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From: Commander, Seventh Coast Guard District  
To: Distribution

Subj: DISPERSANT USE OPERATIONAL PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION  
GUIDANCE

1. The enclosed plan was developed to assist each Coast Guard On Scene Coordinator (OSC) and the Unified Command in their effort to assess the potential use of dispersants, and if warranted, their use on applicable oil spills occurring within the Seventh Coast Guard District. This plan supports the decision making, logistical, and mobilization concerns associated with the proper use, deployment, and monitoring of dispersant technology. Essentially this document provides a guide to develop and execute a dispersant use operations plan.
2. The Seventh Coast Guard District is supported by dispersant pre-approval agreements within both Region IV and the Caribbean Region. These agreements were developed and implemented by each respective Regional Response Team (RRT) supporting those areas. The priority in using dispersants is gaining the approval to do so and mobilizing the equipment and people to accomplish the task. These agreements identify the areas where dispersant use is pre-approved by the respective RRT, those areas where dispersant use can be considered on a case-by-case basis, and those areas where dispersant use is prohibited. They also identify all of the specific use compliance criteria for pre-approval or case-by-case use of dispersants (see Section III of either regional protocol).
3. It is critical that OSCs, Area Committees, and Unified Commands plan for the use of dispersants and other complex advanced countermeasures. Time is critical for the use of this type of technology and deployment windows are narrow. The characteristics and weathering of most oils and other operational priorities lead to dispersant operations being more effective within the first 24 hours of the response. Also specialized equipment and trained personnel are not abundantly available, especially in some remote areas. These resources must be pre-identified and all necessary agreements needed to access them should be in place as much as practicable. This plan, developed in checklist form, should assist OSCs and Unified Commanders in implementing proper dispersant use as an effective countermeasure for an oil spill. This plan is arranged to assist in:
  - a. Decision making on proper dispersant use and strategy;
  - b. Development of an Operations Plan;

- c. Gaining RRT approval (if necessary);

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- d. Developing functional positions within the Unified Command to support dispersant operations; and
- e. Enhancing pre-planning efforts.

4. The format of this guide is a bit different in that it is not intended to stand by itself. It is a collection of flowcharts, matrices, checklists, templates, and job aids that your planners can incorporate into their existing planning efforts and eventually use in training and qualification programs. We wanted to avoid another publication to add to the myriad of pubs you already have. Having said this, we also feel that if your Unified Command staff follows the guidance within this effort, you should be able to address and support all the issues that comprise a successful dispersant deployment.

5. To allow a one-stop-shop, there is some overlap with the existing RRT pre-approval agreements (only in one section). However, the primary goal of this effort is to address the operational aspects, planning, and logistics of dispersant deployment and not the approval of the same. There is a link but the two issues are very different. The appropriate place for you to use this information is in planning and preparedness discussions with your Area Committees and its eventual incorporation of applicable sections into the ACP.

6. Safety of personnel is paramount to the success of the operation. To assist the Unified Command in developing a Dispersant Use Safety Plan, a safety plan checklist is included in this document. Planners are encouraged to develop safety plan templates before the need to deploy dispersants occurs.

7. Like other functions within a particular response management system, the Incident Commander is free to decrease or expand his functional structure based on the response need. Dispersant operations are no different. For instance, in a less complex response, the monitor role can be combined with the spotter role, thus alleviating the need for additional aircraft. For more complex operations, you may decide to add additional spray platforms under one spotter or multiple spotters depending on the acceptable span-of-control. Observers may be assigned to any platform if acceptable to save resource expenses. Any combination is possible. An ICS organization chart is included to show the potential relationships within the Unified Command between the Dispersant Operation Group, the Technical Specialists, and Logistics.

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8. Seventh Coast Guard District COTP/OSCs are to use this plan as a guide to standardize the planning and implementation of dispersant use. Again this effort is focused towards enhancing planning activities of each coastal Area Committee. Area Committees are encouraged to pursue other needed logistical relationships, resource identification, and reference information to support potential dispersant operations in your area of responsibility. Area Contingency Plans should provide information on equipment availability, dispersant manufacturers, any existing agreements/MOAs, and resource points of contact.

WILLIAM H. FELS  
By direction

Encl: (1) "Dispersant Use Operational Planning & Implementation Guidance" dated 11 Mar 99

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