



Working Paper on Contingency Planning and Emergency Response

BACKGROUND

1. Resolution 6 (1998) of ATCM XXII recommended that Consultative Parties adopt the COMNAP guidelines associated with oil handling and contingency planning. These documents comprise:

- Guidelines on Oil Spill Contingency Planning [June 1992];
- Recommended Procedures for Fuel Oil Transfer at Stations and Bases [June 1992];
- Recommendations for Spill Prevention and Containment of Fuel Oil at Stations and Bases [June 1992]; and
- Guidelines for the Reporting of Oil Spill Incidents which occur in Antarctica [November 1993].

2. Resolution 6 (1998) also requires that those Consultative Parties whose research stations and vessels operating in Antarctica are not covered by contingency plans, should take the necessary steps to ensure that the operators of the stations and vessels introduce plans based on the 1992 Guidelines prepared by COMNAP. Consultative Parties are also requested to carry out, individually or collectively (and to the extent possible), regular contingency exercises, both theoretical and practical on land and at sea, to test and thereby refine their contingency plans, and report on the result of the exercises to the ATCM.

3. In addition, Resolution 6 (1998) requested COMNAP to:

- Identify and formulate additional steps in relation to emergency response action and contingency planning for incidents other than oil spills (including guidelines on coordination, communications and equipment requirements)
- Review, and if necessary revise, as appropriate, the COMNAP/SCALOP guidelines on oil spill handling and contingency planning;

4. Previous ATCMs have requested COMNAP to:

- review the consistency of contingency plans developed by national operators with the 1992 COMNAP Guidelines; and
- develop, where appropriate, regional contingency plans facilitating mutual assistance between national operators in response to major oil spill incidents.

5. ATCM XXII requested COMNAP to report on the above items to ATCM XXIII, with the report provided to the Committee for Environmental Protection so that the Committee can provide advice to ATCM XXIII.

DISCUSSION

Scope or Coverage of Contingency Planning

6. Information Paper 6 submitted to ATCM XXII by COMNAP reported the results of a survey on the development and implementation of oil spill contingency plans at Antarctic stations and bases. The survey indicated that oil spill contingency plans have been developed for the vast majority of year-round stations. Nine national operators have also produced contingency/ emergency plans for incidents other than oil spills (for example, fires, search and rescue, medical evacuations and general disasters). Furthermore, most national programs confirmed that they assess the most common risks to life and property that can arise in the usual course of Antarctic Program activities.

7. Based on the results of the COMNAP survey, and a consideration of accidents and disasters that have occurred in the Antarctic, it is concluded that national operators should develop four types of contingency plan (Annex I) covering a range of scenarios that may occur, namely:

- Plan A: General Incidents or Disasters Contingency Plan
- Plan B: Oil Spill Contingency Plan
- Plan C: Chemical Spills Contingency Plan
- Plan D: Response to International Incidents and Disasters

8. Plans A, B and C are to cover incidents, accidents or disasters that may occur with activities under the control of the respective national program (and therefore include scenarios specifically relevant to each program). Plan D will outline the response capability and proposed action in the event that a national program is requested to provide assistance to another national program or non-government operator, as a result of a major incident or disaster. COMNAP will develop guidelines for the preparation of plans A, C and D (guidelines for B already exist), meanwhile national operators will commence the preparation of draft plans if not already existing.

Review of COMNAP/SCALOP Guidelines on Oil Spill Contingency Planning

9. COMNAP plans to complete a review of its guidelines relating to oil spill handling, storage and contingency planning during the next 12 months. The Guidelines for Oil Spill Contingency Planning are likely to be simplified but the overall structure and key elements of the plan will almost certainly be retained.

Review Consistency of Existing Oil Spill Contingency Plans with the COMNAP Guidelines

10. This task has not yet been undertaken by COMNAP and, in any event, should logically follow the review of the Guidelines. In view, however, that ATCM Resolution 6 (1998) adopted the guidelines, it is now incumbent on all Consultative Parties to ensure that their national Antarctic agencies complete, develop and implement plans in accordance with the guidelines. It therefore appears unnecessary and inappropriate for COMNAP to proceed with this work.

Regional Contingency Plans

11. During the initial development work on the COMNAP oil spill guidelines, the feasibility of several operators responding to a major oil spill at or near a station was examined. It was concluded that there are only three areas of Antarctica where stations are geographically close enough to facilitate a coordinated response by several operators to a major oil spill namely; the northwest Peninsula, Prydz Bay and Ross Sea areas. COMNAP has therefore established three sub-groups to develop Regional Oil Spill Response Contingency Plans, as follows:

- Antarctic Peninsula: Chaired by Chile with representatives from Argentina and the UK;
- Prydz Bay: Chaired by Australia with representatives from China and Russia; and
- Ross Sea: Chaired by Italy with representatives from New Zealand and the USA.

The proposed framework for developing and implementing the regional oil spill contingency plans is given in Annex II.

CONCLUSIONS

12. National Antarctic programs have made considerable progress with the development and implementation of oil spill contingency plans for stations or bases. Work is in progress to develop regional oil spill contingency plans for the Antarctic Peninsula, Prydz Bay and Ross Sea areas.

13. A framework has been produced for the development of contingency plans for other categories of incidents or disasters encompassing both national program and international (government and non-government scenarios). Priority is being given to the development of guidelines for the plans and, in the interim, national programs are to proceed with the development and implementation of draft plans.

RECOMMENDATIONS

14. Based on progress to date, COMNAP recommends that :

- contingency plans be developed by national programs to take into account General Incidents and Disasters, Oil Spills, Chemical Spills and Response to International Incidents and Disasters in the Antarctic as outlined in Annex I;
- COMNAP Guidelines relating to oil spill handling, storage and contingency planning be reviewed during the next 12 months;
- in the light of Resolution 6 (1998), COMNAP need no longer undertake a review of the consistency of existing contingency plans with the 1992 COMNAP Guidelines; and
- the sub-groups established by COMNAP to develop and implement Regional Oil Spill Response Contingency Plans for the northwest Antarctic Peninsula, Prydz Bay and Ross Sea areas, progress this work in accordance with the framework given in Annex II.

ANNEX I

CONTINGENCY PLANNING STRUCTURE FOR NATIONAL ANTARCTIC PROGRAMS

Types of Contingency Plan and Proposed Scope
<p>PLAN A: GENERAL INCIDENTS OR DISASTERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of contact Vessel damaged Vessel disabled Vessel beset Damage or loss of small boat, barge or Zodiac • Aviation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of contact Forced landing at a remote place due to weather, breakdown, etc. Aircraft damaged or disabled Crash • Station or Base <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire Explosion Extended loss of power Widespread and debilitating infectious disease • Field Party or Camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of contact Missing person or party Camp emergency (e.g. fire, CO poisoning, etc) Vehicle accident Entrapment on islands, sea ice, etc <p>[Note: National Programs need only complete those sections of plan applicable to their operations.]</p>
<p>PLAN B: OIL SPILLS</p> <p>COMNAP Guidelines have been developed for Oil Spill Contingency Plans for stations or Bases and on a regional multi-operator basis.</p>
<p>PLAN C: CHEMICAL SPILLS</p> <p>COMNAP Guidelines are to be developed and will be similar in structure to the oil spill contingency plans</p>
<p>PLAN D: RESPONSE TO INTERNATIONAL INCIDENTS OR DISASTERS (Other National Programs or Non-Government Activities)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marine • Aviation • Major fire or explosion at a station or base • Medical evacuation • International coordination and communication <p>[Note: National Programs need only complete those sections of the plan that are within their operational capability.]</p>

FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPING REGIONAL OIL SPILL CONTINGENCY PLANS

- 1. SUB GROUP MEMBERSHIP**
- 2. STATION FAMILIARISATION**
 - Develop a checklist
 - Establish support capabilities and assets
 - Define support requirements
- 3. SCENERIO DEVELOPMENT**

Priorities

 - Preservation of human life
 - Preservation of assets
 - Preservation of the environment

Management Role

 - Coordination
 - Chronological log
 - Cost Reimbursement
 - Investigations
- 4. IMPLEMENTATION**
 - Annual update of information (assets, personnel, communications)
 - Pre-season meeting
 - At least one trial exercise each season