



Marine Safety Information Bulletin

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MER-MSIB 08-16: Release of 2016 National Preparedness for Response Exercise Program (NPREP) Guidelines

The purpose of this Bulletin is to announce the release of the new 2016 National Preparedness for Response Exercise Program (NPREP) guidelines. This revision to the guidelines will be published to the Federal Register under docket number USCG-2011-1178. Additionally, the guidelines are currently posted on the USCG Homeport site at <https://Homeport.uscg.mil/exercises> (select the "Port Level Exercises" link).

The NPREP was developed to establish a workable exercise program that meets the intent of section 4202(a) of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90). The NPREP was designed to provide a mechanism for compliance with the exercise requirements, while being economically feasible for the Government and the oil industry to adopt and sustain. NPREP is a unified Federal effort that satisfies the exercise requirements of the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), and the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE). Completion of the exercises described in the NPREP Guidelines is one option for maintaining compliance with OPA 90-mandated Federal oil pollution response exercise requirements. **Some noteworthy points include:**

- The NPREP guidelines are a conglomeration of OPA-90 exercise requirements and associated policies consolidated into one guidebook. PREP clarifies OPA-90 exercise objectives and provides a methodology for evaluating compliance with federal regulations. The NPREP Guidelines describe the minimum expectations for ensuring adequate response preparedness.
- The 2016 revision is the first in over a decade. This revision modernizes the NPREP Guidelines to better align policy with the existing regulations and improve interagency consistency. The new guidelines incorporate salvage, marine fire fighting and non-tank vessel requirements. Additionally, spill countermeasure topics are better addressed, including deep well discharge scenarios.
- These guidelines are co-owned/co-authored by the four agencies (USCG, BSEE, EPA and PHMSA). These agencies comprise the PREP Compliance, Coordination and Consistency Committee, or PREP 4C for short. PREP 4C assumes all the functions of the former NPREP National Scheduling Coordination Committee.
- The PREP Guidelines address 37 different exercise types which test six different response plans overseen by the four PREP4C agencies.

- Over the past year, approximately 1000 comments were derived through a public comment and interagency comment periods. PREP4C adjudicated and documented all comment responses.
- NPREP does not mandate a given exercise design process. Plan holders are free to design exercises that meet the NPREP objectives as well as their own internal ones.
- If Government, industry, or plan holders desire to expand their exercise programs beyond the NPREP Guidelines, they are highly encouraged to do so.

It is recommended that all stakeholders in the environmental response community do the following:

- Acquire a copy of the new NPREP guidelines for familiarization.
- Continue to review and be familiar with your specific plans.
- Ensure familiarity with Area Contingency Plans.
- Participate in your local Area Committee.
- Reach out to your local Coast Guard Incident Management or Planning staff for assistance.

Questions regarding this should be forwarded to the Coast Guard Office of Marine Environmental Response, NPREP Program manager, Mr. Jonathan Smith at **202-372-2675** or by email at Jonathan.R.Smith@uscg.mil.

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