



Massachusetts Department of
Environmental Protection

MassDEP Geographic Response Plan (GRP) Exercise and Testing Program

Incident Commander/Safety Officer Handbook

This handbook describes the roles and responsibilities of exercise Incident Commanders and Safety Officers, and the procedures they should follow. This handbook supplements the Exercise Plan (ExPlan) developed for each region-specific MassDEP GRP annual exercise.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Exercise Objectives and Core Capabilities

The following exercise objectives in Table 1 describe the expected outcomes for MassDEP GRP exercises. These exercises are compliant with the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP). The objectives are linked to core capabilities, which are distinct critical elements necessary to achieve the specific mission area(s). The objectives and aligned core capabilities are selected by the Exercise Planning Team.

Exercise Objective	Core Capability
Demonstrate the ability to deploy oil spill equipment from one or more MassDEP pre-positioned oil spill response trailers utilizing common Geographic Response Plan (GRP) tactics.	Environmental Response/Health & Safety
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
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 UHF and/or VHF communications.	Operational Communication

Table 1. Exercise Objectives and Associated Core Capabilities

Participant Roles and Responsibilities

The term *participant* encompasses many groups of people, not just those playing in the exercise. MassDEP GRP exercises have several different types of participants involved, and their respective roles and responsibilities, are as follows:

- **Players.** Players are personnel who have an active role in discussing or performing their regular roles and responsibilities during the exercise. Players discuss or initiate actions in response to the simulated emergency. Players in GRP Exercises include all personnel deploying boom and other equipment in response to the exercise scenario. Instructions for key players for this exercise are included in the following Appendices:
 - Appendix A - Incident Commander
 - Appendix B - Safety Officer
- **Controllers.** Controllers plan and manage exercise play, set up and operate the exercise site, and act in the roles of organizations or individuals that are not playing in the exercise. Controllers direct the pace of the exercise, provide key data to players, and may

prompt or initiate certain player actions to ensure exercise continuity. In addition, they issue exercise material to players as required, monitor the exercise timeline, and supervise the safety of all exercise participants. MassDEP personnel, along with their contractors, Nuka Research and Moran Environmental Recovery will serve as exercise controllers.

- **Evaluators.** Evaluators evaluate and provide feedback on a designated functional area of the exercise. Evaluators observe and document performance against the objectives in Table 1 along with established capability targets and critical tasks, in accordance with the Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs). The controllers will select evaluators prior to the beginning of the exercise.
- **Observers.** Observers visit or view selected segments of the exercise. Observers do not play in the exercise, nor do they perform any control or evaluation functions. Observers typically view the exercise from a designated observation area that affords visibility of exercise activity while at the same time keeping them out of harms way and away from player activity.
- **Media Personnel.** Some media personnel may be present as observers, pending approval by the MassDEP and the Exercise Planning Team.
- **Support Staff.** The exercise support staff includes individuals who perform administrative and logistical support tasks during the exercise (e.g., registration, catering).

GENERAL INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

Exercise Rules

The following general rules govern exercise play:

- The exercise is conducted in a no-fault learning environment wherein capabilities, plans, and equipment will be evaluated.
- Participating agencies may need to balance exercise play with real-world emergencies. Real-world emergencies take priority.
- Exercise players will comply with procedures outlined in the Massachusetts GRP Tactics Guide and specific GRPs unless otherwise directed by exercise controllers.
- All communications (including written, radio, telephone, and e-mail) during the exercise will begin and end with the statement “**This is an exercise.**” This precaution is taken so that anyone who overhears the conversation will not mistake exercise play for a real-world emergency.
- For an emergency that requires assistance, use the phrase “**actual emergency**” when communicating to the Incident Commander and Exercise Controller(s). The following procedures should be used in case of an actual emergency during the exercise:

- Anyone who observes a participant who is seriously ill or injured will immediately notify the closest controller and the Incident Commander, and, within reason, render aid.
- The controller aware of a real emergency will initiate the “**actual emergency**” broadcast and provide the Incident Commander, Safety Officer, Senior Controller, and Exercise Director with the location of the emergency.
- Unless agreed to otherwise, the host town for a GRP exercise will be responsible for coordinating with local emergency medical services in the event of an actual emergency.
- An Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) should always be present when conducting a GRP Exercise. The Incident Commander and Safety Officer should be aware of the identity of EMT qualified personnel or ambulance services supporting the exercise so they can be immediately engaged in the event of an actual emergency.

Players Instructions

Players should follow certain guidelines before, during, and after the exercise to ensure a safe and effective exercise.

Before the Exercise

- Review appropriate organizational plans, procedures, and exercise support documents. Relevant information is contained on the following web sites:

Topic	Website
Massachusetts Oil Spill Prevention & Response Efforts	http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/cleanup/marine/massachusetts-oil-spill-prevention-and-response-efforts.html#MassachusettsOilSpillPreventionResponseEfforts
Sections I and II of the Massachusetts Geographic Response Plan Tactics Guide.	https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/183bd6_3b551c2878da4bdc888dabb0bb2bbfca.pdf
Massachusetts Geographic Response Plans (GRPs)	https://www.massdepgrp-nukaresearch.com
Oil Spill Response Safety	http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/cleanup/marine/oil-spill-response-safety.html

- Be at the appropriate site at least 10 minutes before the exercise starts.
- Sign in when you arrive. This is important as the sign in sheet serves as the primary documentation for backfill/overtime requests that your city/town will be submitting upon conclusion of exercise.

During the Exercise

- Respond to exercise events and information as if the situation were real, unless otherwise directed by an exercise controller.

- Controllers will provide only the information they are specifically directed to disseminate. You are expected to obtain other necessary information through existing information channels.
- The Exercise Controller(s) will support the Incident Commander and Safety Officer . Together, they will be responsible for participant safety; any safety concerns must be immediately reported. The Senior Controller and Exercise Director will determine if a real-world emergency warrants a pause in exercise play and when exercise play can be resumed.
- If a player does not understand the scope of the exercise, or is uncertain about an organization's participation in an exercise, ask a controller.

After the Exercise

- Participate in the hot wash with the facilitating controller.
- Complete the Participant Feedback Form. This form allows you to comment candidly on emergency response activities and exercise effectiveness. Provide the completed form to a controller, evaluator or support staff.

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APPENDIX A: INCIDENT COMMANDER (IC) INSTRUCTIONS

General

The IC plays a critical role in the success of a GRP Exercise by completing the following tasks:

- Is responsible for the safety of all exercise players with the assistance of the Safety Officer (SO). See Appendix B for the Safety Officer Instructions.
- Set strategies, and priorities and has overall responsibility for the incident response.
- Establish and modify an effective ICS organization based upon changing incident and resource conditions.
- Directs all operational resources, providing tasking to vessel and shore strike teams to achieve the exercise objectives listed in Table 1. Communicate and assure understanding of work expectations within the chain of command and across functional areas.
- Monitor performance, provide appropriate feedback and ensure completion of assigned actions.
- Anticipate, recognize and mitigate unsafe situations. Ensure the safety, welfare, and accountability of exercise participants.

NOTE: Exercise controllers are always available to the IC and SO for direction and advice during the course of the exercise and at least one controller will remain in close proximity to the IC and SO at all times.

Before the Exercise

- Review the exercise plan and the GRP that will be tested. Be familiar with the exercise scenario and objectives. Know what tactic you will be deploying, what resources should be available to you and put together a preliminary plan for how to use them.
- Review the ICS-208 form in Appendix C.
- In addition, the following websites contain useful information.

Topic	Website
Massachusetts Oil Spill Prevention & Response Efforts	http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/cleanup/marine/massachusetts-oil-spill-prevention-and-response-efforts.html#MassachusettsOilSpillPreventionResponseEfforts
Sections I and II of the Massachusetts Geographic Response Plan Tactics Guide.	https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/183bd6_3b551c2878da4bdc888dabb0bb2bbfca.pdf
Massachusetts Geographic Response Plans (GRPs)	https://www.massdepgrp-nukaresearch.com
Oil Spill Response Safety	http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/cleanup/marine/oil-spill-response-safety.html

- Obtain or locate necessary communications equipment and test it to ensure that you can communicate with other exercise players.
- Provide your own Personal Flotation Device (PFD) unless you have arranged for someone else to provide one for you.

During the Exercise

- Report to the exercise check-in location at the time designated in the exercise schedule, and meet with the exercise staff.
- Inventory the resources (vessels, response trailers and personnel) that are actually at the exercise using the ICS-201 prepared for the exercise. Adjust your initial plan accordingly.
- Conduct an operational briefing using the ICS-201 form prepared for this particular exercise. This briefing includes establishing roles and responsibilities for vessels and shore based teams.
- Vessel tasking: A typical GRP Exercise has at least 3 vessels. Two are usually engaged in boom towing and one vessel serves as a safety vessel to keep boating traffic clear of the exercise and to provide support in the event of an actual emergency. Additional vessels participating in the exercise can be used as necessary.
- Shore personnel tasking: You will also have personnel on the shore that will be split into teams to move equipment from the trailer and a shore team to secure boom in place if the tactic calls for that. Establish and assign the necessary number of shore personnel based on the GRP being exercised.
- Take notes on any findings you may have during the exercise for the hot wash.

After the Exercise

- Participate in the hot wash. The facilitator will specifically ask you for your observations during the exercise.
- Complete the Participant Feedback Form.

APPENDIX B: SAFETY OFFICER INSTRUCTIONS

General

Your primary duty is to ensure safe operations for vessels and participants during the exercise. Safety for all exercise participants is the number one priority. Additional safety officer tasks include:

- Identify hazardous situations associated with the incident. Ensure adequate levels of protective equipment are available, and being used. MassDEP response trailers are supplied with several different types of PPE for use by exercise participants as listed on the following website: (<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/cleanup/marine/oil-spill-response-trailer-inventory.html>.)
- Each GRP tactic lists specific safety and deployment considerations. However, there are general safety considerations that apply to oil spill response operations. They are:
 - The most common types of accidents encountered during spill operations are slips, trips, and falls.
 - Vessel masters should have experience in the local operating environment.
 - Vessels deploying response equipment should not operate in a manner that exceeds the equipment's operating limits.
 - Vessels, including skiffs, must have a minimum of two crew aboard.
 - If possible, vessels transiting to/from an operation or staging area should travel in pairs when practicable.
 - Extreme care should be used when taking strains on anchoring systems. Especially when using the aft cleats of small vessels and skiffs.
- Extremes of temperature, humidity and precipitation all place considerable strain on human performance. Symptoms range from heat stroke, sunburn and dehydration at one end of the scale to frostbite and hypothermia at the other. Ensure exercise participants remain hydrated and suitable and sufficient control measures to prevent these conditions are available and used.

NOTE: Exercise controllers are always available to the IC and SO for direction and advice during the course of the exercise and one controller will remain in close proximity to the IC and SO as far as is practicable.

Before the Exercise

- Review the exercise plan and the GRP that will be tested. Be familiar with the exercise scenario and objectives. Know what tactic you will be deploying and the risks associated with carrying these tactics out.
- Review appropriate plans, procedures, and protocols including the following:

Topic	Website
Massachusetts Oil Spill Prevention & Response Efforts	http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/cleanup/marine/massachusetts-oil-spill-prevention-and-response-efforts.html#MassachusettsOilSpillPreventionResponseEfforts
Sections I and II of the Massachusetts Geographic Response Plan Tactics Guide.	https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/183bd6_3b551c2878da4bdc888dabb0bb2bbfca.pdf
Massachusetts Geographic Response Plans (GRPs)	https://www.massdepgrp-nukaresearch.com
Oil Spill Response Safety	http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/cleanup/marine/oil-spill-response-safety.html

- Review the ICS-208 form in Appendix C.
- Obtain or locate necessary communications equipment and test it to ensure that you can communicate with other exercise participants.
- Provide your own Personal Flotation Device (PFD) unless you have arranged for someone else to provide one for you.
- Conduct a safety briefing prior to the beginning of the exercise.

During the Exercise

- Report to the exercise check-in location at the time designated in the exercise schedule, and meet with the exercise staff.
- Anticipate, recognize and mitigate unsafe situations. Ensure all exercise participants are adhering to the provisions identified in the ICS-208 form in Appendix C.
- Ensure you have adequate manpower to achieve the task safely.
- Ensure safe access to the exercise staging area and areas where tactics will be deployed.
- Water operations always carry the hazard of drowning. Make sure all responders are wearing proper personal floatation devices (PFDs) when on or near the water.
- Ensure decks on vessels are kept as clean and organized as possible
- Verify the availability and identify of EMT's supporting the exercise.
- Take notes on any findings you may have during the exercise for the hot wash.

After the Exercise

- Participate in the hot wash. The facilitator will specifically ask you for your observations during the exercise.
- Complete the Participant Feedback Form.

APPENDIX C: ICS-208

SAFETY MESSAGE/PLAN (ICS 208)

1. Incident Name:	2. Operational Period:	Date From: Date	Date To: Date
		Time From: HHMM	Time To: HHMM
3. Safety Message/Expanded Safety Message, Safety Plan, Site Safety Plan:			
KNOWN SAFETY HAZARDS:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lines under tension (boom towing and shoreside anchoring) • Pinch points (connecting boom, boom towing, vessel operations) • Heavy lifting (boom and anchors) - Observe safe lifting practices. • Entanglement – Personnel, lines/rigging, and boom. Personnel, lines, propellers. Maintain situational awareness when working around lines, anchors and boom during shoreside and on-water deployment operations to ensure that entanglement does not occur. Do not stand in the bight of lines or where boom is faked out for deployment. • Loose clothing and jewelry – Refrain from wearing loose clothing that may snag or become entangled on equipment. Jewelry including necklaces and rings should be removed while engaged in equipment deployment operations. • Slips, trips, and falls - Exercise caution in wet, muddy, and rocky areas and when working on piers or bulkheads near water to avoid falling. During boom deployment and retrieval when working in, on, or near the equipment trailers and ramps, special precaution must be taken to avoid injury when working on trailer ramp and around trailer ramp cables. Caution tape provided in trailer should be attached to trailer ramp cables to mark their location. • Crushing injuries – Use caution when working with anchors, driving shoreside stakes with sledgehammer, and when working alongside other vessels to avoid crushing injuries. • Vessel Operations – Working in close proximity to other vessels; Boom deployment and towing, and rigging near outboard motors and vessel screws/propellers. • Flotsam and debris – Conduct shoreside walkdown (Exercise Safety Officer) to identify and remove dangerous objects including glass, sharp objects, or debris washed up on shore that may endanger participants and/or impede exercise activities. Medical waste should only be retrieved by on-scene medical personnel. Flotsam should only be removed if it can be done safely and only if it impedes exercise activities. • Hypothermia – Dependent on water temperature. If participant is immersed in water, extricate safely and quickly and treat as appropriate. • Heat Stress/Stroke – Dependent upon air temperature and humidity. Exposure to extreme heat may put participants at risk for heat stress. Heat stress can result in heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, or heat rashes. Participants exhibiting heat stress related symptoms must be treated immediately IAW participating agency protocols. 			
SPECIFIC PRECAUTIONS:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Exercise Safety Officer will be identified and be responsible for participant safety. • FIRST AID equipment will be available. • Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) are required for all vessel personnel and all shoreside personnel working along shoreline, bulkheads or piers. • Steel-toe boots and safety glasses should be worn. • Hearing protection should be worn when working around generator and air compressor. • All vessel operators will conduct a safety brief with passengers to review vessel-specific safety precautions. • During vessel operations, a spotter should be assigned to provide guidance to vessel operator. Utilize fenders when mooring alongside pier/dock and when rafting with other vessels. • Man overboard – Assigned vessel spotter must maintain constant visual contact with man overboard and provide position and direction to vessel operator. "Emergency" phrase must be communicated to all exercise participants. Incident Commander or Exercise Coordinator will halt all exercise activity. • Vessel load balancing - Each vessel operator must ensure that personnel and equipment are stationed and distributed appropriately on deck. • Hydration – Participants must ensure they remain properly hydrated based on their level of exertion and on-scene weather conditions (heat, humidity). Water is provided. • Sunscreen – Participants should ensure proper sunscreen application based on weather conditions. Sunscreen is provided. 			
4. Site Safety Plan Required? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
Approved Site Safety Plan(s) Located At:			
5. Prepared by: Name: M. Popovich		Position/Title: Exercise Coord.	Signature: _____
ICS 208	IAP Page	Date/Time: 10/3/2016 12:00 AM	

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