



First Responder Training and Geographic Response Strategy (GRS) Testing Exercise Series

Marion, Mattapoisett

After-Action Report

September 16, 2025

The After-Action Report (AAR) 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.

EXERCISE OVERVIEW

Table 1: Exercise Overview

Exercise Name	2025 Marion/Mattapoisett Geographic Response Strategy Exercise
Exercise Date	September 16, 2025
Scope	This full-scale exercise was planned for approximately six hours at the Mattapoisett Fire Department. Exercise play was limited to Hiller Cove and the surrounding areas.
Mission Area(s)	Prevention, Protection, Response
Capabilities	Environmental Response/Health and Safety, Operational Coordination, Operational Communications
Objectives	<p>Demonstrate the ability of local first responders to:</p> <p>Objective 1: Conduct initial response activities within the first 4-6 hours of an oil spill incident by deploying MassDEP oil spill response equipment and implementing common Geographic Response Strategy (GRS) tactics in alignment with the MassDEP GRS Tactics Guide.</p> <p>Objective 2: Establish and maintain command and control in the first 4-6 hours of an oil spill incident response by identifying relative health and safety hazards, developing an initial response organization, and communicating response objectives, strategies, and tactics through the completion of an Incident Briefing form (ICS 201) and the facilitation of an Operations and Safety Briefing.</p> <p>Objective 3: Communicate information and actions between multiple local, state, and federal agencies within the first 4-6 hours of an oil spill incident by identifying a common UHF or VHF radio channel that can be utilized by all participants.</p>
Threat or Hazard	Discharge of oil into a navigable waterway
Scenario	An oil spill has occurred that threatens Hiller Cove and the adjacent shorelines. The Marion and Mattapoisett Fire Departments and Police/Harbormasters will utilize various common Geographic Response Strategy (GRS) tactics to protect sensitive resources in these areas.
Sponsor	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)
Participating Organizations	<p>Participating organizations included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marion Fire Department • Marion Harbormaster • Marion Police Department • Mattapoisett Fire Department • Mattapoisett Police Department • MassDEP • United States Coast Guard Sector SENE • Moran Environmental Recovery (MER) • Nuka Research
Point of Contact	<p>Julie Hutcheson, Marine Oil Spill Prevention & Response Program Coordinator Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection 100 Cambridge St., Suite 900 Boston, MA 02114 (617) 366-7424 julie.hutcheson@mass.gov</p>



Figure 1: Participants practice configuring marine anchor systems



Figure 2: Participants learn about shoreside anchor systems



Figure 3: Participants learn about sorbent materials and culvert plugs



Figure 4: Mattapoisett and Marion oil spill response trailers

Photos courtesy of Nuka Research & Planning Group and Marion Fire Department

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Exercise Planning

In preparation for the Marion/Mattapoisett exercise, both an Initial Planning Meeting (IPM) and a Final Planning Meeting (FPM) were conducted with members of the Exercise Planning Team (EPT). The EPT consisted of senior personnel from each of the participating organizations listed in the Exercise Overview section.

Initial Planning Meeting

A hybrid Initial Planning Meeting (IPM) was held via Zoom and in-person at the Mattapoisett Fire Department (62 County Rd, Mattapoisett, MA 02739) on Tuesday, July 29th, from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

Purpose

The purpose of the IPM was to discuss and identify logistical requirements for the exercise, including the date, classroom and deployment locations, personnel and vessel needs, and any additional operational considerations.

Participants

Table 2: IPM Participants

Name	Title/Rank	Department/Organization
Brian Jackvony	Chief	Marion Fire Department
Ross Macedo	Lieutenant	Mattapoisett Fire Department
Isaac Perry	Harbormaster	Mattapoisett Police Department
Dakoda Price		USCG Sector SENE
Matthew Childs		
Jonathan Orr		
Patrick Laurinaitis		USCG MSU New Bedford

Outcomes

A summary of key IPM outcomes is provided below. Additional details are available in the exercise ICS-201.

- **Exercise Date:** Tuesday, September 16th
- **Classroom Location:** Mattapoisett Fire Department (62 County Rd, Mattapoisett, MA 02739)
- **Deployment Location(s):** 11 Shore Drive, Mattapoisett, 02739
- **Additional Resources:** Marion Fire Department Drone; USCG MSU New Bedford Drone
- **Deployment Notes:** Shallow and rocky spots throughout deployment area

Final Planning Meeting

A Final Planning Meeting (FPM) was held virtually via Zoom on September 9, from 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM.

Purpose

The purpose of the FPM was to review the draft ICS-201 to validate exercise logistics confirmed during the IPM and to discuss any outstanding operational details needed to support the on-water deployment.

Participants

Table 3: FPM Participants

Name	Title/Rank	Department/Organization
Brian Jackvony	Chief	Marion Fire Department
Andrew Murray	Chief	Mattapoisett Fire Department
Isaac Perry	Harbormaster	Mattapoisett Police Department
Timothy Fox		USCG Sector SENE

Outcomes

A summary of key FPM outcomes is provided below, including a description of deployment plans.

- Deploy and test the 900ft EX02 tactic from the Aucoot Cove BB18 GRS

Exercise Conduct

Exercise controllers and senior participant personnel monitor weather forecasts and may also conduct pre-deployment site surveys to identify any physical or environmental limitations that could impact execution of the deployment plan. Any necessary adjustments to the plan and the conditions observed on the day of the exercise are summarized below.

Table 4: Summary of Observed Conditions

Factor	Observed Conditions
Wind speed and direction	12 mph, NE
Tidal conditions	Flood tide
Water depth (approx.)	5 ft
Wave action & Current speed (approx.)	Moderate wind and currents
Vessel traffic	None
Harbor mooring field density	Moderate
Other observations	Small boat ramp located in residential area off Shore Dr.

The following deployment activities were completed:

- Completed the deployment of a modified, 600ft chevron EX02 tactic. The first 100ft of boom extended from a shore anchor on a section of beach east of the Shore Drive boat ramp – to the edge of a small jetty west of the ramp. The remaining 500ft was then attached and extended across Hiller Cove, and anchored on Aucoot Beach to complete a chevron exclusion array.

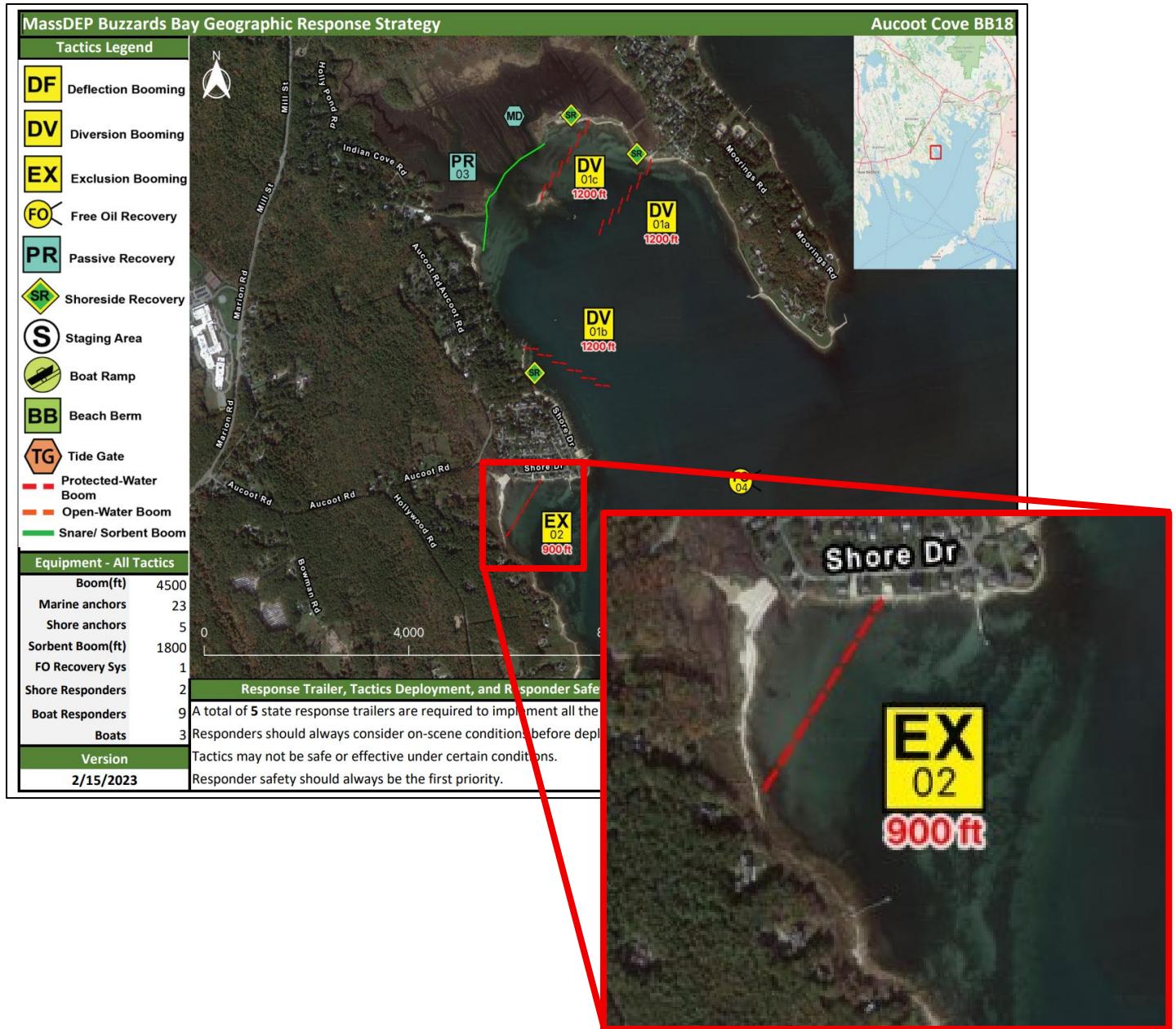


Figure 5: Exercise Tactic Map

EXERCISE REPORT

Objective 1: Conduct initial response activities within the first 4-6 hours of an oil spill incident by deploying MassDEP oil spill response equipment and implementing common GRS tactics in alignment with the MassDEP GRS Tactics Guide.

Strength: Shore crews at the Shore Drive boat ramp location worked together to configure a double rebar shoreside anchor above the high tide mark, then transfer 600ft of boom to awaiting vessels for tow.

Strength: Work vessels safely and efficiently towed boom from the boat ramp to the opposite shoreline, then transferred the boom to awaiting shore crews on Aucoot Beach for anchoring.

Strength: Command staff, vessel crews, and shore crews worked together to identify the necessary adjustments to boom lengths, then configure and test a modified exclusion tactic.

Observation: Trailer crews at the Shore Drive location experienced delays in configuring a shoreside anchor due to sections of rebar being stored underneath the sorbent materials at the bottom of the trailer.

Analysis: While initially looking through the trailer to gather and prepare all anchoring equipment, shore crews were unable to find rebar sections to create a double rebar shoreside anchor. After a brief pause in operations to discuss these challenges, crews decided to take a second look through the trailer. Once they pulled much of the equipment out of the trailer's side compartment, crews eventually were able to find the sections of rebar laying on the floor. After pulling the two sections of rebar from the trailer, crews were able to effectively complete a double rebar shoreside anchor. After demobilizing the EX-array, crews repositioned equipment within the trailer to ensure sections of rebar are more accessible in future responses.

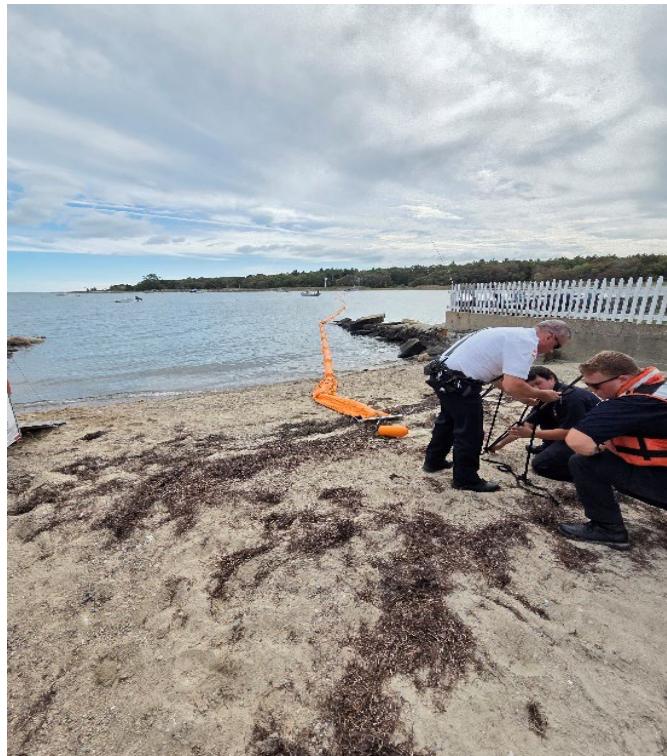


Figure 6: Shore crews configure a double rebar anchor at the Shore Dr. boat ramp



Figure 7: Completed modified 600ft EX tactic

Objective 2: Establish and maintain command and control in the first 4-6 hours of an oil spill incident response by identifying relative health and safety hazards, developing an initial response organization, and communicating response objectives, strategies, and tactics through the completion of an Incident Briefing form (ICS-201) and the facilitation of an Operations and Safety Briefing.

Strength: Despite the challenge of operating from two different locations throughout most of the exercise, command staff, vessel crews, and shore crews worked well together to coordinate roles and responsibilities and communicate deployment plans and tactical adjustments.

Observation: Shortly after arriving on-scene, several firefighters were deployed to an emergency call.

Analysis: Shortly after crews began to stage at both Aucoot Cove beach and the Shore Drive boat ramp for the on-water evolution, many firefighters were deployed to a nearby emergency call. This had impacts on several aspects of the operation. Some responders who remained at the site of the training needed to be reassigned to support different roles to overcome last-minute personnel shortages. For example, the Safety Officer initially planned to support the rest of the command staff at the beach location but needed to relocate to the boat ramp to assist trailer crews with equipment preparation. Because of this, he was unable to completely monitor safety hazards and precautions near the beach. To further complicate the operation, command staff and exercise controllers were unable to discuss deployment modifications with shore and vessel crews in a singular briefing due to the two operating locations.

In addition to the observed impacts on roles and responsibilities, it was also noted that the departing firefighters left with three pairs of waders. Because the vessels towing boom across Aucoot Cove could not completely approach the shoreline due to shallow water depths, shore crews had to walk several feet into the water to retrieve the anchor – and would have avoided getting wet if waders were still on scene.



Figure 8: Crews at Aucoot Cove Beach coordinate with work vessels to transfer boom to the shore



Figure 9: Completed 600ft EX tactic with deployed peat moss

Objective 3: Communicate between multiple local, state, and federal agencies, including fire, police and harbormaster departments using VHF and UHF communications.

Strength: Command Staff pre-identified a common radio frequency as the primary communications channel for the exercise and directed participants to join the channel during the operations briefing.

Strength: Responders utilized radios throughout the exercise to communicate hazards (e.g., shallow waters) and to discuss the adjustments needed to safely and effectively deploy a modified exclusion tactic.

Observation: Trailer crews and vessel crews experienced minor lapses in communication when towing boom from the trailer.

Analysis: Due to last-minute changes in the operational plan (deploying 600ft of boom instead of 900ft), there was some initial confusion regarding how much boom to prepare during the towing evolution. Despite this challenge, shore and vessel crews were able to coordinate brief pauses in the towing operation to effectively identify the boom lengths needed.



Figure 10: Vessel crew making final adjustments to 600ft EX tactic

PARTICIPANTS & RESOURCES

Table 5: List of Participants

Participating Organizations	
Town of Marion, MA	Participant Count
Marion Fire Department	8
Marion Harbormaster	1
Marion Police Department	1
Town of Mattapoisett, MA	
Mattapoisett Fire Department	7
Mattapoisett Police Department	2
TOTAL TOWN/CITY PARTICIPANTS	19
State	
Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)	2
Nuka Research and Planning Group, LLC (contractor for MassDEP)	2
Moran Environmental Recovery (contractor for MassDEP)	3
Federal	
United States Coast Guard Sector SENE	2
TOTAL	28

2025 Marion/Mattapoisett GRS Exercise
Breakdown of Participants with Prior Exercise Experience

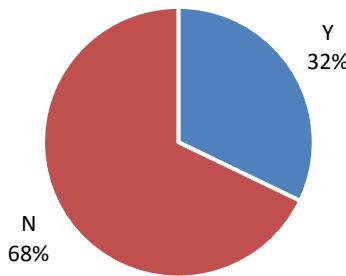


Figure 11: Previous Exercise Participation

Table 6: List of Resources

List of Resources			
Agency	Resource	Kind	Exercise Function
Marion FD	Zodiac	Vessel	Boom Deployment
Marion HM	Workboat	Vessel	Boom Deployment
Mattapoisett FD	21' Aluminum Center Console	Vessel	Boom Deployment
Mattapoisett HM	28' Stanley Landing Craft	Vessel	Boom Deployment
Marion FD	Drone	Equipment	Support
USCG	Drone	Equipment	Support
Marion FD	Oil spill response trailer	Trailer	Support