

“(3) REVISIONS AND AMENDMENTS.—The President may, from time to time, as the President deems advisable, revise or otherwise amend the National Contingency Plan.

“(4) ACTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH NATIONAL CONTINGENCY PLAN.—After publication of the National Contingency Plan, the removal of oil and hazardous substances and actions to minimize damage from oil and hazardous substance discharges shall, to the greatest extent possible, be in accordance with the National Contingency Plan.”

(b) DEFINITIONS.—Section 311(a) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1321(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (8), by inserting “containment and” after “refers to”; and

(2) in paragraph (16) by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon;

(3) in paragraph (17)—

(A) by striking “Otherwise” and inserting “otherwise”;

and

(B) by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

“(18) ‘Area Committee’ means an Area Committee established under subsection (j);

“(19) ‘Area Contingency Plan’ means an Area Contingency Plan prepared under subsection (j);

“(20) ‘Coast Guard District Response Group’ means a Coast Guard District Response Group established under subsection (j);

“(21) ‘Federal On-Scene Coordinator’ means a Federal On-Scene Coordinator designated in the National Contingency Plan;

“(22) ‘National Contingency Plan’ means the National Contingency Plan prepared and published under subsection (d);

“(23) ‘National Response Unit’ means the National Response Unit established under subsection (j); and

“(24) ‘worst case discharge’ means—

“(A) in the case of a vessel, a discharge in adverse weather conditions of its entire cargo; and

“(B) in the case of an offshore facility or onshore facility, the largest foreseeable discharge in adverse weather conditions.”

(c) REVISION OF NATIONAL CONTINGENCY PLAN.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall revise and republish the National Contingency Plan prepared under section 311(c)(2) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (as in effect immediately before the date of the enactment of this Act) to implement the amendments made by this section and section 4202.

33 USC 1321  
note.

**SEC. 4202. NATIONAL PLANNING AND RESPONSE SYSTEM.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (j) of section 311 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1321(j)) is amended—

(1) by striking “(j)” and inserting the following:

“(j) NATIONAL RESPONSE SYSTEM.—”;

(2) by moving paragraph (1) so as to begin immediately below the heading for subsection (j) (as added by paragraph (1) of this subsection);

(3) by moving paragraph (1) two ems to the right, so the left margin of that paragraph is aligned with the left margin of paragraph (2) of that subsection (as added by paragraph (6) of this subsection);

(4) in paragraph (1) by striking "(1)" and inserting the following:

"(1) IN GENERAL.—";

(5) by striking paragraph (2); and

(6) by adding at the end the following:

"(2) NATIONAL RESPONSE UNIT.—The Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating shall establish a National Response Unit at Elizabeth City, North Carolina. The Secretary, acting through the National Response Unit—

"(A) shall compile and maintain a comprehensive computer list of spill removal resources, personnel, and equipment that is available worldwide and within the areas designated by the President pursuant to paragraph (4), which shall be available to Federal and State agencies and the public;

"(B) shall provide technical assistance, equipment, and other resources requested by a Federal On-Scene Coordinator;

"(C) shall coordinate use of private and public personnel and equipment to remove a worst case discharge, and to mitigate or prevent a substantial threat of such a discharge, from a vessel, offshore facility, or onshore facility operating in or near an area designated by the President pursuant to paragraph (4);

"(D) may provide technical assistance in the preparation of Area Contingency Plans required under paragraph (4);

"(E) shall administer Coast Guard strike teams established under the National Contingency Plan;

"(F) shall maintain on file all Area Contingency Plans approved by the President under this subsection; and

"(G) shall review each of those plans that affects its responsibilities under this subsection.

"(3) COAST GUARD DISTRICT RESPONSE GROUPS.—(A) The Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating shall establish in each Coast Guard district a Coast Guard District Response Group.

"(B) Each Coast Guard District Response Group shall consist of—

"(i) the Coast Guard personnel and equipment, including firefighting equipment, of each port within the district;

"(ii) additional prepositioned equipment; and

"(iii) a district response advisory staff.

"(C) Coast Guard district response groups—

"(i) shall provide technical assistance, equipment, and other resources when required by a Federal On-Scene Coordinator;

"(ii) shall maintain all Coast Guard response equipment within its district;

"(iii) may provide technical assistance in the preparation of Area Contingency Plans required under paragraph (4); and

"(iv) shall review each of those plans that affect its area of geographic responsibility.

Uniformed  
services.  
North Carolina.

Public  
information.

Records.

“(4) AREA COMMITTEES AND AREA CONTINGENCY PLANS.—(A) Establishment.  
There is established for each area designated by the President an Area Committee comprised of members appointed by the President from qualified personnel of Federal, State, and local agencies.

“(B) Each Area Committee, under the direction of the Federal On-Scene Coordinator for its area, shall—

“(i) prepare for its area the Area Contingency Plan required under subparagraph (C);

“(ii) work with State and local officials to enhance the contingency planning of those officials and to assure preplanning of joint response efforts, including appropriate procedures for mechanical recovery, dispersal, shoreline cleanup, protection of sensitive environmental areas, and protection, rescue, and rehabilitation of fisheries and wildlife; and

“(iii) work with State and local officials to expedite decisions for the use of dispersants and other mitigating substances and devices.

“(C) Each Area Committee shall prepare and submit to the President for approval an Area Contingency Plan for its area. The Area Contingency Plan shall—

“(i) when implemented in conjunction with the National Contingency Plan, be adequate to remove a worst case discharge, and to mitigate or prevent a substantial threat of such a discharge, from a vessel, offshore facility, or onshore facility operating in or near the area;

“(ii) describe the area covered by the plan, including the areas of special economic or environmental importance that might be damaged by a discharge;

“(iii) describe in detail the responsibilities of an owner or operator and of Federal, State, and local agencies in removing a discharge, and in mitigating or preventing a substantial threat of a discharge;

“(iv) list the equipment (including firefighting equipment), dispersants or other mitigating substances and devices, and personnel available to an owner or operator and Federal, State, and local agencies, to ensure an effective and immediate removal of a discharge, and to ensure mitigation or prevention of a substantial threat of a discharge;

“(v) describe the procedures to be followed for obtaining an expedited decision regarding the use of dispersants;

“(vi) describe in detail how the plan is integrated into other Area Contingency Plans and vessel, offshore facility, and onshore facility response plans approved under this subsection, and into operating procedures of the National Response Unit;

“(vii) include any other information the President requires; and

“(viii) be updated periodically by the Area Committee.

“(D) The President shall—

“(i) review and approve Area Contingency Plans under this paragraph; and

“(ii) periodically review Area Contingency Plans so approved.

“(5) TANK VESSEL AND FACILITY RESPONSE PLANS.—(A) Regulations.  
The President shall issue regulations which require an owner or

operator of a tank vessel or facility described in subparagraph (B) to prepare and submit to the President a plan for responding, to the maximum extent practicable, to a worst case discharge, and to a substantial threat of such a discharge, of oil or a hazardous substance.

“(B) The tank vessels and facilities referred to in subparagraph (A) are the following:

“(i) A tank vessel, as defined under section 2101 of title 46, United States Code.

“(ii) An offshore facility.

“(iii) An onshore facility that, because of its location, could reasonably be expected to cause substantial harm to the environment by discharging into or on the navigable waters, adjoining shorelines, or the exclusive economic zone.

“(C) A response plan required under this paragraph shall—

“(i) be consistent with the requirements of the National Contingency Plan and Area Contingency Plans;

“(ii) identify the qualified individual having full authority to implement removal actions, and require immediate communications between that individual and the appropriate Federal official and the persons providing personnel and equipment pursuant to clause (iii);

“(iii) identify, and ensure by contract or other means approved by the President the availability of, private personnel and equipment necessary to remove to the maximum extent practicable a worst case discharge (including a discharge resulting from fire or explosion), and to mitigate or prevent a substantial threat of such a discharge;

“(iv) describe the training, equipment testing, periodic unannounced drills, and response actions of persons on the vessel or at the facility, to be carried out under the plan to ensure the safety of the vessel or facility and to mitigate or prevent the discharge, or the substantial threat of a discharge;

“(v) be updated periodically; and

“(vi) be resubmitted for approval of each significant change.

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“(D) With respect to any response plan submitted under this paragraph for an onshore facility that, because of its location, could reasonably be expected to cause significant and substantial harm to the environment by discharging into or on the navigable waters or adjoining shorelines or the exclusive economic zone, and with respect to each response plan submitted under this paragraph for a tank vessel or offshore facility, the President shall—

“(i) promptly review such response plan;

“(ii) require amendments to any plan that does not meet the requirements of this paragraph;

“(iii) approve any plan that meets the requirements of this paragraph; and

“(iv) review each plan periodically thereafter.

“(E) A tank vessel, offshore facility, or onshore facility required to prepare a response plan under this subsection may not handle, store, or transport oil unless—

“(i) in the case of a tank vessel, offshore facility, or onshore facility for which a response plan is reviewed by

the President under subparagraph (D), the plan has been approved by the President; and

“(ii) the vessel or facility is operating in compliance with the plan.

“(F) Notwithstanding subparagraph (E), the President may authorize a tank vessel, offshore facility, or onshore facility to operate without a response plan approved under this paragraph, until not later than 2 years after the date of the submission to the President of a plan for the tank vessel or facility, if the owner or operator certifies that the owner or operator has ensured by contract or other means approved by the President the availability of private personnel and equipment necessary to respond, to the maximum extent practicable, to a worst case discharge or a substantial threat of such a discharge.

“(G) The owner or operator of a tank vessel, offshore facility, or onshore facility may not claim as a defense to liability under title I of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 that the owner or operator was acting in accordance with an approved response plan.

“(H) The Secretary shall maintain, in the Vessel Identification System established under chapter 125 of title 46, United States Code, the dates of approval and review of a response plan under this paragraph for each tank vessel that is a vessel of the United States.

“(6) **EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS AND INSPECTION.**—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this section, the President shall require—

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“(A) periodic inspection of containment booms, skimmers, vessels, and other major equipment used to remove discharges; and

“(B) vessels operating on navigable waters and carrying oil or a hazardous substance in bulk as cargo to carry appropriate removal equipment that employs the best technology economically feasible and that is compatible with the safe operation of the vessel.

“(7) **AREA DRILLS.**—The President shall periodically conduct drills of removal capability, without prior notice, in areas for which Area Contingency Plans are required under this subsection and under relevant tank vessel and facility response plans. The drills may include participation by Federal, State, and local agencies, the owners and operators of vessels and facilities in the area, and private industry. The President may publish annual reports on these drills, including assessments of the effectiveness of the plans and a list of amendments made to improve plans.

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“(8) **UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT NOT LIABLE.**—The United States Government is not liable for any damages arising from its actions or omissions relating to any response plan required by this section.”

(b) **IMPLEMENTATION.**—

(1) **AREA COMMITTEES AND CONTINGENCY PLANS.**—(A) Not later than 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall designate the areas for which Area Committees are established under section 311(j)(4) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, as amended by this Act. In designating such areas, the President shall ensure that all navigable waters, adjoining shorelines, and waters of the exclusive economic zone are subject to an Area Contingency Plan under that section.

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note.

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(B) Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, each Area Committee established under that section shall submit to the President the Area Contingency Plan required under that section.

(C) Not later than 24 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall—

(i) promptly review each plan;

(ii) require amendments to any plan that does not meet the requirements of section 311(j)(4) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act; and

(iii) approve each plan that meets the requirements of that section.

Establishment.

(2) NATIONAL RESPONSE UNIT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating shall establish a National Response Unit in accordance with section 311(j)(2) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, as amended by this Act.

Establishment.

(3) COAST GUARD DISTRICT RESPONSE GROUPS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating shall establish Coast Guard District Response Groups in accordance with section 311(j)(3) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, as amended by this Act.

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Regulations.

(4) TANK VESSEL AND FACILITY RESPONSE PLANS; TRANSITION PROVISION; EFFECTIVE DATE OF PROHIBITION.—(A) Not later than 24 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall issue regulations for tank vessel and facility response plans under section 311(j)(5) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, as amended by this Act.

(B) During the period beginning 30 months after the date of the enactment of this paragraph and ending 36 months after that date of enactment, a tank vessel or facility for which a response plan is required to be prepared under section 311(j)(5) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, as amended by this Act, may not handle, store, or transport oil unless the owner or operator thereof has submitted such a plan to the President.

(C) Subparagraph (E) of section 311(j)(5) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, as amended by this Act, shall take effect 36 months after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) STATE LAW NOT PREEMPTED.—Section 311(o)(2) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1321(o)(2)) is amended by inserting before the period the following: “, or with respect to any removal activities related to such discharge”.

14 USC 92 note.

**SEC. 4203. COAST GUARD VESSEL DESIGN.**

The Secretary shall ensure that vessels designed and constructed to replace Coast Guard buoy tenders are equipped with oil skimming systems that are readily available and operable, and that complement the primary mission of servicing aids to navigation.

**SEC. 4204. DETERMINATION OF HARMFUL QUANTITIES OF OIL AND HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES.**

Section 311(b)(4) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1321(b)(4)) is amended by inserting “or the environment” after “the public health or welfare”.