



Section 9101

Region 10 Response Team and Northwest Area Committee Charter

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Region 10 Response Team and Northwest Area Committee Charter

Oil and hazardous material spill response is a unique regulatory field where public trust demands a rapid, aggressive, and well-coordinated response action by federal, state, and responsible parties.

In Region 10, we are committed to:

- Zero missed internal notifications.
- A bias towards a rapid, aggressive, and well-coordinated response when spills or incidents occur.
- Joint decision making through Unified Command.
- Maintaining our organization's expertise on the area plan and serving as full participants in the planning process.
- Ensure that organized transitions occur when Regional Response Team (RRT)/Northwest Area Committee (NWAC) agencies experience turn-over of key people.

RRT and Area Committee Function

The National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP) is the rule book for implementing the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation & Liability Act and Oil Pollution Act of 1990. All response actions by the federal agencies must be consistent with the NCP. Since inception, the NCP has required federal agencies to develop and maintain Regional Contingency Plans. After the enactment of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (prompted by lessons learned from the Exxon Valdez oil spill), the NCP was updated to require Area Contingency Plans and Area Committees across the United States.

Region 10 is the only region to develop a "unified plan" whereby the United States Coast Guard (USCG), United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and all states in the region sign on to one plan that meets the requirements for both a Regional Contingency Plan and an Area Contingency Plan. Region 10 does not have subarea contingency plans. Previous state and federal Regional Contingency Plans were shelved for an area-wide focus on one Unified Plan. Then Region 10 combined the RRT meetings with the Area Committee meetings.

The resulting RRT/Area Committee Strategic Plan is written to apply to both organizations jointly.

The Region 10 Executive Committee is a combination of the Region 10 Regional Response Team (RRT 10), and the NWAC, which includes three individual areas of responsibility (Sector Columbia River, Sector Puget Sound, and Inland). Part of the rationale for holding joint meetings is the fact that there is significant overlap in the respective memberships, including federal, state, tribal representatives.

The combined RRT and Area Committee meetings have a long history of success and reflect the inherent business culture and spirit of partnership in the Northwest. With the large geographic area of responsibility managed by RRT 10 and the Area Committee, the combined meeting approach was found to be the most efficient and effective method to ensure response and planning coordination, as well as sharing of ideas.

The decision to form the joint Executive Committee and hold joint meetings was made around 2002. There are three meetings per year, each a day and a half long. The meetings are moved around the region in an attempt to maintain a presence and outreach to as many local responders as possible. The Area Committee Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs are welcome to hold additional meetings in their Sectors or subareas to supplement the three annual combined meetings. See a brief overview of the two-day combined meeting agendas below:

Day 1: Half day session with RRT 10/NWAC Executive Committee. The Executive Committee meeting is open to the NCP-designated RRT members, Area Committee Co-Chairs, and any other agency representatives invited by them. At the end of the half-day meeting, there is the option of a closed door session for NCP-designated RRT members only, where sensitive issues may be discussed. Any NCP-designated RRT member may raise issues for discussion during the closed door session. All RRT member agencies should have a representative at these half day Executive Committee and closed door RRT sessions.

Day 2: Full day Area Committee meeting, hosted by EPA, USCG Captain of the Port, and States. The objective is to engage with local officials and responders from the local area where the meeting is held. This provides an opportunity for the EPA, Captain of the Port, and State that are hosting the meeting to create a meeting agenda that will be interesting and worthwhile for their local community. This meeting is open to everyone.

Relationship of RRT to NWAC:

The RRT has two roles specified in the NCP:

1. Support the Federal On-Scene Coordinator (FOSC) during incident-specific activations.
2. Ensure effective regional planning and preparedness.

If the Area Committee is fully functional and effective at multi-agency joint planning and preparedness, then the RRT's primary focus is limited to preparing for incident-specific activations and planning for support of the FOSCs. RRT Co-Chairs and all RRT members are encouraged to observe the full-day Area Committee meeting on Day Two, in order to support and maintain familiarity with FOSC and State On-Scene Coordinator issues and concerns.

RRT/NWAC Organizational Groups:

- **Workgroups:** Work in subject areas that require ongoing attention to improve both the NWACP and the function of the RRT/NWAC. Area planning developments should be memorialized in the NWACP if appropriate. The workgroups report to the Steering Committee.
- **Task Forces:** Work on specific issues that have a limited scope and a clear end point. The task forces report to the Steering Committee.
- **Steering Committee:** Guides the preparedness work of the Area Committee and the RRT task of preparing to support the FOSCs. Ensures that workgroup and task force efforts are meeting the needs of the Executive Committee. Frames decision points for the Executive Committee. Manages the annual update to the NWACP.
- **RRT Coordinators:** Designated to coordinate the work of the RRT, which includes preparedness and planning responsibilities. In R10, the RRT Coordinators from EPA and USCG District 13 also serve as the Co-Chairs of the Steering Committee.
- **Area Committee Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs:** Acts as representatives for their agency and approve RRT/NWAC policy and procedures. Ensures that the steering committee, workgroups, and task forces are enhancing their ability to respond. Ensures that responses are conducted in accordance with the NWACP.
- **RRT Co-Chairs:** Ensures that the RRT is ready to fulfill its NCP obligations. Ensure that adequate area planning is conducted.
- **Executive Committee Members:** Ensures that NWACP policies and procedures appropriately incorporate the expertise and capabilities each agency provides.

NCP-Designated RRT Members:

United States Environmental Protection Agency	United States Department of Energy
United States Coast Guard District 13	United States Department of Health and Human Services (Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry)
United States Department of Agriculture (United States Forest Service)	United States Department of the Interior
United States Department of Commerce (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration)	United States Department of Justice
United States Department of Defense (United States Army Corps of Engineers)	United States Department of Labor (Occupational Safety and Health Administration)
	United States Department of Transportation (Federal Aviation Administration)

Northwest Area Contingency Plan

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Federal Emergency Management
Agency
General Services Administration
Idaho Office of Emergency Management
Oregon Department of Environmental
Quality
Washington State Department of
Ecology
Makah Tribe

Executive Committee Members:

All NCP-designated RRT members
Sector Columbia River
Sector Puget Sound
Washington State Department of Health
Washington State Emergency
Management Division
Oregon Public Health Division
Oregon State Fire Marshall
Idaho Department of Health and Welfare
United States Navy

Area Committee Members:

All members of the Executive
Committee
Industry representatives
County/city agencies
Nonprofit representatives
All tribes