

Drill & Exercise Credit Statement

In 1995, the Members of the Pacific States/British Columbia Oil Spill Task Force accepted recommendations from a stakeholder Project Workgroup regarding protocols for granting credit for drills and exercises conducted in other Task Force member jurisdictions.

According to our 2004-2005 Annual Work Plan, the Oil Spill Task Force Coordinating Committee was charged to review the 1995 Drill and Exercise credit protocols and decide whether they should be updated; to make necessary adjustments in collaboration with interested stakeholders; and to recommend new protocols by the 2005 Annual Meeting, if necessary.

After reviewing and discussing the Drill/Exercise protocols at their 2004 Fall Quarterly meeting, the Coordinating Committee reported to the Task Force Members that the credit protocols are no longer feasible. For example, the protocols require that a plan holder or response organization invite the agency from which they are seeking credit to attend and observe the drill. This would involve out-of-state travel, and most member agencies face budget restrictions on travel.

In lieu of actual observation of the drill, the 1995 protocols do allow for an evaluation to be completed by the drilling agency or an "independent third party," (although that term is not defined in the report), or as a last resort, a self-evaluation using approved checklists may be submitted. However, each member agency currently has a very specific drill/exercise checklist and they do not believe that the checklist developed by the Drills/Exercises Workgroup in 1995 is still adequate. More to the point, they do not feel that one checklist would suffice for all member agencies. In addition, many of the Task Force member agencies are now emphasizing unannounced drills, which preclude advance arrangements for review/credit. Furthermore, the issues involved in deployment drills – which they consider crucial – vary greatly from one location to another.

Although the Task Force Members concur that the drill/exercise credit protocols are no longer feasible, they still encourage contingency plan holders and oil spill response organizations to approach member agencies on a case-by-case basis on the issue of credit for drills and exercises in other member jurisdictions.