



Geographic Response Strategy Exercise Series – Gloucester First Responder Exercise

After-Action Report/Improvement Plan

May 17, 2022

The After-Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) aligns exercise objectives with preparedness doctrine and related frameworks and guidance. Exercise information required for preparedness reporting and trend analysis is included; users are encouraged to add additional sections as needed to support their own organizational needs.

NOTE: The actual on-water deployment/GRS test was cancelled due to unexpected high winds in Gloucester Harbor. This AAR captures general information related to the classroom and hands-on training that was completed prior to termination.

EXERCISE OVERVIEW

Exercise Name	2022 Gloucester First Responder Exercise
Exercise Dates	May 17, 2022
Scope	This is a full-scale exercise, planned for approximately 6 hours in Gloucester Harbor. Exercise play is limited to Gloucester Harbor in the vicinity of USCG Station Gloucester, Harbor Cove, and the adjacent shorelines.
Focus Area(s)	Prevention, Protection, Response
Capabilities	Environmental Response/Health and Safety, Operational Coordination, Operational Communications.
Objectives	<p>Objective 1: Demonstrate the ability to deploy oil spill equipment from one or more MassDEP pre-positioned oil spill response trailers utilizing common Geographic Response Strategy (GRS) tactics.</p> <p>Objective 2: Demonstrate the ability to assemble a spill response organization utilizing Incident Command System (ICS) principles through execution of an Incident Briefing (ICS 201) and implementation of on-site incident management and tactical operations.</p> <p>Objective 3: Demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate between multiple local, state, and federal agencies including fire departments, police departments, harbor masters, and other state and federal first responders using VHF and UHF communications.</p>
Threat or Hazard	Discharge of oil into a navigable waterway
Scenario	An oil spill has occurred that threatens Gloucester Harbor. The Gloucester and Rockport Fire Departments and Harbor masters will utilize various common Geographic Response Strategy (GRS) tactics to protect sensitive resources in Gloucester Harbor and the surrounding area.
Sponsor	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)
Participating Organizations	<p>Participating organizations included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gloucester Fire Department • Gloucester Harbor master/Shellfish • Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) • U.S. Coast Guard Sector Boston • Moran Environmental Recovery • Nuka Research <p>Note: See Appendix B for participant count</p>
Point of Contact	<p>Julie Hutcheson, Marine Oil Spill Program Coordinator Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program 1 Winter St. Boston, MA 02108 (617) 366-7424 julie.hutcheson@mass.gov</p>

First Responders participate in the classroom portion of the exercise



Moran Environmental Recovery provides trailer familiarization to the first responders



Photos courtesy of Nuka Research

First responders practice throwing a heaving line



First responders learn how to assemble the boom



Photos courtesy of Nuka Research

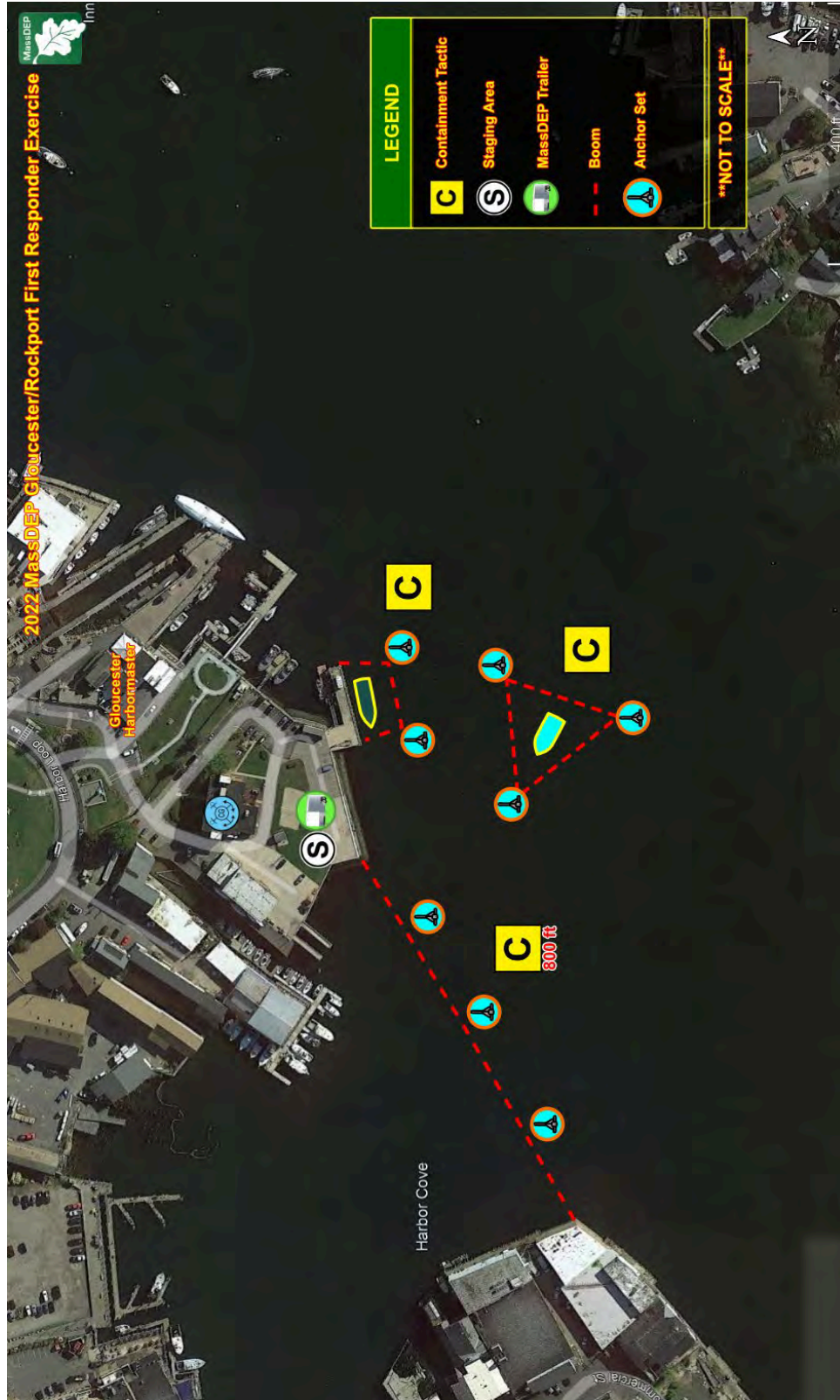


Figure 1. Exercise Tactics Map

ANALYSIS OF CAPABILITIES

Aligning exercise objectives and capabilities provides a consistent taxonomy for evaluation that transcends individual exercises to support preparedness reporting and trend analysis. Table 1 includes the exercise objectives, aligned capabilities, and performance ratings for each capability as observed during the exercise and determined by the evaluation team.

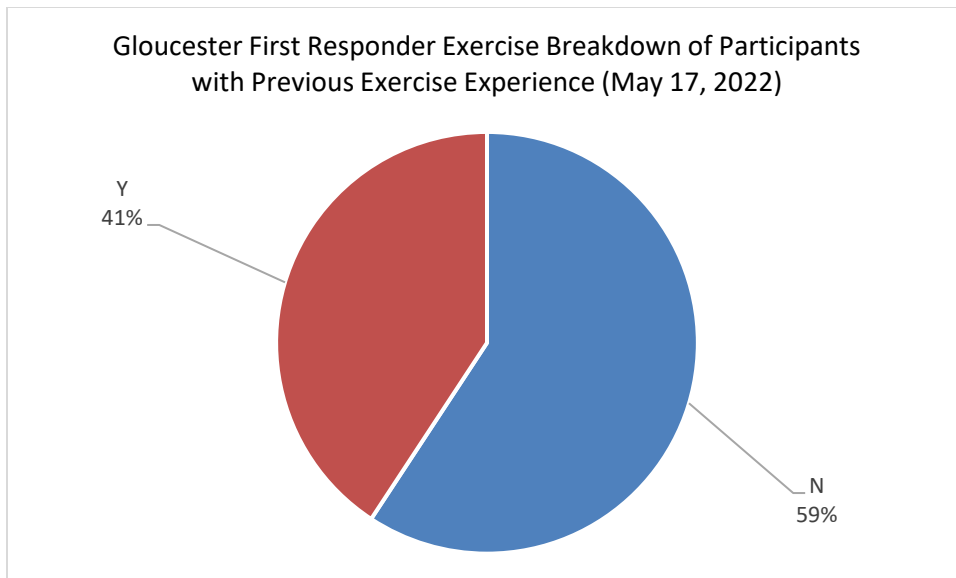
Objective	Capability	Performed without Challenges (P)	Performed with Some Challenges (S)	Performed with Major Challenges (M)	Unable to be Performed (U)
Demonstrate the ability to deploy oil spill equipment from one or more MassDEP pre-positioned oil spill response trailers utilizing common Geographic Response Strategy (GRS) tactics.	Environmental Response/Health and Safety				U
Demonstrate the ability to assemble a spill response organization utilizing Incident Command System (ICS) principles through execution of an Incident Briefing (ICS 201) and implementation of on-site incident management and tactical operations.	Operational Coordination				U
Demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate between multiple local, state, and federal agencies including fire, police and harbor master departments using VHF and UHF communications	Operational Communications				U
Ratings Definitions: Performed without Challenges (P): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s) and did not negatively impact the performance of other activities. Performance of this activity did not contribute to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers, and it was conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws. Performed with Some Challenges (S): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s) and did not negatively impact the performance of other activities. Performance of this activity did not contribute to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers, and it was conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws. However, opportunities to enhance effectiveness and/or efficiency were identified. Performed with Major Challenges (M): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s), but some or all of the following were observed: demonstrated performance had a negative impact on the performance of other activities; contributed to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers; and/or was not conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws. Unable to be Performed (U): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were not performed in a manner that achieved the objective(s).					

Table 1. Summary of Core Capability Performance

As indicated on the cover page, the on-water equipment deployment was cancelled due to unexpected high winds in Gloucester Harbor so a comprehensive evaluation of each exercise objective and associated capability could not be performed. Therefore, no further performance overview can be provided.


APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANTS & RESOURCES

Participating Organizations	
	Participant Count
City of Gloucester, MA	
Gloucester Fire Department	23
Gloucester Harbormaster/Shellfish	4
TOWN PARTICIPANTS	27
Federal	
United States Coast Guard Boston	2
State/Other	
Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)	3
Nuka Research and Planning Group, LLC (contractor for MassDEP)	3
Moran Environmental Recovery (contractor for MassDEP)	3
TOTAL	38



Agency	Resource	Kind	Exercise Function
Gloucester HM	Oil Spill Response Trailer	Equipment	Equipment Demo

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK



MassDEP
Geographic Response Plan (GRP)
Exercise and Testing Program

Participant Feedback Form

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Mildly disagree	Neutral	Mildly agree	Strongly agree

Please use the above rating scale to answer the questions for each of the following topics.

The objectives were clearly explained and the exercise met those objectives.	1 2 3 4 5
Comments:	
The material appropriately challenged me and the pace of instruction was correct.	1 2 3 4 5
Comments:	
The instructor(s) did an excellent job.	1 2 3 4 5
Comments:	
I found the classroom to be a comfortable learning environment.	1 2 3 4 5
Comments:	
I feel more prepared to respond to an oil spill than I did before this exercise.	1 2 3 4 5
Comments:	
The best thing about this training was _____.	
This training could have been improved by _____.	

Please use the back of the sheet if you need more room for comments.

(Rev 2016)


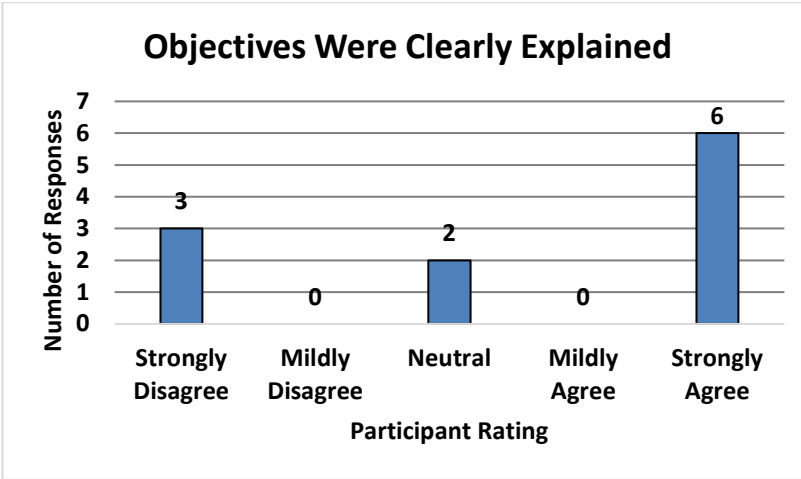


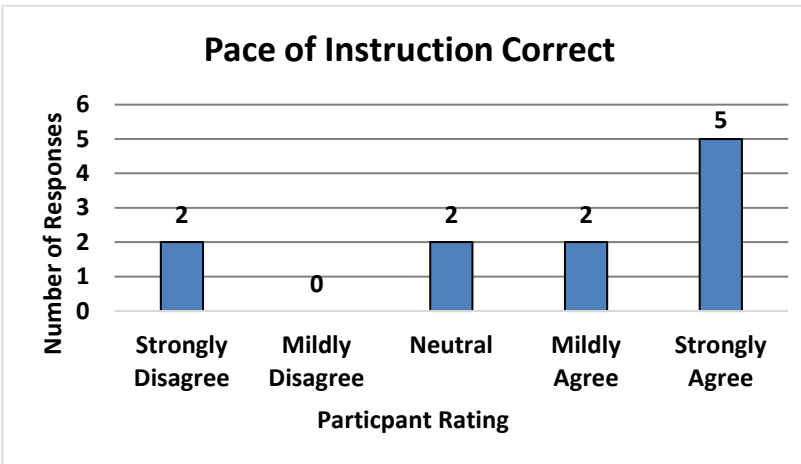
Figure 2. Participant Feedback Form

Participant Feedback Summary

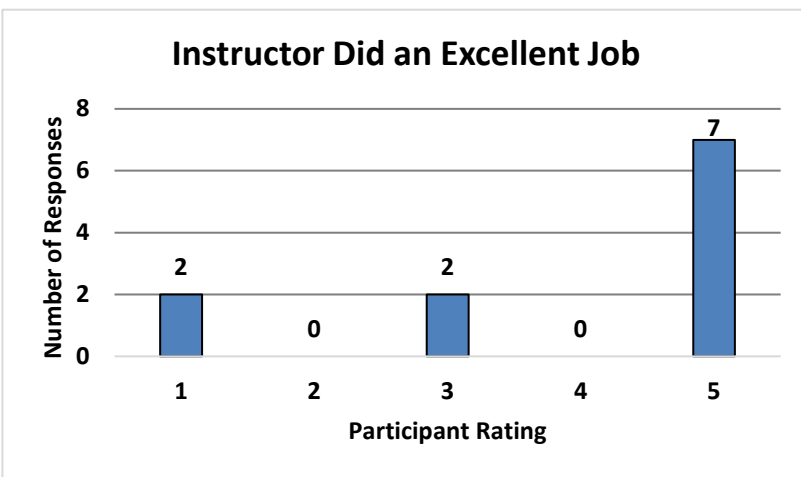
The following feedback was received from 11 of the 27 participants (40%).



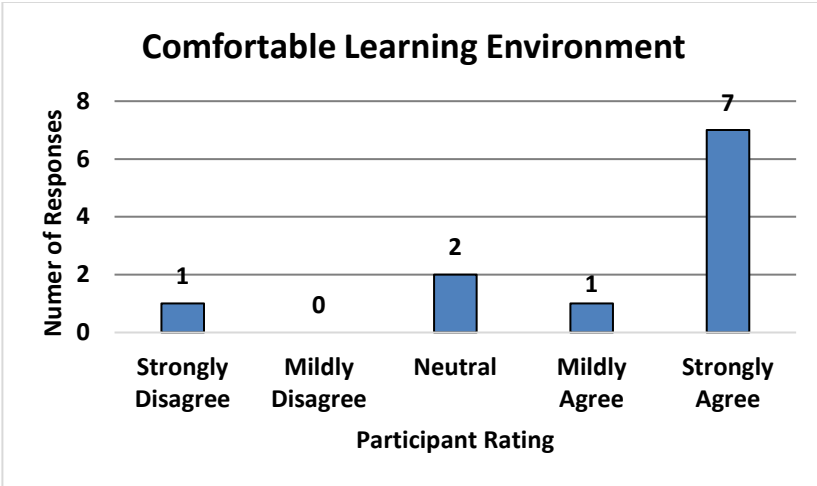
Comments: None



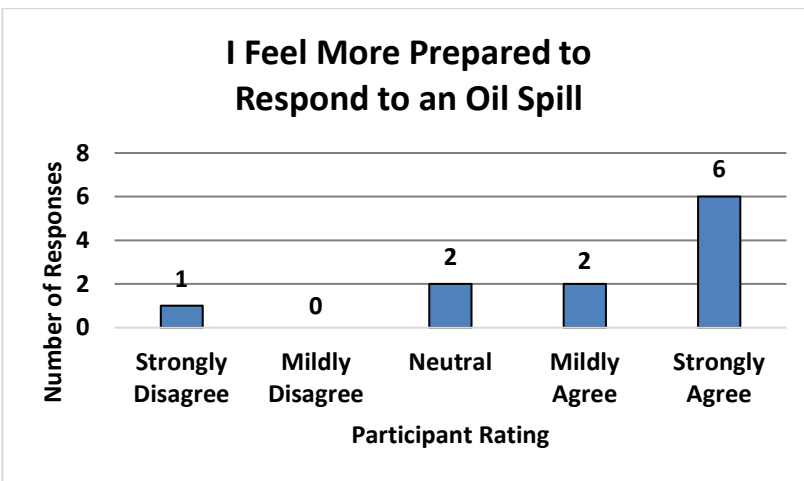
Comments: None



Comments: None



Comments: None



Comments: "Good refresher but have been in this training before"

The best thing about this training was "Hands on Portion", "The instructors and the props"

This training could be improved by: "Additional funding so I can afford to have more of my personnel attend"; "Great class"