

To be effective, oil spill response planning needs to integrate the expectations and objectives of all stakeholders. Conflicts over protection and response strategies are inevitable, and require a realistic appraisal of the risks and benefits associated with response options. This is especially true when dispersants are under consideration. This course presents an overview of a consensus-building process based on an ecological risk assessment approach which has proven effective in helping stakeholders resolve ecological trade-off issues associated with dispersant use.

Course Agenda

Day 1 (Morning)

Background

- Benefits of a risk-based approach
- What is consensus ecological risk assessment?
- How can it support oil spill response planning?

Introduction to the essential elements of the process?

- Scenario development
- Estimating fate and effect
- Response options
- Resources of concern
- Defining effects
- Evaluating risk

Results of actual workshops

Day 1 (Afternoon)

Essential elements, why they are important and how they are used

- Development of a spill scenario
- Estimates of the fate of the oil and the potential for exposure for the resources of concern
- Response options for consideration
- Environmental resources of concern
- Defining resources for analysis
- Hazard definition
- Understanding the basic conceptual model matrix
- Defining effects
 - General objectives of the analysis
 - Using fate and effect information
 - Thresholds to define the sensitivity to oil

Day 1 (Afternoon cont.)

- Conducting the analysis
 - What is a risk ranking matrix?
 - Using focus groups to determine risk
 - Estimating levels of concern
- Evaluating the relative risk for the response options under consideration
 - How can you compare effects – the natural recovery baseline
 - Preparing the relative risk summary

Day 2 (Morning)

Communication skills are an important component of the process

- Different people - different priorities
- The importance of values and responsibilities
- Consensus does not mean acquiescence
- Credibility as a key issue

Participants engage in conducting a risk assessment based on a hypothetical location

Day 2 (Afternoon)

Interpreting the issues and results associated with the risk assessment exercise

Information sources and how to use them

Establishing reasonable goals and objectives for your program

Integrating consensus risk assessment principals into your oil spill planning process