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# National Oil Spill Contingency Plan

## Chapter 14 – Media Protocols



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## Overview

This chapter sets out general procedures and guidelines to be used when working with the media and the community during an oil spill response.

## Media Relations

### Aim

Media management will influence how the spill response is run and how it is perceived so it is important to establish a good working relationship with media as soon as possible.

Media relations should aim to:

- support the OSC to meet media and community requirements without hindering the operational effectiveness of a response;
- provide timely and accurate information to all media;
- maintain the integrity and positive reputation of response organisations throughout the response; and
- enable the general public to better understand and support an oil spill response.

### The Media Liaison Officer (MLO) and the On-Scene Commander (OSC)

One staff member should be put in overall charge of managing media relations and should report to the OSC. Here this position is referred to as the MLO.

Given the media team's primary job is to effectively communicate the OSC's plans and the response team's actions to the media, the OSC must give the highest priority to providing access and information to the media team.

The OSC should attempt to:

- meet the MLO's requirements for media work but both parties should understand that these requirements must not interfere with the operational effectiveness of a response; and
- fully brief the MLO throughout the response and also alert them to any possible risk factors.

The OSC may also ask the MLO to communicate messages to the public (e.g. safety, volunteers etc) through the media.

Often "no go" areas are established for safety reasons while the cleanup is underway so media should not be allowed unsupervised access to the spill area or the ICC.

It may be possible to suspend operations for brief periods and escort reporters and camera operators to the site of the spill. This should be at the discretion of the OSC and journalists should always be escorted onto the site.

### The Media Liaison Officer

The MLO is responsible for the following activities and tasks:

- draft, gain approval for and distribute media releases;
- manage incoming media calls;
- manage interview requests and brief participants;
- promote and manage press conferences;
- manage site visits by media, dignitaries or special interest groups;
- monitor media (checking for misinformation or information/concerns gleaned from the public);
- distribute safety warnings or any other information as required by the OSC;
- liaise with media staff from other agencies; and
- ensure internal staff are kept informed of the response.

## Spokespeople

Generally, only the MLO or the OSC will speak to journalists.

Under certain circumstances it may be necessary for experts in specific fields, to talk to the media. This must be approved by the OSC. Prior to any media interviews, identified experts will be given any necessary advice by the MLO.

All other operations personnel on the response team should refer media courteously to the media centre and/or the appropriate phone numbers for the MLO. The requirement to do this should be included in initial briefings for all response personnel.

Media queries concerning issues that fall outside the spill response should be referred to the appropriate organisation or individual to provide that comment.

Either the duty media officer (24 hour phone: (04) 499 7318) or the communications adviser (work hours phone: (04) 494 1214) can be contacted for Maritime NZ issues or advice.

The Incident Command Team, which includes the Media and Community Relations section are not expected to handle enquiries from the general public. General enquiries should be handled through a central phone number capable of handling large volumes of calls, and manned by people with customer service training and who have been briefed on how to handle calls.

## Escalation from Tier 2 to Tier 3

The MLO should ensure that the Maritime New Zealand duty media officer is kept informed of any response likely to generate media coverage.

Should the response change from a Tier 2 to a Tier 3 response it is highly likely that the Tier 2 MLO will continue to be involved in the response to maintain continuity and to utilise that person's local knowledge.

If a response is escalated to a Tier 3 the MLO could be asked to continue to manage media relations until a Maritime NZ media adviser arrives on scene. The MLO will need to communicate with Maritime NZ through the duty media officer and attempt to meet their requirements.

The MLO should prepare the following information to brief the Maritime NZ media adviser when they arrive:

- Copies of any media release/information made;
- a list of any media on scene;
- a list of any media activity that has taken place or is planned;
- a list of any current media requests; and
- a list of any likely risk areas.

## Further resources

Maritime NZ is able to assist with any or all of the following to assist MLOs during any response or in preparedness activity:

- background information on all aspects of oil spill response;
- key messages and response lines;
- supportive comment for media releases;
- oil spill response (OSR) specific media training and scenario practice;
- graphics and images;
- presentation templates;
- specialist advice; and
- media distribution lists.

A Maritime NZ staff member may also be available to travel to the local area to assist in any way required. The Maritime NZ website (<http://www.maritimenz.govt.nz/>) contains useful background information regarding marine oil spill response.

# Community Relations

## Aim

A spill response will be of great interest to the local community and their understanding and support is vital to a successful response at the time and into the future. A plan should be developed that ensures the community are kept informed of the response and how it will affect them.

The details of this plan, its tools and its messages will vary depending on the area and the incident but should include the following activities:

- briefing community leaders;
- holding public meetings;
- displaying and/or distributing response information;
- asking organisations to send a representative to the command centre; and
- using a website as the focal point for public information.

The audiences considered for community engagement must include:

- Iwi;
- residents and homeowners near the spill;
- DoC and any other agencies in the area;
- businesses dependent on access to the marine area or affected by the spill response and may include:
  - any residents' association or community action group in the immediate area,
  - commercial and/or recreational fishermen, environmental groups with an interest in the area, and
  - other marine users;
- local schools;
- other organisations with community responsibilities which may be affected by the spill and its response; and
- local politicians.

## Escalation from Tier 2 to Tier 3

Should the response escalate from a Tier 2 to a Tier 3, Maritime NZ will assume responsibility for community relations but it is highly likely a local staff member will be delegated to manage them.

The following information should be prepared for the Maritime NZ Media and Community Relations Manager before they arrive:

- a copy of any information released to date;
- a list of community leaders and their contact details; and
- a Community Plan in the Maritime NZ format (see Appendix 3) drafted as current as possible.

## Media and Community Relations in a Tier 3 Response

### Aim

This Section sets out how Maritime New Zealand plans to deal with media and community relations in a Tier 3 response in support of the Incident Command Centre (ICC) and the MIRT.

### Structure

The size and structure of the media and community relations team required will depend on the individual requirements of the response such as size, complexity, location and duration. The MoU with local government allows Maritime NZ to ask for assistance in forming a media and community relations team.

The communications adviser based in the Education and Communications team at National Office will usually act as the Media & Community Affairs Manager (MCM) during a response. If the adviser is unavailable a decision on deputation will be made between the Director Maritime MNZ (DMNZ), General Manager Business Development and Communication and the National On-Scene Commander (NOSC).

It is the responsibility of the MCM to manage the media and community team and decide on its structure, personnel and operation.

## **Notification**

The MCM should be informed of a major spill at the earliest opportunity to allow maximum mobilisation time. Depending on the nature of the incident, this communication could come through several different ways:

- the Rescue Coordination Centre of New Zealand;
- the Maritime NZ duty media officer;
- the Maritime NZ duty manager;
- the Oil Spill Duty Officer;
- the Director Maritime NZ;
- Maritime NZ MPRS staff;
- the National On Scene Commander; or
- Regional Council/TLA media/community relations staff.

This notification should be made regardless of time or location.

The MCM should be briefed on the basic details of the incident and anticipated actions as soon as possible. It will depend on knowledge and availability as to who does this briefing. While in transit to the scene, the MCM should then be kept informed of developments via the MIRT.

The MCM will select and notify any Council staff required to support media and community relations, in addition to staff available locally.

## **MCM and the NOSC**

The NOSC will give a high priority to providing access and information to the media/community team so they are capable of implementing an effective media and community plan. The NOSC will also attempt to meet any media requirements designated by the MCM.

It is important to note that a response's number one priority is the operational element so meeting media and community requirements must not interfere with the operational effectiveness of a response.

The MCM will develop and manage media and community plans to support the Incident Action Plan and the NOSC.

## **Media centre**

It will be necessary to set up a media centre during a response (usually based at the ICC). It is the responsibility of the MCM to manage the centre and:

- determine the most appropriate location;
- ensure that is adequately resourced;
- ensure that is adequately staffed; and [is this not already part of the bullet above?]
- ensure that its operation and location is appropriately promoted.

## **Spokespeople**

It is the responsibility of the MCM to manage interview requests with the support and approval of NOSC and/or DMS. It is also the MCM's responsibility to ensure spokespeople are adequately briefed before an interview or meeting.

The MCM will assess the individual requirements of the interview request, consult with NOSC and/or DMS and designate the most appropriate spokesperson.

MCM will take into account the following factors when assessing the most appropriate spokesperson:

- type and status of media;
- likely question lines;
- availability;
- subject knowledge;
- credibility; and
- risk and benefit.

Generally the MIRT media team will arrange spokespeople on issues regarding the salvage, strategic, policy, legal and political aspects of a response.

Those in consideration as spokespeople include (but are not limited to):

- DMS;
- NOSC (generally only comments on the operational issues);
- Members of the ICC; [-do-]
- MSA Deputy Directors;
- MSA General Managers;
- MIRT members;
- subject matter experts; and
- staff from outside (but supporting) organisations.

Where appropriate the MCM (or their delegates) are authorised to act as spokesperson under the following conditions:

- that they speak to (but not expand on) previously released material;
- that they release only factual and documented information; and
- that, where possible, they first seek approval from DMS and/or NOSC.

All other personnel involved in the response (regardless of their employer) should refer media queries to the MCM in the first instance.

## **Community relations**

Representatives of a local community may be involved in an advisory and consultative role during a response. They will also be kept informed of the response through media reports. However, the MCM is responsible for managing a proactive plan that reinforces this activity and engenders community support and understanding.

The MCM will attempt to ensure that all sectors of the community are kept as fully informed as possible, in a timely, accurate and easily understood manner. The MCM is expected to liaise closely with local government in identifying community leaders and the processes by which they will be kept fully informed.

They will also look to utilise the awareness of the local political situation and any other issues unique to the area that local knowledge can provide.

## **Key tasks**

The following is a list of duties that could be expected to be undertaken by the MCM and their team during a response. The type and circumstances of the incident will dictate which of these tasks is necessary. It is intended as a guide only and not a complete list of duties required.

Note: Where the MCM is assigned a task they may delegate it to another member of their team.

<b>TASK</b>	<b>USUAL ASSIGNMENT</b>
<b>OPERATIONAL</b>	
Select, notify and mobilise members of the media and community support team	MCM
Manage HR/Finance requirements of team	MCM/Finance
Arrange travel/accommodation needs of MCM and team	ICC
Provide and promote interim media response until ICC is established	MIRT
Complete media and community plans (using templates) and present to NOSC	MCM
Draft and gain sign off for media releases and community notices. Note – all parties will attempt to achieve a 30- minute turn around time for signing off releases.	MCM/MIRT
Distribute media releases and copy to other relevant parties	MCM/MIRT
Field media calls Note- the MIRT media team are responsible for salvage queries and any crossover media work involving the RCCNZ	MCM/MIRT
Log media activity	MCM/MIRT
Manage interview requests	MCM
Designate spokespeople and provide briefings	MCM
Schedule, arrange and manage press conferences	MCM
Schedule, arrange and manage community meetings	MCM
Arrange graphic support for conferences/meetings	MCM
Develop and distribute press packs and any other information required	MCM
Monitor media coverage and provide transcripts when necessary	MIRT
Rumour control management	MIRT
Internal (MNZ) communications	MIRT
Arrange, escort and safely manage any media site visits	MCM
Activate incident website page	MCM
Update website information	MIRT
<b>LIAISON</b>	
Notify Manager Education & Communications and any other MNZ staff necessary	MCM
Notify non-MNZ organisations of interim response	MCM
Ensure non-MNZ organisations and relevant stakeholders are kept informed	MCM/MIRT
Alert NOSC to any current or potential key media issues and manage response	MCM
<b>STRATEGIC</b>	
Identify story ideas and proactive opportunities involving response	MCM
Review and analyse media and community action post-response	MCM

## **MCM and Regional Council/TLA liaison**

The relationship between the MCM and Council communications/media representatives should attempt to achieve the following aims:

- ensure a free and frank exchange of information;
- foster a spirit of cooperation leading to a greater appreciation and understanding of each party by media and the general public;
- to work together to ensure a coordinated and effective response;
- to make the best use of local knowledge and available resources; and
- to build a shared capacity to respond to crisis situations.

The below protocols are expected to be followed during a response:

- The LCR will try and keep the MNZ communications adviser updated on any incident that could be escalated to a Tier 3 response.
- Once a Tier 3 response is activated the MCM will direct the initial response and then manage media/community activity when on scene.

- The LCR will attempt to provide the MCM with any information and/or resources required for an effective media and community response plan.
- The LCR will highlight any local issues likely to impact on an effective media and community response plan.
- The MCM will ensure that the LCR and other Council communications/media representatives are kept informed of media activity and strategy.

## Appendix 1: Media Plan Template

Date:

Aim:

Objectives:

Key Messages

### Risks & Mitigations

Risk	Mitigation

Channels & Tools

Spokespeople

## Appendix 2: Media Plan Example

**Date: 20 September 2008**

### **Aim:**

To respond to media requests in a reasonable timeframe with full and accurate information while recognising that the operational component of the response is the number one priority.

### **Objectives:**

- Foster a greater understanding of the role and work of Maritime NZ through an effective and responsive media programme.
- Maintain the integrity of Maritime NZ and XX Regional Council by dealing with media in a professional and cooperative manner.
- Ensure that on-site media have reasonable and safe access to the areas and staff they require

### **Key Messages**

- The response team understand the importance of the East Waikau coastline and is focusing its efforts on preventing the spill from reaching the shore.
- We need to make sure anything we do now won't do more harm to the environment than the actual spill.
- Maritime NZ has a team of oil spill experts on site who are assessing the best way to minimise the impact of the *Sadie F* grounding.

### **Risks & Mitigations**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
That Maritime NZ are seen as slow to react	Specialist equipment has been mobilised and is currently en route. Planning centres on environmental impact and can't be rushed.
That dispersant use will cause further harm	Maritime NZ has consulted with the XX Regional Council, the Department of Conservation, environmental and wildlife advisors and iwi before deciding to apply dispersant. Fact sheet - OSR Equipment Interview – Julian Roberts
Camera crew disrupt clean up	Police to set up & maintain cordon. Contact is John XX on 0274 XX

### **Channels & Tools**

Media releases – morning and afternoon

Press conference – daily @ 3pm

0508 SPILL INFO

[Website](#) updates

Media site tour – Wednesday 22nd, 12.30pm

### **Spokespeople**

Catherine Taylor – Director Maritime NZ

Neil Rowarth – Response Planning Manager

Nick Quinn – GM MPRS

Julian Roberts – Environmental analyst



## Appendix 4: Community Plan Example

**Date: 9 September 2008**

### **Aim:**

To provide timely and accurate information to the local community throughout the duration of a response

### **Objective:**

- To ensure all sections of the community are kept informed of response activity and its effects.
- To foster a greater understanding of the work and role of Maritime NZ.
- To encourage a spirit of cooperation between the community Maritime NZ and the XX Council

### **Key Messages:**

- The response team is doing everything possible to protect the XXX coastline.
- Maritime NZ will re-open XX Beach as soon as practical but not before it is 100% safe.
- Maritime NZ is working alongside XX Council and using their local knowledge to plan the response to the spill

### **Audiences:**

<b>AUDIENCE</b>	<b>SPECIFIC KEY MESSAGE/S</b>	<b>CHANNELS/TOOLS</b>
Green Tree Intermediate School	Children are safe from spill and its effects	Presentation to School assembly, Tuesday 12th
DoC		Local officer Margaret XX 027xx
XX Sailing Club members	Every effort will be made to reopen the channel as soon as possible but the clean up must continue without interruption	Letter to members Invite to community leaders meeting – Monday 11th
XX Preservation Society	Your willingness to help is appreciated but we have enough staff for now.	Invite to community leaders meeting – Monday 11th Article in newsletter
Local businesses	Any loss of business that can be accounted for is liable for compensation under international protocol.	Flyer distributed Sunday 10th Library noticeboard

# Appendix 5: Interview Notes

Time & location	Reporter	Media

**Main Purpose of the Interview** \_\_\_\_\_

**Key Messages:**

**1** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**2** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**3** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>Our Partners</b></p>
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<p><b>Key stats/facts</b></p>
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**Presentation notes:**

## Appendix 6: Interview Notes example

Time & location	Reporter	Media
3pm 1 October 2008, ICC	Joe Bloggs	TV3

**Main Purpose of Interview:** Reporter wants details on the spill, the initial stages of clean up and what is to be done next. Seems to be taking angle that Maritime NZ has not done enough to manage the spill and the effect of oil on the beach will be catastrophic to the local community.

### Key Messages:

1. 1 We have a team of highly trained personnel who have converged on XXX coast and are working together to clean up the spill and prevent any further pollution. By declaring a Tier 3 emergency, we are able to plan for a major pollution response and mobilise trained personnel and specialised equipment into the area.

.....

.....

2. Our focus now is on dealing with how best to tackle the spill and minimise its impact. We'll keep monitoring and responding to the situation until it is safe and stable enough to downscale the response.

.....

.....

3. We are working with the local community to ensure we manage this spill effectively and quickly. Their concerns are important to us, and they can be assured that we have a highly trained and dedicated team working to minimise the effects on their coast.

.....

.....

Our partners
XX Regional Council
XX Community Association

Key stats/facts
Oil identified along 10km of coastline
No wildlife identified as endangered by spill – situation being monitored
Investigation team working to confirm the source of spill
Five teams of six working on rotation on cleaning beach

### Presentation notes:

# Oil Spill Response – Key Messages/Response Lines

## Generic

- The Marine Transport Act requires that we provide an effective marine oil pollution response system, at reasonable cost.
- The main objectives of a spill response are to prevent further pollution and to safely contain and/or clean up the spill and in doing so minimise further damage to the marine environment.
- Oil spills can have severe and long-term biological, economic, political, cultural, and social impacts.

## Activation

- An oil spill response is a balance between removing the oil while causing minimum harm to the environment and taking into account safety issues and the available resources.
- By declaring a Tier 3 response, we are able to immediately mobilise trained personnel and specialised equipment into the area.
- We have established an operations base staffed by a team of trained personnel experienced in oil spill response. They are assessing the situation and developing a plan that can be put into action should there be a spill.
- Response action planning includes identifying sensitive sites in the area and deciding how best to protect these sites in the event of an oil spill.

## Salvage

- It is not the role or responsibility of the oil spill response team to engage in salvage operations.
- We are working with the vessel's owner to develop a salvage plan that will not compromise the safety of the vessel, its fuel oil or cargo.
- Before the vessel can be moved we need a comprehensive salvage plan, the necessary resources and equipment in place and suitable tide and weather conditions.

## Safety

- Occupational safety and health requirements are incorporated into any oil spill response planning and are a major priority for us.
- The sea is sometimes very unforgiving and conditions can change quickly putting people's lives at risk.

## Prosecution

- Maritime NZ will do everything in its power to identify the offending ship and take appropriate action.

## Dispersants

- Any dispersant used in New Zealand marine waters is approved in accordance with marine protection rules.
- Modern dispersants have a low toxicity-about 8 times less toxic than dishwashing detergents.

## Wildlife

- All national and regional oil spill response contingency plans contain environmental and wildlife preservation objectives.
- Wildlife and habitat are protected as much as possible during containment and clean-up activities.

## **OSR Key Response Lines**

### **How long will this take?**

Right now we are concentrating on dealing with this incident effectively so as to minimise the impact. We'll keep monitoring and responding to the situation until its safe and stable enough to downscale the response.

### **How much will this cost?**

At this stage we cannot determine the total cost. The spiller is liable for all cleanup costs. We have a great team of trained responders here who are concentrating on preventing any further pollution and on cleaning up the spill.

### **Why aren't you doing anything?**

We have a team of highly trained personnel who are currently monitoring the situation. We have to be sure that any action we take will not do more damage to the environment than the actual spill.

### **Won't putting dispersant into the water just cause more pollution?**

Before using dispersants we carefully consider the environmental impact to confirm that dispersant application will result in a better environmental outcome.

### **Have you got enough people/resources to handle this situation?**

MNZ has a team of professionals and response equipment ready for response to this type of situation, and access to Regional teams who receive regular training in preparation for oil spill response. International support arrangements are also available if required.

### **Why can't people enter the affected area?**

Safety is a major priority for us and we have to make sure the response is not slowed down by unwanted intrusion. We'll try and get the area open as soon as possible but not before it's completely safe.

## Appendix 7: Initial Briefing Form

Date:

Nature and cause of incident:

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Location (use kms if necessary):

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Weather conditions (include sea conditions if appropriate):

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Size of spill likely:

Tier 3 declared  Considering Tier 3  Major  Large  Reasonable  Small  No spill yet

Type of oil (if known):

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Environmental sensitivities:

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Action to date:

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Next action planned:

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Personnel details:

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