



2009

YEAR IN REVIEW



From the Commander



Greetings and welcome to the 2009 National Strike Force Year in Review. The National Strike Force is ubiquitous- seemingly everywhere at the same time- and as such we have garnered an impressive global impact. During 2009 we clearly illustrated that definition: ranging from a preventive maintenance verification inspection (Rhode Island); to a Vessel of Opportunity Skimming System survey (Florida); to lightering a grounded fishing vessel and conducting air monitoring for an active volcano (Alaska); to supporting responses for a major oil spill (Texas), a hazardous material release (North Carolina), and state contractor oversight after a typhoon (Guam); and for participating as part of the major Coast Guard contingent for the G-20 summit (Pennsylvania) and the Winter Olympics (Washington). I continue to be quite impressed and proud of these superior professionals.

In the pages that follow are samples of cases where we provided specialized technical services to augment Federal On-Scene Coordinators (FOSCs). These cases ranged from abating hazardous materials in response to the tsunami in American Samoa to overseeing lightering operations for a grounded tug on Bligh Reef in Prince William Sound. Strike Teams planned and supported FOSCs' efforts to provide public safety and security at major events such as the Presidential Inaugural address and the Kingston, Tennessee landslide disaster.

In addition to the Strike Teams' field efforts, the Coordination Center clarified and implemented Strike Force doctrine, standardized and recapitalized equipment, and improved crisis communication support for FOSCs. Inspectors increased the Preparedness Assessment Verifications for Sector Commanders; verified Oil Spill Response Organization equipment in the field; and trained the response community on the newly updated Response Resource Inventory system, which is now a web-based application.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge all of the NSF crew - AST, GST, PST, NSFCC, PIAT - for their distinguished service to the Coast Guard and the public. This command is successful because dedicated professionals superbly and safely executed the mission, took care of each other, learned and trained intently, and had fun. I am grateful for the superb team leadership and the devotion to duty which have been the foundation and essence of the National Strike Force ubiquity.

As always we remain – the World's Best Responders: any time, any place, any hazard. Semper Paratus!

Roderick E. Walker

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Roderick E. Walker'.

Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
Commander, National Strike Force

World's Best Responders



- Atlantic Strike Team, Ft. Dix, N.J.
- Gulf Strike Team, Mobile, Ala.
- Pacific Strike Team, Novato, Calif.
- Public Information Assist Team & National Strike Force Coordination Center, Elizabeth City, N.C.
- represents a Team deployment or training
- represents a Preparedness Assessment Visit

Responses and training not depicted: American Samoa, Guam, Thailand, Saipan, Rota, Tinian



Atlantic Strike Team

The Atlantic Strike Team is based in Fort Dix, N.J. The AST's area of responsibility covers the Coast Guard's 1st, 5th, and 9th Districts, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands in the 7th District and the northern portion of the 8th District. This corresponds to EPA Regions I, II, III, V and VII. The 84 active-duty, reserve, civilian and auxiliary members of the AST supported on-scene coordinators in a variety of complex cases in 2009. Following are a few of the case highlights.

In November, four members of the AST responded to a call from Sector Hampton Roads regarding a grounded barge carrying 312 intermodal containers containing various hazardous materials. The 571-foot unmanned container barge broke free of its tow during a storm in heavy seas and drifted over 150 miles south to Virginia Beach, Va. The AST provided a salvage response team to provide technical expertise and support for the damage assessment of the vessel and its cargo, air monitoring, and on site safety.

The AST identified which of the containers onboard carried hazardous materials and produced a plume model for a worst-case-scenario chlorine leak. The barge was removed using three tugs and taken to a safe area for a Coast Guard inspection, then continued to its destination.

AST responded in October to a call from Sector San Juan regarding an explosion at the Caribbean Petroleum facility in Bayamon, Puerto Rico. The explosion caught approximately 15 of 40 fuel storage tanks on fire containing millions of gallons of petroleum products that burned for more than three days. The AST provided a 10-member team to support both Sector San Juan and EPA Region II during the incident. During the 60-day involvement, the AST was an integral component of this multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional response, providing incident management support and conducting community air monitoring, spill impact assessments and site safety operations.

Members of the AST responded to a request by EPA Region II to provide particulate air monitoring, site safety, and contractor monitoring at the former Consolidated Irons and Metals Site located in Newburgh, N.Y., in July. The 7.5-acre site is a former car and scrap metal junk yard located on the Hudson River that was taken over by the EPA in 1998 due to PCB, cadmium, and lead contaminated waste and soil that was discovered on site. The AST members are providing oversight in the final phase of operations that include the removal of 110,000 tons of contaminated soil and backfill operations.

During May, AST personnel deployed in support of an EPA Region II request for assistance with boat crew survey operations, shoreline reconnaissance, and safety oversight at a lead slag site located in the communities of Old Bridge and Sayerville, N.J. In the late 1960s to early 1970s, lead slag, reportedly due to the dumping of blast furnace pot bottoms, deposited along the beachfront resulting in a 1.3-mile contaminated area of the Raritan Bay. The AST provided a boat and boat crew in support of EPA operations for shoreline survey and contractor oversight during sampling operations.

In April, the AST began assisting the EPA with air monitoring, site safety and contractor monitoring at the Alfred Heller Heat Treating plant in Clifton, N.J. The AST deployed an eight-member team to conduct air monitoring and site safety of the 60,000-square-foot facility to protect the general public during an auction of the facility and its 20 furnace lines. Since the completion of the auction, the AST has been providing the EPA with continued air monitoring, site safety, and contractor monitoring of the hazard categorization operations and removal of approximately 450 drums, confined space clean up operations, and asbestos removal.

Clockwise from top left: The Caribbean Petroleum fuel storage facility burns after an explosion there rocked the San Juan suburb of Bayamon, Puerto Rico in October. AST members participate in team building exercises at Fort Dix, N.J., obstacle course. AST members conduct inspections aboard the abandoned vessel Snowbird in Baltimore in June. Petty Officer Nate Lafriniere checks an instrument during a confined space entry drill at a Ready For Operations (RFO) inspection in June. Petty Officer Rich Bradway surveys a container barge hard aground on Virginia Beach in November.

Gulf Strike Team

The Gulf Strike Team is based in Mobile, Ala. The GST's area of operation includes the 7th District with the exception of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, the southern portion of the 8th District and part of the 5th District. This corresponds to EPA Regions IV and VI. The 79 active-duty, reserve, civilian and auxiliary members of the team had an amazing year in 2009. A few of the highlights are described below.

The GST responded to a variety of incidents throughout 2009 ranging from a fly ash release in Tennessee to tar balls on a South Texas beach to an oil spill in one of the busiest ports in the United States.

Members of the Gulf Strike Team responded to a release of approximately 5.4 million cubic yards of fly ash at the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) Kingston, Tenn., fossil fuel plant in December (08). The fly ash, a by-product of coal combustion, was held in storage cells surrounded by a dike. One of the dikes failed and fly ash flowed into the Emory and Clinch rivers, which are tributaries of the Tennessee River.

The GST responders assisted EPA Region IV personnel with incident management support, site safety and boat operations. The GST also assisted by enforcing safety

regulations and monitoring water quality on the affected waterways.

In July, members of the GST deployed to assist personnel from Sector Corpus Christi, Texas when tar balls washed ashore along a 250-mile stretch of South Texas beaches.

The Strike Force provided shoreline cleanup and assessment team (SCAT) personnel, site safety and media relations assistance. In addition, the NSF partnered with Marine Safety Detachment Brownsville, Sector Corpus Christi, Texas General Land Office (TGLO) and other state and local agencies to assist in overseeing the safe and effective cleanup of dozens of miles of economically sensitive shoreline. A few days later, GST personnel responded to a release of approximately 63,000 gallons of crude oil from a crack in a submerged pipeline in the Gulf of Mexico, approximately 30 miles south of Atchafalaya Bay, La.

The GST personnel assisted Marine Safety Unit Morgan City with technical expertise on the effective use of dispersants to clean up the oil that covered nearly 50 square miles of ocean surface. As a result, no oil reached the shore.

In September, the GST responded to an oil sheen that originated from a World War II cargo ship that sank in Sabine Pass, Texas. Four personnel deployed to assist Marine Safety Unit Port Arthur with incident management assistance and site safety oversight.

Both environmental teams ensured the safe completion of diving operations, hull patching, and lightering operations that pumped approximately 15,000 gallons of weathered heavy fuel oil from the stricken cargo vessel.

Later in September, several members of the GST responded to a collision involving a tank vessel and a tugboat in the Houston Ship Channel, the second busiest U.S. port.

The T/V Chemical Supplier discharged approximately 10,500 gallons of heavy fuel oil in the northern most section of the channel after colliding with the T/B Buffalo.

The GST personnel assisted Sector Houston-Galveston with Incident Command System support, contractor oversight, and site safety. They also oversaw cleanup operations, confined space clean up and oil debris removal for several days before the ship channel was able to be reopened.

Clockwise from top left: Chemical Response and Remediation Contractors remove tar balls in July from Boca Chica beach near South Padre Island, Texas. Petty Officer Curtis Ainsley observes operations in Tennessee in July. A diver from the Resolve Marine Group prepares before going underwater during the Sabine Block 13 case. Lt.j.g Ryan Dickson discusses plans with response team members during the Sabine Block 13 oil spill in Port Arthur, Texas, in September. Chief Warrant Officer Peter Davenport observes cleanup operations in Texas in July.





Pacific Strike Team

The Pacific Strike Team is based in Novato, Calif. The PST's area of responsibility covers the Coast Guard's 11th, 13th, 14th and 17th Districts and the northwest portion of the 8th District. This corresponds to the EPA's Regions VII, IX and X. The team's 78 active-duty, reserve, civilian and auxiliary members spent 2500 total days in support of on-scene coordinators in 2009. Some of the highlights are outlined below.

The year began with a notable case that involved a 112-foot fishing vessel that grounded in March on a remote island in the Bering Sea north of Alaska's Aleutian Islands, threatening an environmentally sensitive area.

When commercial resources were not available, Sector Anchorage requested PST assistance with off-loading the vessel's fuel. The entire evolution lasted 21 days and required the teamwork of seven PST members.

Engulfed in extremely harsh Bering Sea weather, each member contributed in the staging, rigging, and operation of Coast Guard lightering equipment, ensured site safety as operations commenced, and oversaw contractors.

A month later PST members were requested by Coast Guard 14th District and Sector Honolulu to act as the Incident Specific Federal On-scene Coordinator on the island of Tutuila, American Samoa. The pollution source was the exUSS CHEHALIS, a Navy vessel deliberately scuttled in 1949 after suffering an explosion and cargo fire. Settled in 190 feet of water, the vessel had begun to seep its combined estimated cargo of 115,000 gallons of aviation gas and diesel.

More than half a century after the initial casualty, a joint team of Coast Guard and Navy assets conducted the first phase of an operation to remove the fuel oil using Navy divers and remotely operated submersibles to identify and locate the fuel cargo, stored ammunitions, and other hazardous chemicals so the oil products could be safely pumped off the vessel.

In June, the Environmental Protection Agency requested PST support for sampling efforts in Yosemite Creek in the San Francisco area. This site is the center of litigation between the EPA and more than 75 possible responsible parties suspected of dumping various contaminants.

The team assisted in collecting 34 core samples using a vibrocore system to retrieve core soil samples.

The following month, the PST assisted the EPA in the collection, segregation, transportation, and disposal of pesticides, herbicides, insecticides, and other farm-related hazardous waste on the island of Guam. Many of the hazardous substances were illegally acquired from other countries. While on site, the four PST members also provided logistical and safety support during the collection of the hazardous waste.

At the end of September, when American Samoa was devastated by a tsunami, the PST rapidly mobilized and deployed two teams to support recovery operations. One team assisted Sector Honolulu while the other team supported EPA response efforts.

As a result, the PST was among the first of the relief forces to arrive, ready with Strike Team boats, thereby launching the first Coast Guard, non-native boats on the island. The PST worked on salvage operations, pollution assessments, and provided EMT support to the local population.

Clockwise from top left: PST members work aboard the tug Wenonah in San Francisco Bay in August. Petty Officer Adam Anderson re-adjusts a fuel hose fitting to be used in lightering the 112-foot fishing vessel Mar-Gun in March. Ens. Lon Nguyen and contractors sort through hazardous materials during the Guam pesticide amnesty case in July. PST members test a vibrocore sampling unit in the Yosemite Slough in June. PST members monitor the air around fuel drums in American Samoa in the aftermath of the tsunami in September.



Public Information Assist Team

The Public Information Assist Team consists of four highly trained professionals who specialize in risk communication during oil and hazardous substances releases and natural disasters.

The PIAT's roots can be traced to 1978 when it was established at Coast Guard Headquarters as part of the National Contingency Plan.

The PIAT's primary mission is to provide unique, interagency environmental response communication expertise to assist Incident Commanders in meeting their objectives of truth and transparency of operations for the public.

When not traveling to incident responses throughout all Coast Guard Districts and EPA Regions, the PIAT provides joint information center and risk communication training to the nationwide response community.

In addition to training, the PIAT will offer Area Contingency Plan review for public information and customized communication plan development for Sector public affairs programs beginning in early 2010.

The PIAT responded to several notable incidents in 2009, and each case was fundamentally different and presented unique challenges. When mystery tar balls washed up along two pristine beaches of Texas's Padre National Seashore in late July, a member of the PIAT deployed to manage public information activities.

The PIAT member leveraged Flickr and Twitter to disseminate imagery, instead of using slower, more traditional means. As a result, the flow of imagery and information to the public and media was largely unhindered and clean up efforts were well-documented.

In August, two members of the PIAT deployed to Sector Lake Michigan to manage public information following the Sector's closure of the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal.

The Army Corps of Engineers had recently increased the voltage of an electric fish barrier in the canal and needed to determine the risk to people and vessels. The invasive species barrier presented a significant health and safety risk to the boating public.

The PIAT used its risk communication expertise to help the Sector alert the waterway users to the increased danger and provided the command with a detailed strategic communications plan.

Finally, in September, two PIAT members launched to Sector Houston-Galveston, to assist an established Unified Command to manage a 10,500-gallon spill that closed the Houston Ship Channel.

Once the environmental impact of the spill was mitigated and cleanup operations began, public and industry scrutiny shifted squarely to the closure of the Houston Ship Channel and the potential costly delays to the flow of commerce.

During the initial response and the immediate aftermath, the PIAT managed a roller coaster of local, national, and international media demands in order to keep all stakeholders informed of the status of the waterway.

Clockwise from left: Petty Officer Adam Baylor, a PIAT member, escorts a news cameraman during a NSF facility inspection in Portsmouth, Va., in April. Petty Officer Lawrence Chambers, a PIAT member, instructs officials in media relations before an exercise at the Panama Canal in March. A cleanup contractor shows off a large tar ball on Padre Island National Seashore, Texas, in July. An Asian carp awaits disposal after being caught near the electric barrier in Chicago. Baylor instructs officials in managing information during a crisis before an oil spill exercise at the Panama Canal in March.

Coordination Center

Throughout the past year, the National Strike Force (NSF) has undertaken a dramatic overhaul of its response equipment and training program. Staying in alignment with the strategic transformation of the Coast Guard, the NSF has campaigned to recapitalize its aging inventory and find solutions to develop a better trained responder.

The NSF Coordination Center re-established workgroups after the Executive Steering Committee meeting held in September 2009. Two of the workgroups that have designed the foundation for modernization are the chemical workgroup and training workgroup.

The chemical workgroup has taken great strides to standardize the NSF response inventory. In doing so, the chemical workgroup has identified and prioritized capabilities to fill current gaps, improve/upgrade aged equipment, and build upon the NSF inventory.

Equipment Capability Priority	Final Tier
Ability to ID unknown gases	1
PID / FID	2
CWA detection	2
Benzene Monitoring	1
Bio Aerosol Sampling	3
RPP (Level C CBRN Operations)	2
GS Mass Spectrometry	3
Radiation Isotope Identification	3
MSA Accountability System	2
Real Time Medical Monitoring	3

Equipment Upgrades:

Some important upgrades to existing NSF response equipment are new Portacounts, which are respirator fit testers by TSI; the Weather Pak MTR, an improved onsite, real time weather monitor by Coastal Environmental Systems, Inc.; the Ludlum Model 2241-3, which is a general purpose radiation ratemeter/scaler; a new Level "A" hazmat response trailer from Haulmark Trailers; the C3, which is a submersible fluorometer for dispersant monitoring from Turner Designs; a T200 Infrared camera, which allows for thermal surveys by FLIR; and the ONESuit, which is a new Level "A" vapor protection ensemble from Saint Gobain.

New Equipment:

Major improvements in NSF capabilities to assist responders during a hazmat response are the Gas ID, which is an unknown gas and vapor identifier by Smiths Detection, and the Gamma Rae II, which is an intrinsically safe gamma radiation detector and dosimeter from Rae Systems. The Atlantic Strike Team is currently testing a system that can monitor levels of air while responders are in the exclusion zone.

Scale:

Tier 1: Capability requiring immediate attention

Tier 2: Capability requiring attention but can be completed in a short-term period

Tier 3: Capability requiring attention but can be completed over a long-term

The TWG is making efforts to revise and update the existing NSF training program by ensuring quality through standardization within the NSF. In November 2009 a NSF Training Requirements Analysis (TRA) was released outlining the framework, structure, and direction for the future NSF training program. Currently the TWG is working to fully support the ESC and TRA by revising NSF Performance Qualification Standards (PQS), which were last updated in 2005, and creating an interactive web based NSF Learning Portal.

NSF PQS:

Throughout the history of the NSF, training standards have developed and evolved to reflect the highest expectations of a Hazardous Materials Responder. The NSF Responder Development Program establishes the training standards and qualification levels for Strike Team Members. The NSF has four qualifications: Response Member, Response Technician, Response Supervisor, and Response Officer. The NSF Responder Development Program contains all four qualifications and the NSF Course Map, comprised of all courses needed to obtain a NSF Qualification or to maintain team readiness. The NSF

TWG is updating the NSF Responder Development Program to accurately reflect the missions and duties of a NSF Responder.

NSF Learning Portal:

As the Coast Guard continues to develop and implement web based learning applications and programs, the NSF is also pursuing the creation of a NSF Learning Portal. As well as saving on travel and training costs, web-based learning tailors to the student by allowing him or her to complete the course at any pace and location. The NSF is researching converting various team mandated trainings and courses into e-learning. A few of these trainings include the NSF Oil Week Course and Team Confined Space Training.

The NSF has grown and expanded its responsibilities throughout its proud 30-plus year history. The innovative changes made to the NSF through the modernization process will allow future Strike Team responders to be better equipped with state-of-the-art instruments and possess enhanced technical knowledge and skills to remain the World's Best Responders: Any time, Any place, Any hazard.

Clockwise from top left: Petty Officer Todd Legutki discusses equipment with an OSRO representative during an October preparedness assessment visit in Tampa, Fla. A lancer barge is lifted off a pier during an oil spill response exercise. Petty Officer Adam Evans reviews safety and maintenance records at an OSRO office in Toledo, Ohio, in September. Coast Guard members inflate boom before deploying it from a vessel.



MAR-GU



JUN Bering Sea Operation



Shipwrecked

Members of the PST assess the grounded fishing vessel Mar-Gun on St. George Island, Alaska. The island is home to fur seals, sea lions and marine birds as well as an historic archeological site - a Russian Aleutian settlement.

At the crack of dawn in early March, the captain of the 112-foot fishing vessel Mar-Gun radioed the Coast Guard saying his vessel had run aground on St. George Island, Alaska, with five crew members onboard and carrying nearly 19,000 gallons of fuel.

The Mar-Gun grounded on a shoal off a remote island in the middle of the Bering Sea. If any of the vessel's diesel fuel and lubricating oils spilled into the extremely sensitive environment, the fur seals, sea lion rookeries and marine birds living there could have been disastrously affected. In addition to the environment and wildlife being threatened, the vessel grounded near the site of an historic Russian Aleutian settlement.

The five crewmembers of the Mar-Gun were rescued without incident from the vessel by a Coast Guard helicopter and were delivered safely to St. Paul, Alaska. According to the crew, they transferred the fuel onboard to tanks away from the outer hull in an effort to preempt any discharge or spill before departing the vessel.

The Pacific Strike Team was notified shortly after the incident and six members deployed immediately. It took them approximately 30 hours to travel from Novato, Calif., to St. George Island, Alaska, due in large part to the remoteness of the location. In addition to the Pacific Strike Team responders, Coast Guard

personnel from several Western Alaska units were mobilized to support the civilian responders hired by the owner of the Mar-Gun.

"The tactics employed and the use of the Strike Team allowed us to take advantage of the first weather window after the grounding and not waste valuable time," said Cmdr. Joseph LoSciuto, deputy commander of Coast Guard Sector Anchorage and federal on-scene coordinator for the response.

The operation to recover the diesel and other oils from the vessel was set in motion. However the bitter March weather hampered efforts.

All of the responders battled raging winds of 40 mph and stinging snow that turned into ice pellets. If it wasn't the snow or ice pellets, it was the wind proving to be the most painful. Temperatures hovered around 10 to 20 degrees, which felt more like 20 below zero with the wind.

The cold temperatures and high winds generated very heavy surf conditions, which made transiting to and from the



Humping Hoses

Petty Officer Adam Anderson carries a transfer hose to a pre-staging area to transfer fuel from the grounded 112-foot fishing vessel Mar-Gun.



All-hands Evolution

A layer of protective wrapping is applied over a hose fitting hose to prevent leakage onto the beach.



A Unified Plan

Chief Warrant Officer Mark Gregory, a response officer at the PST, discusses the plan for lightering the Mar-Gun.

Mar-Gun extremely challenging for the six members of the PST.

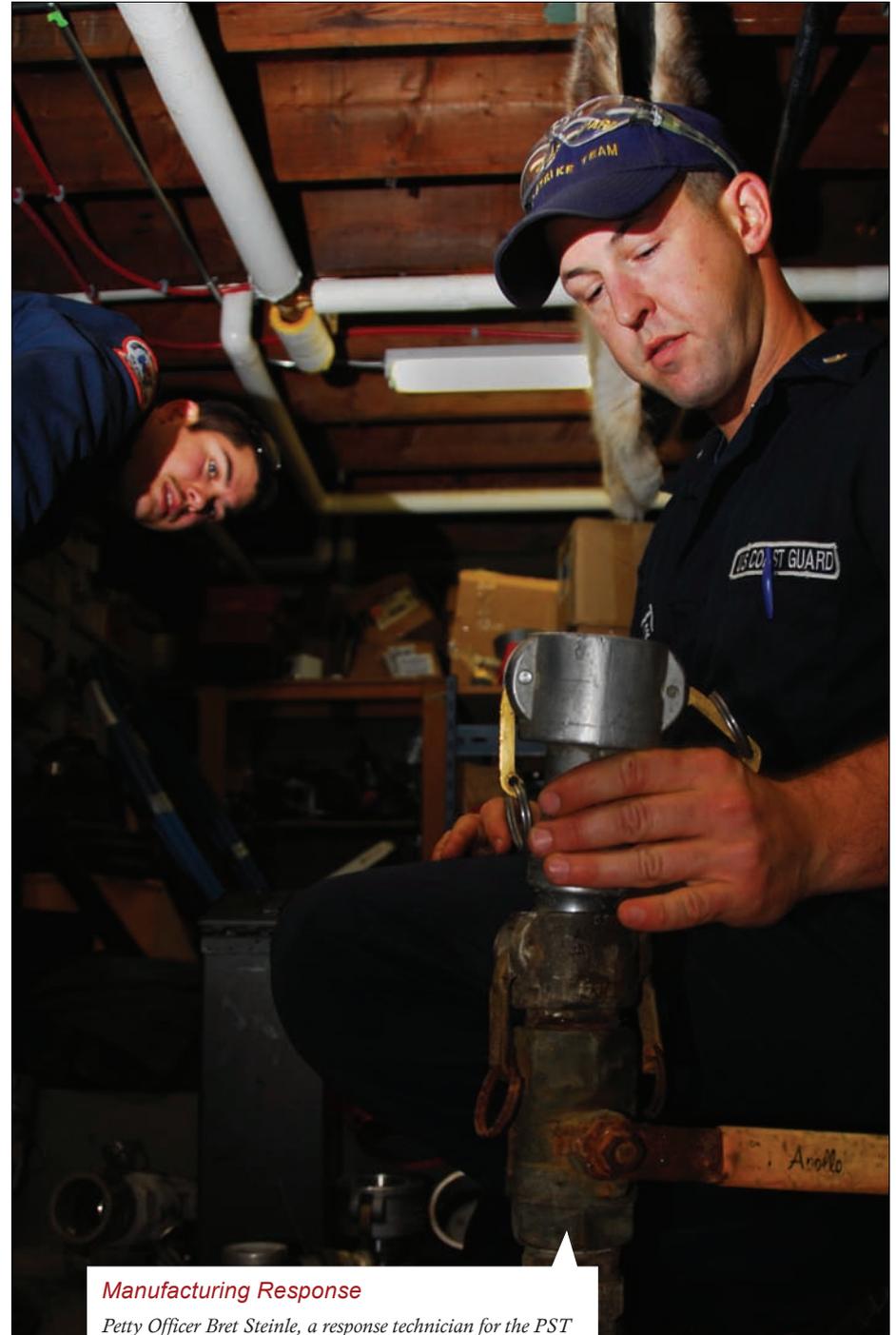
To transit to the stricken vessel the PST members rigged a system of pulleys extending from shore to the vessel enabling a small inflatable boat to be pulled safely to and from the ship. Although the mechanism worked well, the members still had to charge their way through six to 10-foot waves.

While the responders pumped the diesel and other oils from the vessel, a light intermittent diesel sheen was sighted,

but it evaporated quickly. It also didn't affect the shoreline, where clean-up and assessment teams combed the area during fuel lightering operations.

Six days after grounding on the shoal, the responders completed emptying the fuel tanks. Other salvage efforts continued through mid-May, when the Mar-Gun was successfully refloated and towed to Zapadni Bay, Alaska.

“In my 25 year career, this is the best Coast Guard success story I have ever been apart of,” said LoSciuto. ■



Manufacturing Response

Petty Officer Bret Steinle, a response technician for the PST adjusts a fitting that will be connected to one of the fuel hoses rigged to lighter the Mar-Gun.



From the Field

WORDS FROM THE FIRST RESPONDERS.

THE BOOTS ON THE GROUND.

THE STRIKE TEAM MEMBERS WHO WERE THERE.

“Being a Response Supervisor has been a real learning experience. It’s a big responsibility documenting the cost of a Super Fund site. I’ve been at the Strike Team for three years, and I’ve grown as a responder, but also as a person. It’s been an awesome experience.”

-MST2 Carol Baillie, AST

“I’ve been on the team since September, and I’ve deployed on six responses so far. When I first reported in, the scope of what we do was a bit overwhelming. But it’s been a fantastic learning experience - just really exciting.”

-MST3 Eric Schenk, GST

“It’s been a real education. The Strike Team has taken me places I never would have even imagined going as a civilian. We get to go to these neat places, and then help the people who live there. It’s been a great ride.”

-Lt. j.g. Aaron Riutta, PST

“I’ve experienced a whirlwind of activity since I arrived at PIAT in August. It’s impossible to predict what will come next or what city I might find myself in at the end of each day. The work has been challenging, and of course stressful at times, but in the end, I feel like I’m lucky to be working with the incredible people in the response community.”

-CWO2 Amy Thomas, PIAT

Strike Team Qualifications

Response Member

Entry-level Strike Team position, attained by member within six months. Primary responsibility is to assist the Response Technician.

Qualifications and Training:

- 160-hour National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) HAZMAT technician course
- 80-hour Basic Strike Team equipment & response training
- NOAA Shoreline Clean-up Assessment Training
- Familiar with Strike Team equipment
- 100- and 200-level ICS training

Response Technician

Second-level Strike Team position, attained within 18 months. Serve as technical experts and fill leadership positions in response organizations.

Qualifications and Training:

- Qualified Response Member
- 80-hour NFPA HAZMAT specialist training
- 40-hour Weapons of Mass Destruction training
- 40-hour Oil Spill Response training
- EPA Water/Soil/Air Sampling course
- 300-level ICS training
- Expert with all Strike Team equipment and operations

Response Supervisor

Highest enlisted-level Strike Team position, may be attained within 30 months. Primary responsibilities are to supervise Strike Team operations and lead responses.

Qualifications and Training:

- Qualified Response Technician
- 24-hour NFPA HAZMAT Incident Commander course
- EPA Health and Safety for Decision Makers course
- FEMA Professionals in Emergency Management course

Response Officer

Highest Strike Team position, attained within 18 months and only available to Strike Team officers.

Qualifications and Training:

- Requires extensive field experience
- Response Officers are NFPA HAZMAT incident command qualified and capable of managing an incident response

Activation and Deployment





Strike Team Resources

Type -I incident Nationally significant incident involving resources from throughout the nation in massive quantities. Examples include: Spills of National Significance (SONS), the Sept. 11 attacks and the Exxon Valdez oil spill. **Type -II incident** Regionally significant, involving resources from outside the immediate location of the incident, and may include out of state resources. Examples include: Space Shuttle Columbia Recovery Operation, major hurricane response and major oil spills impacting several states. **Type -III incident** Local but complex due to the extended time involved in the response (48 or more hours) or may escalate into a Type II or I incident. May require Strike Team assistance as a force multiplier for the operational commander. Examples include: localized oil or chemical spills, vessel sinkings and groundings, hazardous cargo leakage from various transportation modes and localized flooding events. **Type -IV incident** Routine emergency that does not normally require Strike Team assistance.



Coastal Environmental Systems Weather Pak MTR provides on-site, real-time weather data for chemical, biological, and radiological responses. The Weather Pak also incorporates an integrated GPS and an ultrasonic wind sensor.

New Equipment



TSI Portacount 8038 is a respirator fit-tester that provides quantitative analysis of all types of respirators. The fit test measures mask fit under conditions that approximate actual use.

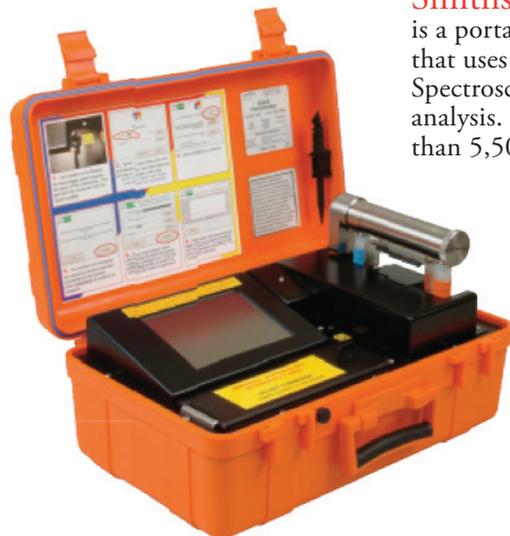
Turner Designs C3 Submersible Fluorometer uses up to three optical sensors to rapidly collect and report real-time, scientifically based information during a dispersant operation.



New Equipment



Rae Systems GammaRAE II is a gamma source detector and dosimeter. Additionally the GammaRAE II is intrinsically safe and permits operations in a potentially flammable/explosive environment.



Smiths Detection Gas ID is a portable gas and vapor identifier that uses Fourier-Transform Infrared Spectroscopy for qualitative materials analysis. The Gas ID can identify more than 5,500 gases and vapors.



Ludlum Model 2241-3 is a portable microprocessor-based digital scaler/ratemeter for measurement of ionizing radiation. The Ludlum 2241-3 has changeable probes, which allow for detection of Alpha, Beta, Gamma, and Neutron radiation.



Level A

Level A protection is required when the greatest potential for exposure to hazards exists and when the greatest level of skin, respiratory and eye protection is required.

Toxic vapor analyzer (detects organic and inorganic gases)



Fully-encapsulating chemical resistant suit

Multi-gas detector (monitors four atmospheric hazards at the same time)

Inside the suit: hard hat and SCBA

Level B

The same level of respiratory protection is required as in Level A, but a lesser degree of skin protection is needed. Level B protective clothing includes a one piece ensemble with the SCBA worn outside the garment. Separate gloves and boots would be sealed at the interfaces to minimize chemical penetration.



Self-contained breathing apparatus

Chemical splash suit

Chemical weapons detector and identifier (detects nerve and blister agents, as well as gamma and x-ray radiation)

Single beam infrared spectrometer (scans five distinct gases simultaneously)

Level C

The same level of skin protection as Level B, but a lower level of respiratory protection is needed. One- or two-piece splash suits are worn with a cartridge respirator. Level C is worn when chemicals are not hazardous via skin absorption and are typically well below established exposure limits.

Air purifying respirator

Airborne particulate monitor (detects dust, smoke, fumes and mists)

Chemical splash suit



Particulate air sampling pump - can take four simultaneous samples

Level D

Level D is the minimum protection required. Protection is primarily a work uniform.

RAD Backpack (detects gamma ray and thermal neutron radiation)

RAD pager (measures gamma and neutron rate)



Pocket radiac (detects radiation)

Handheld spectrometer (provides gamma dose and rate and neutron count rate, source finder and automatic nuclides identification)



Hazardous Material Response Trailer

The HMRT trailer houses all chemical response gear to sustain a response for three to four days. It is road-deployable anywhere within the continental United States without need of special permits and can be deployed by aircraft. Each Strike Team has one HMRT.



Fly-Away Box (Gulf Strike Team)

The GST developed the “fly-away” box to address the need for an easy-to-deploy offshore HAZMAT load for the NSF. This ISU-90 box is air-loadable, containing similar standard “Level A” trailer load. With the small size, the team is able to deploy this gear by air, boat or a combination of the two. Keeping the contents modular allows responders to load the specific gear that is required and deploy the box to a platform, offshore vessel or remote location to conduct a HAZMAT response.



Mini-ANDROS II Robot

It provides the NSF with visual first responder capability. It can be used for remote atmospheric testing and is equipped with a video uplink system that can provide downrange intelligence for entry teams. The visual data can also be provided to key decision makers. The robot can be operated at a distance of 1,200 feet through fiber optic cable. Each Strike Team has one Mini-ANDROS II robot.



Air-Deployable Hazardous Material Response Trailer

The “Level A” chemical response trailer houses all chemical response gear and is self-sustaining for one to three days. The AST and GST have this capability.



Pump Load The large pumping system is designed for lightering oil tankers and cargo vessels. The submersible pumps incorporated in the ready load are capable of pumping a wide range of petroleum products, mild acids, corrosives, and water. The large pumping system is prestaged on a trailer and palletized into four segments, ready for rapid deployment by aircraft or tractor trailer. The system consists of two HPU Deutz prime movers, one HVPU Highstar prime mover, three submersible pumps with associated hoses on pallets, and one support box with various kits. Additional stainless steel discharge hoses (three - six inches) are available to add to the load as required for chemical off-loading of corrosive materials. The hoses are flex hose type with a stainless steel braided cover and cam-lock fittings.



Sea Slug The Fluid Containment Bladder is used for storage and transportation of recovered fluid during oil spill recovery operations. The FCB is a flexible, closed tube tapered at each end with a cast aluminum fitting assembly designed to distribute the towing load to the container fabric. The FCB comes with all fittings and gear for filling and towing operations at sea and can additionally be used for fluid storage on land.

The Sea Slugs are constructed using high strength PVC-coated polyester material with closed-cell foam for floatation. The Sea Slug has a stainless steel towing gear, with marine grade aluminum fittings. To protect the FCB from damage due to inadvertent grounding, the bottom half is fitted with a second skin which is sealed in place. Each end of the bladder also has a connection for filling or off-loading and the front of the FCB has a smaller bladder used for buoyancy. Each Strike Team has two 10,000 gallon Sea Slugs. The GST has two additional 25,000 gallon Sea Slugs.





32-Foot Munson Utility Boat has a square bow, a drop ramp door, a wheel house, a tow bit, a removable J-davit, complete hydraulics package and a full array of electronics. The boat can operate in seas up to six feet, transport up to 16 people and is powered by twin/counter-rotating 225-horsepower engines. It is transportable over the road or by C-5 aircraft. Each team has one 32-foot Munson.



18-Foot Johnboat is an aluminum-hulled vessel. The boat can be used to deploy harbor boom, transfer personnel and conduct other logistical tasks. It is powered by one 50-horsepower outboard engine and is mounted on its own road-ready trailer for transport over the road or by C-130. Each team has a johnboat.



24-Foot Munson Utility Boat is an aluminum-hulled vessel. It can be used to deploy harbor boom, transfer personnel and conduct other logistical tasks. It is powered by two 90-horsepower outboard engines and is mounted on its own road-ready trailer for transport over the road or by C-130. The PST and GST each have one 24-foot Munson boat. The AST has a 23-foot Sea Ark with two 130-horsepower engines and the same capabilities as the Munson.



Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat has a fiberglass keel and deck. It can be used to deploy harbor boom, transfer personnel and conduct other logistical tasks. It is powered by two 40-horsepower outboard engines and is mounted on its own road-ready trailer for transport over the road or by C-130. The GST and PST have one 17-foot RHIB and the AST has a 50-horsepower 18-foot RHIB.



Viscous Oil Pumping System VOPS is designed to be incorporated into and enhance an existing offloading pumping system. It is designed to be used when the oil characteristics to be pumped create higher frictional hose resistance than either the pump or the hose system can handle in the form of discharge pressure. The system is based around the concept of injecting a small amount of water via a uniquely designed annular injector into the internal circumference of a pipe or hose that is pumping oil. The water forms an internal coating, or tube of water, between the oil and the pipe wall. This water sleeve replaces the oil-to-hose wall friction factor with an oil-to-water friction factor. This creates a drastic reduction in head pressure from friction losses. The VOPS is not a complete lightering system but is designed to enhance the operation of existing lightering pump systems. Each Strike Team has one VOPS.



Flood Response Trailer Two johnboats with two outboard motors are stacked on a two-axle trailer with two ATVs and fuel for rapid deployment for flood responses. They can be transported by road or C-130. Each 14-foot johnboat is an aluminum hulled vessel powered by one 20-horsepower outboard engine. The boat can be used to deploy harbor boom, transfer personnel and conduct other logistical tasks. The ATVs are four wheel drive, light terrain vehicles. The Strike Teams have different makes and models of ATVs in their inventories to perform a variety of functions from personnel transport to carrying equipment. The vehicles are for off road use only and are ideal for beach surveys. Load capacity, including rider and gear, is 380 lbs. Front cargo rack maximum capacity is 66 lbs. Rear cargo rack maximum capacity is 132 lbs. The ATV has four forward gears and one reverse gear. They can tow a light trailer utilizing a 1-7/8" trailer hitch ball. They can also be operated at night due to installed lighting systems. Each Strike Team has one flood response trailer.



Vessel of Opportunity Skimming System VOSS is a modular oil skimming system that can be operated from a vessel of opportunity at a spill site. With this system, a vessel between 60 to 400 feet in length can be quickly transformed into an oil recovery vessel. The optimum vessel is 100 to 300 feet long. It must be able to operate at a sustained speed of one-half to one knot and have strong rails that can accommodate universal clamps to secure the outriggers and skimmer-lifting davit.

The VOSS has a maximum skimming output of 190 gallons per minute and a maximum sweep width of 42-feet off each side or 84 feet plus the beam of the vessel. It can skim and pump both light and heavy oil at one-half to one knot, using the fast sweep boom, depending on sea state, oil viscosity and thickness.

The VOSS is staged on a 48-foot low-bed tractor trailer for fast response. It has two containers, each with a complete sweeping and skimming system for one side of a vessel. These systems can be split between two vessels or installed on one vessel as a two-sided sweeping system. Two collapsible inflatable barges are staged on the trailer in their own containers for storage and transport of recovered oil or off-loaded product. The entire VOSS and two barges without the trailer can be loaded on a C-130 military airplane, or with the trailer on a C-5 military airplane, for transport. Each Strike Team has one VOSS.



Inflatable Boom provides a barrier to contain, collect, or protect areas from oil floating on the water. The inflatable boom is designed to be rapidly deployed and recovered with a minimum amount of manpower. In 30 minutes four personnel can deploy 656 feet of boom from the reel or retrieve it from the water. A diesel hydraulic power pack supplies hydraulic power to the integral air blower and to the boom reels. A tool box containing spare parts and accessories completes the staging unit inventory. Each team has more than 6,500 feet of inflatable boom on hand.



Frequently Asked Questions

How do I request Strike Team assistance?

Contact the nearest Strike Team or the National Response Center for direct deployment of needed assets for National Contingency Plan (NCP) incidents. The teams maintain an aggressive response posture to provide maximum special team support to Federal On Scene Coordinators. Ask for the Operations Officer or the Officer of the Day. For non-environmental response incidents, a request for forces needs to be filed with the Deployable Operations Group (DOG).

If I am uncertain as to whether an incident requires support from the Strike Team, what should I do?

Call. The Commanding Officer, operations officer or command duty officer will discuss the incident and specifically recommend what equipment or personnel resources they can provide to support the response.

Where can I obtain an equipment listing for various Oil Spill Response Organizations (OSRO) in a specific AOR?

The Response Resource Inventory (RRI) is a database that is maintained at the NSFCC and contains equipment inventory for classified OSROs. The database contains locations as well as equipment amounts and capabilities. Information derived from the RRI can be retrieved from the NSF website. For specific OSRO inventory information, contact the Response Support Division at 252-331-6000 ext 3036 or the website at: <https://cgrrri.uscg.mil>

How do I request the Public Information Assist Team?

Public information professionals who are skilled in the Incident Command System (ICS), Joint Information Center (JIC), risk communication and crisis media relations, can be requested for NCP incidents directly through the NSFCC or through the National Response Center at 800-424-8802. For Non-NCP incidents, a request for forces needs to be filed with the Deployable Operations Group (DOG).

Who pays for a Strike Team to respond?

In most cases, the On-Scene Coordinator has the \$1 billion Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund (OSLTF) or the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) fund to pay for associated costs resulting from oil spills or substantial threats of oil or hazardous material spills to navigable waterways of the United States. If the incident does not meet either of those funding specifications, the requesting agency would fund the Strike Teams' response through the Stafford Act or other means.

Can the Strike Team respond to projects in the remediation phase?

Strike Teams respond to projects or incidents at all phases. Contact the nearest team for additional information.

Can foreign governments request Strike Team assistance during major incident?

Strike Teams deploy internationally to assist foreign governments in a variety of incidents. The requesting government contacts the U.S. State Department for Strike Team support.

Photo Credits

On the Cover: St. George Island, Alaska -- Chief Petty Officer Alan Dooley, Petty Officer 1st Class Erik Vonstockhausen, Petty Officer 2nd Class Adam Anderson and Petty Officer 2nd Class Bret Steinle (PST) muck through knee-deep water en route to returning from the F/V Mar-Gun, Thursday, March 5, 2009. (U.S. Coast Guard photo/ Petty Officer 3rd Class Walter Shinn)

On the Back: Crews from the Coast Guard, Texas General Land Office and other partner agencies oversee clean-up efforts Sept. 27, 2009, in the Houston Ship Channel. (U.S. Coast Guard photo/ Petty Officer 3rd Class Patrick Kelley)

Pg 4 - Caribbean Air and Marine Branch photo, Ens. Mark Bender, MSTC Robert Birdwell, Birdwell, Capt. David Haynes

Pg 7 - PA3 Adam Baylor, USCG photo, USCG photo, USCG photo, PA3 Patrick Kelley

Pg 8 - USCG Photo, PA3 Walter Shinn, USCG Photo, Lt.j.g. Aaron Riutta, MK1 Brandon Bach

Pg 10 - PA1 L.F. Chambers, PA2 William Colclough, Baylor, Capt. David Haynes

Pg 13 - Lt. Raymond Jackson, USCG photo, USCG photo, MST2 Wyatt Ingram

Pg 14-15 - Shinn

Pg 18-19 - Caribbean Air and Marine Branch photo

Pg 21 - PA3 Thomas Atkenson, CWO Mark King, USCG photo, USCG photo

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