

# HISTORY

The National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Plan, more commonly called the National Contingency Plan or NCP (40 Code of Federal Regulations, CFR, Part 300), is the federal government's blueprint for responding to both oil spills and hazardous substance releases. The NCP is the result of our country's effort to develop national response capabilities and promote coordination among the hierarchy of responders.

The first NCP was developed and published in 1968 in response to a massive oil spill from the oil tanker Torrey Canyon off the coast of England in 1967. More than 37 million gallons of crude oil spilled into the ocean, causing massive environmental damage. To avoid the problems faced by response officials involved in this incident, U.S. officials developed a coordinated approach to cope with potential spills in U.S. waters. The 1968 plan provided the first comprehensive system of accident reporting, spill containment, and cleanup, and established a response headquarters, a national reaction team, and regional reaction teams (precursors to the current National Response Team and Regional Response Team).

Congress has broadened the scope of the National Contingency Plan over the years. As Required by the Clean Water Act of 1972, the NCP was revised the following year to include a framework for responding to hazardous substance spills as well as oil discharges. Following the passage of Superfund legislation in 1980, the NCP was broadened to include releases at hazardous waste sites requiring emergency removal actions. The latest revisions to the NCP were finalized in 1994 to reflect the oil spill provisions of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990.

***For additional information  
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**NATIONAL  
RESPONSE  
SYSTEM  
ELEMENTS**



## NATIONAL RESPONSE SYSTEM ELEMENTS

The National Oil and Hazardous Substances Response System is the federal government's mechanism for emergency response to discharges of oil into navigable waters of the United States, and releases of chemicals into the environment. The system provides a framework for coordination among federal, state and local responders and responsible parties.

The National Response System is described in the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP), found in Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 300. The NCP establishes three organizational levels: The National Response Team (NRT), Regional Response Teams (RRTs), and On-Scene Coordinators (OSCs).



## NATIONAL RESPONSE TEAM (NRT)

Consists of 16 Federal agencies: EPA, USCG, FEMA, HHS, GSA, DOD, DOE, DOI, DOT, USDA, DOJ, DOS, NRC, DOC, DOL, Treasury

EPA chaired, United States Coast Guard co-chaired

- During activation chaired by agency providing OSC

### Planning

- Recommend changes to the NCP
- Provide policy and program direction to RRTs
- Publish guidance documents
- Develop procedures to ensure coordination of federal, state, and local governments and private response
- Monitor response related research

### Preparedness

- Evaluate methods of responding to discharges or releases
- Make recommendations on appropriate equipping, training, and protection of response teams
- Monitor response-related research and developments
- Review regional responses

### Response

- Coordinate the supply of equipment, personnel, or technical advice to the affected region from other regions or districts



## REGIONAL RESPONSE TEAMS (RRT)

Consist of local, State and 15 Federal agencies on the National Response Team

Co-Chaired by USCG and EPA

### Planning

- Develop and maintain Regional Contingency Plan (RCP)
- Review local emergency plans at request of LEPC

### Preparedness

- Conduct drills/exercises of RCP
- Participate in LEPC exercises
- Revise RCP as necessary

### Response

- Provide assistance and support as requested by OSC

## FEDERAL ON-SCENE COORDINATOR (FOSC)

### Planning

- As RRT member, participates in development of Regional Contingency Plan
- Oversees development of Area Contingency Plan (ACPs) for assigned areas

### Preparedness

- Participates in drills and exercises conducted by industry, LEPCs, Area Committees, RRT, and NRT

### Response

- During an incident directs all federal containment, removal, and disposal efforts and coordinates all other efforts at scene
- Point of contact for coordination of federal efforts with the private, local, and state response communities