Maritime Environmental Emergency Response (in Western Australia)

Incident Controller's Basic Guide

1.   INCIDENT CONTROLLER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The roles and responsibilities for the Incident Controller are outlined in the National Plan for Maritime Environmental Emergencies Aide-memoire for Marine Pollution Response and include:

Role:
- Overall responsibility for the management of all activities and personnel deployed to resolve the incident
- Establishment of systems and procedures for the safety, health, and welfare of all response personnel and members of the public who may be involved at an incident
- Issuing of warnings and incident information to the public and affected stakeholders
- Management of the relationship with agencies and people affected, or likely to be affected, by the incident
- Liaison with the State Marine Pollution Coordinator, when activated, to ensure the response is managed and coordinated effectively and appropriately within senior levels of supporting agencies and government

Responsibilities:
- Take charge and exercise leadership, including the establishment of the incident management structure
- Set objectives for the incident response, considering the safety of the community as a priority
- Develop and approve plans and strategies to control the incident
- Implement the Incident Action Plan (IAP) and monitor its progress
- Provide information and warnings to communities so that they can make informed decisions
- Establish effective liaison and cooperation with all relevant agencies, affected communities and others external to the IMT
- Obtain and maintain human and physical resources required for the resolution of the incident
- Apply a risk management approach, and establish systems and procedure for the safety and welfare of all response personnel
- Ensure effective communications with the State Marine Pollution Coordinator, when activated
- Ensure appropriate financial delegations are in place and these delegations are made known to the appropriate response personnel
- Ensure relief and recovery considerations are addressed
- Ensure collaborations between response and recovery agencies

The National Plan for Maritime Environmental Emergencies Aide-memoire for Marine Pollution Response is accessible via the AMSA website.

2.   INCIDENT NOTIFICATION AND UPDATES TO HAZARD MANAGEMENT AGENCY

For all MEE incidents, Department of Transport (DoT) as the Hazard Management Agency (HMA) for Maritime Environmental Emergencies (MEE) is required to be notified. Notification requirements are outlined on the DoT Maritime Environmental Emergency website and must include the following at a minimum:

1.   For **ALL INCIDENTS (That are or have the potential to impact WA State Waters)**, notify the DoT Maritime Environmental Emergency Response (MEER) Team **IMMEDIATELY** by calling **08 9480 9924.**

2.   For **ALL MOP INCIDENTS**, file a Pollution Report (POLREP), template available on the DoT Maritime Environmental Emergency website and email to marine.pollution@transport.wa.gov.au within the following timeframes:

    a.   Within **24 HOURS** for **LEVEL 1** incidents

    b.   Within **2 HOURS** for **LEVEL 2/3** incidents

    OR

    For **LEVEL 2/3 MTE INCIDENTS**, provide DoT with the completed AMSA Incident Alert (Form 18) within **2 HOURS**, available on the AMSA website, and submit to DoT by email to marine.pollution@transport.wa.gov.au.

3.   For **ANY LEVEL 2/3 INCIDENTS (Where DoT is not the Controlling Agency)**, the Controlling Agency is to provide DoT within **6 HOURS** an initial Incident Level Declaration, available on the DoT Maritime Environmental Emergency website, and submit to DoT by email to marine.pollution@transport.wa.gov.au.

4.   For **LEVEL 2/3 INCIDENTS (Where DoT is not the Controlling Agency)**, the Controlling Agency is to provide DoT with ongoing Situation Reports (SITREPs) and updated Incident Level Declarations **DAILY** (or as requested by the SMPC). A SITREP Template is available on the DoT Maritime Environmental Emergency website and is submitted to DoT by email to marine.pollution@transport.wa.gov.au.

3.   INCIDENT LEVEL ASSESSMENT AND DECLARATION

For all MEE incidents, DoT as the HMA support and responses are based on the principle of 'proportionate response' whereby the amount of resources mobilised will be varied according to the scale and location of the incident. The State Hazard Plan - MEE identifies three levels of incidents as follows:

- **Level 1** Incidents are generally able to be resolved through the application of local or initial resources only (e.g. first-strike capacity).
- **Level 2** Incidents are more complex in size, duration, resource management and risk and may require deployment of jurisdiction resources beyond the initial response.
- **Level 3** Incidents are generally characterised by a high degree of complexity that is likely to require national and international resources.

The Controlling Agency, through the Incident Controller is required to determine the appropriate incident level as soon as practicable upon assuming responsibility for the incident. The Incident Controller must note the declared incident level in all communications, including their personal log and situation reports. The Incident Controller has a responsibility to continually assess the incident level and regularly confirm that assessment with the SMPC (daily unless advised otherwise).

If assessed by the Incident Controller as a Level 2 or 3 incident, the Incident Controller must make an Incident Level Declaration to the SMPC using the prescribed template. This template is available on the DoT Maritime Environmental Emergency website and must be emailed to marine.pollution@transport.wa.gov.au when completed. The template provides a series of criteria to consider in determining the appropriate level for an incident, these include:

Level 2 (One or more Criteria)	Level 3 (One or more Criteria)
☐ requires a multi-agency response	☐ requires significant coordination of multi-agency response
☐ requires coordination of multi-agency resources	☐ there is a protracted response duration
☐ has a duration covering multiple shifts	☐ resources need to be sourced from State, National and even International level
☐ resources need to be sourced from district or State level	☐ there is a high level of complexity
☐ there is a medium level of complexity	☐ there is a significant - actual or imminent impact on critical infrastructure
☐ there are multiple incident areas	☐ there is a significant impact on the community (social, built, economic and natural)
☐ there is a medium - actual or imminent impact on critical infrastructure	☐ may require delegation of all IMT functions
☐ there is a medium impact on the community (social, built, economic and natural)	☐ evacuation and/or relocation of community is required
☐ may require delegation of a number of IMT functions	☐ there is an actual or potential loss of life or multiple, serious injuries
☐ the incident involves multiple hazards	☐ a declaration of an 'Emergency Situation' or 'State of Emergency' is likely.
☐ there is potential for the incident/or a requirement to be declared an 'Emergency Situation'.	

Once the SMPC confirms the incident level assessment of the Incident Controller, they will then make further notifications of the incident level to other agencies and Emergency Management positions as required as per the State Emergency Management Framework and State Emergency Management Plan. They will also provide strategic support and relevant state response resources consummate to the level of the incident.

4.   INCIDENT CONTROLLER RECOGNITION OF APPOINTMENT

For Level 2/3 MEE incidents, the appointment of a Controlling Agency and an Incident Controller by the Controlling Agency will be recognised in writing by the SMPC. The Controlling Agency through the SMPC is responsible for the appointment and recognition of an Incident Controller for an incident. The template for the recognition of appointment of a Controlling Agency and an Incident Controller by the SMPC during a MEE incident can be requested from the Department of Transport via marine.pollution@transport.wa.gov.au.

5.   STRATEGIC CONTROL PRIORITIES

A key principle of incident management is 'unity of command'. As part of this, to ensure all incident personnel are working in collaboration, the SMPC, in partnership with the appointed IC must provide clear direction for the incident. From the SMPC, clear direction will be focused on the provision of the strategic priorities for the incident.

The SMPC priorities for an incident will be produced in consideration of the State Strategic Control Priorities which are:

- PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION OF LIFE: This is the fundamental overarching priority for the State, and includes:
  - Safety of emergency services personnel.
  - Safety of community members including vulnerable community members and visitors/tourists located within the incident area.
- Community warnings and information
- Protection of critical infrastructure and community assets
- Protection of residential property
- Protection of assets supporting individual livelihood and community financial sustainability
- Protection of environmental and heritage values.

Note: The above priorities are not hierarchical; however, protection and preservation of life must be paramount when considering the State strategic control priorities that identify the priority roles and actions for the emergency management response, where there are concurrent risks or competing priorities.

In the context of MEE, the priority of 'Control the Source / Casualty' will also be considered when relevant to the incident.

Note: The WA State Strategic control priorities can be accessed via the WA State Emergency Management Policy

6.   INCIDENT SUPPORT GROUP

As per requirements laid out in the State Emergency Management Plan, if a Level 2 incident is declared, the IC must consider the establishment of an Incident Support Group (ISG). If a Level 3 incident is declared, the IC must establish an ISG. The IC must appoint a relevant person to be the Chair of the ISG, which consists of representatives (liaison officers) from organisations involved in the incident and relevant service providers and representatives for essential services.

The **function** of the ISG is to assist the IC through the provision of information, expert advice, support and resources relevant to their organisation.

The **composition** of the ISG is a Chair (appointed by the IC and from the Incident Management Team), the Local Emergency Coordinator (where relevant if a Local Government Authority is impacted), members (representatives from agencies and community organisations directly involved in the response to and recovery from the incident).

At each **meeting** of the ISG, reporting is required whereby Liaison officers must provide consolidated reports on agency response activities, agency specific impact assessments resource status updates and details of significant issues. The Chair (from the Incident Management Team) must provide a current situation report, update on outcome of previous meeting, details of significant issues, details of assistance required, recorded outcomes of meetings and details of next meeting (if known).

A meeting template for ISG meetings can be found on the State Emergency Management Committee website.

7.   EMERGENCY SITUATION AND STATE OF EMERGENCY DECLARATIONS

Section 50 of the EMA provides a Hazard Management Agency (HMA) with the ability to declare, in writing, an "Emergency Situation". The term "Emergency" means the occurrence or imminent occurrence of a hazard which is of such a nature or magnitude that requires a coordinated response

The SMPC can declare an emergency situation only if certain conditions are met and specific procedures must be followed in making a declaration of an emergency situation. Furthermore, as part of an emergency situation the SMPC can authorise officers or employees to act as Hazard Management Officers (HMO). Only the Minister responsible for the EMA may declare a State of Emergency when a situation requires extra powers provided under the EMA.

All matters relating to emergency situations, state of emergencies and HMO Powers should be referred to the DoT as the HMA (through the SMPC) by the IC.

8. RESPONSE END POINT CRITERIA

The Incident Controller is responsible for determining the end point criteria and triggers for the transition from response to recovery for all MEE incidents. For Level 2/3 MEE incidents the SMPC is required to endorse recommended end point criteria and triggers for the transition from response to recovery. For the formulation of end point criteria for an incident, a guideline is accessible via the AMSA website, and a template for the documentation of end point criteria can be requested from DoT via marine.pollution@transport.wa.gov.au.

When achieved, the IC is required to confirm with the SMPC when the transition point has been reached based on the endorsed end point criteria and thus recommend that the response phase of the incident can be terminated. The response phase can only formally be terminated with approval from the SMPC.

9. IMPACT STATEMENT

As per requirements laid out in the State Emergency Management Plan, for all Level 2/3 MEE incidents, the IC is responsible for ensuring an Impact Statement is developed to support the transition from response to recovery.

The IC will confirm with the SMPC when the impact statement has been produced to review and sign the Impact Statement. The process for developing and finalizing the impact statement will be overseen by the SMPC in support of the IC and is outlined in the State Emergency Management Committee Impact Statement template and guideline which can be found on the State Emergency Management Committee website.

10. OTHER INCIDENT CONTROL MATTERS

For all other matters requiring strategic support for the management of a MEE Incident, the IC should liaise with the SMPC and seek confirmation of relevant approval criteria, request procedures and management processes. This includes for matters such as the management of MEE Incidents in conjunction with other hazards where differing Hazard Management Agency or Controlling Agency arrangements are in place (eg. Search and Rescue, Fire and Hazardous Chemicals), and for Place of Refuge management, Dispersant and Decanting Use Requests and assistance from other state resources and other jurisdictions (including national).

Note: Further information on the requirements of incident control can be found as follows:

- Requirements relating to the State Emergency Management Framework can be found on the State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) website
- Requirements relating to the control of MEE related incidents can be found on the Department of Transport (DoT) website for Maritime Environmental Emergency