



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

C-O-MM, Cotuit, W. Barnstable

After-Action Report

September 23, 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 C-O-MM, Cotuit, W. Barnstable Geographic Response Strategy Exercise
Exercise Date	September 23, 2025
Scope	This full-scale exercise was planned for approximately six hours at the Centerville Fire Department. Exercise play was limited to Prince Cove Marina 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 Prince Cove and the adjacent shorelines. The C-O-MM, Cotuit, and W. Barnstable Fire Departments, and Barnstable Department of Natural Resources 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"> • C-O-MM Fire Department • Cotuit Fire Department • W. Barnstable Fire Department • Barnstable Department of Natural Resources • 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 learn about double rebar shoreside anchors



Figure 2: Participants learn about marine anchor systems



Figure 3: Participant prepares to toss heaving line



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Exercise Planning

In preparation for the C-O-MM, Cotuit, W. Barnstable 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 C-O-MM Fire Department Centerville Station (1875 Falmouth Rd, Centerville, MA 02632) on Wednesday August 13th, 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
Patrick Hill	Chief	C-O-MM Fire Department
Eric Sabatinelli	Captain	
Michael Rogers	Captain	
George Miskiv	Lieutenant	
Ian Diaz	Firefighter	West Barnstable Fire Department
Thomas Deeg	Firefighter	Cotuit Fire Department
Brian Taylor	Harbormaster	Barnstable Department of Marine & Environmental Affairs
Jason Scott		USCG Sector SENE

Outcomes

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

- **Exercise Date:** Tuesday, September 23rd
- **Classroom Location:** C-O-MM Fire Department (1875 Falmouth Rd, Centerville, MA 02632)
- **Deployment Location(s):** Prince Cove Marina (235 Cedar Tree Neck Rd, Marstons Mills, MA 02648)
- **Additional Resources:** Barnstable Department of Marine & Environmental Affairs Drone
- **Deployment Notes:** The boat ramp and the surrounding area are tightly configured with floating docks and vessels.

Final Planning Meeting

A Final Planning Meeting (FPM) was held via Zoom on Wednesday, September 17, from 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM.

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
Patrick Hill	Chief	C-O-MM Fire Department
Michael Rogers	Captain	
Jason Davern	Lieutenant	
George Miskiv	Lieutenant	
Brian Morrison	Deputy Chief	West Barnstable Fire Department
Ian Diaz	Firefighter	
Sean Brown	Chief	Cotuit Fire Department
Jeff Lebowski	Firefighter	
Derek Lawson	Director	Barnstable Department of Marine & Environmental Affairs
Jay Horn	Assistant Harbormaster	
Chris Nappi	Natural Resource Officer	Barnstable Department of Natural Resources
Matthew Childs		USCG Sector SENE

Outcomes

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

- Deploy and test a 200-300 ft containment tactic around a moored vessel.
- Deploy and test a 400 ft exclusion tactic at the opening of a creek north of Prince Cove Marina.

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, SW
Tidal conditions	Flood tide
Water depth (approx.)	5 ft
Wave action & Current speed (approx.)	Moderate currents
Vessel traffic	Minimal
Harbor mooring field density	Moderate
Other observations	Shallow waters near the site of the EX-tactic

The following deployment activities were completed:

- Deploy 200ft of containment boom around a moored vessel.



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: Shoreside crews worked well to prepare and stage 200ft of boom, load the appropriate number of marine anchor systems onto each vessel, then transfer the boom from shore to an awaiting vessel for tow.

Strength: Work vessels safely and efficiently towed boom from the shoreline to a nearby moored vessel for containment booming.

Strength: Command staff, vessel crews, and shoreside personnel worked together to determine an initial plan for deployment and to coordinate marine anchor adjustments to overcome equipment shortages.

Observation: The 200ft section of boom did not have mid-point marine anchor attachment rings.

Analysis: After completing the towing evolution and preparing to anchor the containment array, vessel crews recognized that the 200ft section of boom did not have mid-point marine anchor attachments. To overcome this, crews deployed two marine anchors to set the containment array (instead of the original plan to deploy four). Throughout the effort to configure an adequate containment area, vessel crews and shoreside command staff quickly and effectively communicated and coordinated changes, including utilizing a nearby mooring ball as a third anchoring point. After completing these initial adjustments, crews discussed further changes needed to improve the containment area, but exercise controllers ultimately called an end to the operation due to timing constraints.

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.



Figure 6: Shoreside crews load anchoring equipment onto vessels to prepare for towing operations



Figure 7: Vessel crews tow boom towards the containment area

Strength: Command staff quickly developed and communicated deployment plans to all participants and assigned roles and responsibilities for vessel and shoreside crews.

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 and Safety briefings.



Figure 8: Vessel crews work to configure the 200ft containment tactic

PARTICIPANTS & RESOURCES

Table 5: List of Participants

Participating Organizations	
Town of Barnstable, MA	Participant Count
C-O-MM Fire Department	12
Cotuit Fire Department	5
West Barnstable Fire Department	3
Department of Natural Resources	5
Department of Public Health	1
TOTAL TOWN/CITY PARTICIPANTS	26
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	4
TOTAL	37

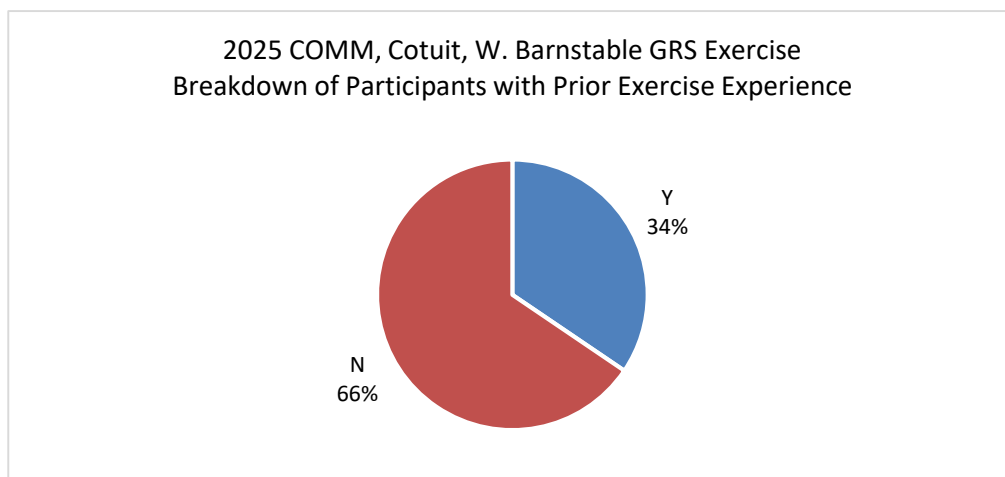


Figure 9: Previous Exercise Participation

Table 6: List of Resources

List of Resources			
Agency	Resource	Kind	Exercise Function
COMM FD	14' Whaler	Vessel	Boom Deployment
COMM FD	27' Safeboat	Vessel	Boom Deployment
Cotuit FD	28' Safeboat	Vessel	Boom Deployment
Barnstable DNR/HM	16' Skiff	Vessel	Boom Deployment
Barnstable DNR/HM	21' Alcar	Vessel	Support
COMM FD	Oil spill response trailer	Trailer	Support