safety						O	O
HUET						X	X
First Aid	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

X – Required O – Preferred

Appendix B – Equipment requirements

Personal protective equipment provides the final protective barrier for workers where oiling or other conditions can pose a health or safety hazard. Jurisdictions are responsible for ensuring their NRT personnel are equipped with appropriate PPE.

The following is the minimum standard level of PPE, suitable for general field operations. Other equipment may be necessary in other locations or where specific hazards apply.

Eyes	Safety glasses (clear or tinted)	Field
Body	Long sleeve shirt and long pants, or similar coveralls – all oil resistant.	Field
Hands	Work gloves – oil resistant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rigger’s leather or synthetic • Nitrile (not latex) 	Field
Feet	Enclosed oil resistant footwear	Field
Head	Sun hat	Field

Additional PPE may include:

Item	Role
Logbook/notebook	IMT
Mobile phone	IMT/Field
Mobile internet and Wi-Fi enabled laptop	IMT
Sunblock	Field
Hard hat	Field
Hearing protection	Field
Polarised sunglasses	Field
Hi-vis vest	Field
Wet weather gear	Field
Cold weather gear	Field
Digital camcorder or phone with camera	Field
Personal first aid kits	Field
PLB/EPIRB (AMSA supplied)	Field
Personal Floatation Device	Field

All PPE should be:

- The final barrier applied to any hazard
- Well maintained and easily accessible
- Appropriate for the type of work and give appropriate protection for the risk
- Compatible with other PPE in use and not create extra health or safety risks
- Compatible with any workers’ medical needs or conditions
- Easy to use, fit properly and comfortable for extended use
- Compliant with relevant Australian Standards

Appendix C – AMOSC Core Group

AMOSC core group membership

The minimum number of AMOSC Core Group members is 84; drawn from member companies. AMOSC funds the training, revalidation and management of Core Group members.

Group skills and experience

All Core Group members will have successfully completed AMOSC's IMO Level I equivalent *Course in Oil Spill Response Operations* and been assessed by their parent company and by AMOSC as being experienced, competent and capable.

Each Core Group member is required to attend a revalidation activity (typically a workshop) every 2 years to maintain their status in the Core Group.

A number of AMOSC Core Group members have enhanced their spill response skills through completion of more advanced AMOSC training courses, typically the IMO Level II equivalent *Course in Oil Spill Repose Management*. Core Group members who have these qualifications, and subsequently demonstrate ongoing competence during exercises, workshops and responses, are streamed into the more advanced parts of the AMOSC Core Group.

AMOSC's objective is to maintain the following minimum composition of the Core Group:

- Management support (30+ members)
- Field Operators (60+ members)

This is in addition to Core Group members who are trained in aerial observation or shoreline response. AMOSC also has a dedicated Oiled Wildlife response team.

AMOSC and AMSA have agreed to train and exercise the Core Group and National Response Teams together where possible.

Activation of AMOSC Core Group

Access to the Core Group for governments can be made via AMSA to AMOSC, or directly to AMOSC. AMOSC members may access the Core Group directly through AMOSC in accordance with the National Plan AMOSC activation by AMSA Guidance document (NP-GUI-006).