THE NOAA SCIENTIFIC SUPPORT TEAM - SERVING THE FOSC AND UNIFIED COMMAND

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Office of Response & Restoration

- Emergency Response Division
- Assessment Response Division
- Marine Debris Program
- Disaster Response Center
What’s New with NOAA Hazmat?

- **Our Name** - We are now the Emergency Response Division (ERD) of NOAA’s Office of Response and Restoration (OR&R).

- We still use the legacy term “NOAA Hazmat” informally, since that name is well known among the incident response community.

- response.restoration.noaa.gov
Origin of the NOAA Scientific Support Coordinator & Team

The idea of a scientific support function originated during the M/V Argo Merchant oil spill off Nantucket in 1976 where it became apparent that the FOSC required a focal point to coordinate scientific activity with a technical staff to focus on the operational needs of the incident.

Single Point of Contact – the SSC

All of NOAA’s scientific support for incident response is available through the assigned Scientific Support Coordinator-ALSO, acts as DOC Natural Resource Trustee.
What Are NOAA SSCs?

Most FOSCs think of us as their genies in the lamp 😊
• Actually FOSC’s have several different lamps - all with different “genies”

• The NCP refers to them as Special Teams
Per the NCP, the FOSC may designate the SSC as their principal advisor for:

- **Scientific Issues**
- **Communication with the scientific community**
- **Coordination of requests for assistance from state and federal agencies regarding scientific studies**

*Between incidents the SSC takes an active role in RRTs and Area Committees*
What Does NOAA Scientific Support Offer?

- **An Advanced Scientific Support Team** - NOAA scientists with expertise in oceanography, biology, chemistry, geomorphology, natural resources, human health and safety, and technical information management.
What Does NOAA Scientific Support Offer?

- **Depth Of Experience And Expertise**

The NOAA Scientific Support Team represents not only a broad range of scientific disciplines, but the operational experience to apply it to incident response. Hazmat has responded to most major U.S. spills, more than 100 per year over the last four decades, and many major overseas incidents.
What Does NOAA Scientific Support Offer?

- **Access To All Of NOAA’s Resources**

Through the SSC, the FOSC can access the myriad of resources available throughout NOAA. NOAA, as the nation’s oceanic and atmospheric science agency, can provide a tremendous depth of scientific and technical resources.
What Does NOAA Scientific Support Offer?

- **Customized Science Support**

The NOAA Scientific Support Team is tailored to the specific scientific requirements of that incident and the local scientific and technical expertise available.

Benchttop science in command center – DBL-152 Oil Spill
What Got Spilled?

Where Does it Go?

Who Does it Hit?

How Does it Hurt?

What Can I Do?
NOAA Scientific Support Team Services

- Environmental Chemistry
- Oil Slick Tracking
- Spill Trajectory Forecasts
- Incident Specific Spot Weather Forecasts
- Biological Assessments
- Environmental Tradeoffs of Countermeasures & Cleanup
- Resources at Risk Analysis

- Environmental Unit Leadership
- Information Management
- Integration of Scientific Expertise
- Trustee Coordination with Unified Command
- Spill Exercise Design Team and Participation
- Training and Preparedness
Incident Command System (ICS)
During an incident

Unified Command
FOSC
SOSC
RPIC

SSC

Planning
Operations
Logistics
Finance

Environmental Unit

Ref. USCG IMH
Scientific Support Coordinator Position from IMH

The SSC is a THSP and is defined in the NCP as the principal advisor to the FOSC for scientific issues. If the Environmental Unit has been established and the SSC is serving in the Command Staff, the SSC should also coordinate with the ENVL. Generally, SSCs and their Scientific Support Teams (SSTs) are provided by NOAA in the coastal zones and by EPA in the inland zones. The FOSC can request SSC support directly from the SSC assigned to the area or from an RRT agency member. During an oil spill response, the SSC serves on the FOSC’s staff and may at the request of the FOSC lead an SST and be responsible for providing scientific support for operational decisions and for coordinating on-scene scientific activity. Additionally, SSCs may be designated by the FOSC as the principal advisors for scientific issues, communication with the scientific community, and coordination of requests for assistance from federal and state agencies regarding scientific studies.
The major responsibilities of the SSC are:

A. Review Common Responsibilities in chapter 2.
B. Attend planning meetings.
C. Determine resource needs.
D. Provide trajectory forecasting, including the actual location of oil, to the Situation Unit.
E. Seek consensus on scientific issues affecting the response.
F. Facilitate in the Endangered Species Act consultation process.
G. Develop a prioritized list of resources at risk, including threatened and endangered species, in conjunction with Natural Resource Trustee Representatives and the FOSC’s Historical/Cultural Resources THSP.
H. Provide environmental hazards information of the spilled product.
I. Evaluate and compare the environmental impacts of countermeasures, cleanup methods, and response endpoints.
J. Integrate knowledge from government agencies, universities, community organizations, and industry to assist the FOSC in valuating the hazards and potential effects of an oil release and in developing response strategies.
K. Facilitate the FOSC’s work with the lead administrative trustee for natural resources to ensure coordination between damage assessment data collection efforts and data collected in support of response operations.
L. Maintain Unit Log (ICS 214-CG) and forward to DOCL for disposition.
Response

Downtown Lynchburg, Va. is being evacuated after a train derailed and caught fire this afternoon.
Typical Environmental Unit during Response
SCIENCE MEETINGS DURING RESPONSE
AREA COMMITTEES & REGIONAL RESPONSE TEAMS
Training
Typically, the SSC also 
Serves as the NOAA 
Natural Resource 
Trustee representative for 
the Regional Response Teams for the 
region(s) to which they are assigned. 
Coordinates with and represents NOAA 
NMFS, NMS
NOAA Scientific Support Team

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Thank You!