



**First Responder Training and Geographic  
Response Strategy (GRS) Testing Program Backfill  
& Overtime Reimbursement**

**Background:** Since the passage of the Oil Spill Act in 2004, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) Marine Oil Spill Program has successfully undertaken a comprehensive First Responder Training and Geographic Response Strategy (GRS) Testing Program. This program prepares local first responders in how to use the pre-positioned spill response trailers and equipment provided by MassDEP and how to implement GRS throughout coastal Massachusetts.

This exercise and training program began in 2009 and in 2011 MassDEP began conducting these exercises in compliance with the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP), which allows local municipalities to obtain funding for backfill and overtime (BF/OT) reimbursement. Regional homeland security councils, including NERAC, SRPEDD and MBHSR (coordinated by the City of Boston Office of Emergency Management (OEM)), previously provided this funding based on the GRS exercise program's compliance with HSEEP.

Massachusetts regional homeland security councils no longer provide funding for backfill and overtime (BF/OT) reimbursement. However, MassDEP, through the Oil Spill Prevention & Response Trust Fund, now provides funding for BF/OT costs of up to a maximum of \$2,500.00 per town. Each town should submit one BF/OT package that includes the total requested reimbursement amount for both fire department and harbormaster staff.

**What does MassDEP pay for?** These exercises are hosted by MassDEP and organized by its contractor, Nuka Research. Funding covers overtime and backfill for participants only on the day of the exercise (i.e., no more than 8 hours).

**What do I need to do?**

1. Each town's participating fire and harbormaster departments must coordinate to complete one BF/OT reimbursement request packet, as provided via email by Nuka Research. BF/OT document packages can also be downloaded from the MassGRS project site here: <https://www.massdepgpr-nukaresearch.com/faq>.
2. Each town's BF/OT packet must include a signed and completed cover sheet, worksheet, and payroll documentation. Also, please be sure the requested reimbursement amount falls at or under the \$2,500 per town MassDEP reimbursement cap.
3. Once completed, submit the packet via e-mail to Sam Butler, Nuka Research.
4. You will receive a receipt once the submitted package is accepted. You will also be updated via e-mail throughout the reimbursement process. Your town will be reimbursed as soon as Nuka Research is reimbursed from MassDEP.

**Contact Information:**

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