

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

**United States
Coast Guard**



2025 U.S. Coast Guard Marine Environmental Response and Preparedness Manual (MERMAN)

Joseph A. Boudrow

First District Incident Management & Preparedness Advisor

MERMAN

The Marine Environmental Response and Preparedness Manual

- USCG Commandant Instruction 16000.14B
- Updated 24 March 2025
- Purpose:
 - Establishes CG policies, guidelines, & procedures for MER.
 - Provides general information for use in activities and operations.

MERMAN Organization

Instruction divided into six chapters:

Chapter 1 - MER Program

Chapter 2 - MER Administration

Chapter 3 - MER Training

Chapter 4 - MER Planning

Chapter 5 – MER Preparedness & Compliance

Chapter 6 – MER Operations



MERMAN

- How does this Coast Guard Instruction guide the Coastal Area Committees...



Area Contingency Plans

-
- MERMANN covers ACP Review Process
 - Annual Validation of contact info
 - Incorporate lessons-learned
 - Validate Geographic Response Strategies
 - Validate Worst Case Discharges
 - Document changes

Area Contingency Plans

- Five Year Revisions
 - ACPs formally approved by District Commanders
 - National Review Panels
 - Pass Back Memos
 - Five Year ACP Improvement Plans



NRP Pass-Back Memo

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security
United States
Coast Guard



Commandant
United States Coast Guard

2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave
Washington, DC 20545-7516
Staff Symbol: CG-MER
Phone: (202) 372-2875

16471
30 Mar 2022

MEMORANDUM

From: R. M. Alonso, CAPT
COMDT (CG-MER)

To: Distribution

Thru: CG LANTAREA (LANT-5)

Subj: COAST GUARD NATIONAL REVIEW PANEL RESULTS FOR SECTOR SAULT
SAINTE MARIE AREA CONTINGENCY PLAN

Ref: (a) COMDT (CG-SRI) Memo 16471 of 28 Nov 2017
(b) U.S. Coast Guard Marine Environmental Response and Preparedness Manual
(c) COMDTINST M16000.14 (series)
(d) COMDT (DCO) Memo 16471 of 02 Feb 2017
(e) National Contingency Plan, 40 CFR part 300

1. BACKGROUND. In accordance with reference (a), CG-MER launched a new Area Contingency Plan (ACP) review and approval process, which is now formally incorporated into reference (b). This policy is a cornerstone product of the broader area contingency planning revitalization initiative outlined in reference (c). The focal points of this policy are to promote formal standards for annual updates as well as institute a Coast Guard National Review Panel (CGNRP) that addresses national consistency on a macro level and ensure our compliance with references (b) and (d). Per reference (b), every coastal ACP is reviewed by the CGNRP every five years.

2. DISCUSSION. The fourth CGNRP convened 24 - 26 August 2021. CGNRP members included representatives from Commandant (CG-MER), Atlantic Area, Pacific Area, National Strike Force Coordination Center, District Five, District Eight, District Thirteen, and District Fourteen. District representation on the CGNRP is on a rotational basis and changes with each CGNRP convening. The scope of the CGNRP review is to conduct a targeted and strategic review of ACPs within the context of national consistency, trends and emergent issues. The CGNRP review is intended to complement the more comprehensive review and approval completed at the District level. The CGNRP focused on the following precepts:
a. Worst Case Discharge Scenarios (especially pipeline and rail scenarios if applicable);
b. Status of Endangered Species Act (ESA) compliance;
c. Section 106 compliance (National Historic Preservation Act);
d. Status of Geographic Response Strategies; and
e. Overall usability of ACP.

Subj: COAST GUARD NATIONAL REVIEW PANEL RESULTS FOR SECTOR
SAULT SAINTE MARIE AREA CONTINGENCY PLAN

16471

3. ACTION. As one of eight ACPs reviewed by the 2021 CGNRP, the Northern Michigan ACP was evaluated in accordance with paragraph (2) above. Results of the CGNRP review for Sector Sault Sainte Marie are provided as enclosure (1) of this memo. This memorandum (with enclosure) must be incorporated into the annual Federal On-Scene Coordinator (FOSC) update process outlined in reference (b) and documented accordingly in the accompanying record of changes. Districts shall work with their units to ensure the CGNRP comments are adjudicated and any necessary ACP changes are completed within a reasonable timeframe as deemed appropriate by the District. Such completion timeframes will be commensurate with the level of effort and complexity associated with each recommendation. The CGNRP recommendations shall be incorporated into a five-year "improvement plan" that identifies the short to long-term update strategy over the five-year revision cycle and annual update process as described in reference (b). Additionally, the completion status of CGNRP recommendations detailed in enclosure (1) must be documented in the Area Committee Annual Report as required by reference (b).

4. The ACP review and approval process fills a critical role in ensuring a nationally consistent preparedness posture is maintained. CG-MER continues to pay particular attention to refining the policy and process to ensure future review efforts are optimized and efficient. CG-MER looks forward to any feedback regarding process improvement and stands ready to assist the field in overcoming any challenges it may face with respect to the ACP revision process. My point of contact is Mr. Jonathan R. Smith, at (202) 372-2675 or e-mail address at Jonathan.R.Smith@uscg.mil.

#

Enclosure: (1) Table of CGNRP Recommendations for Sector Sault Sainte Marie

Dist: CGD NINE (dt)
CGD NINE (dc)

Copy: CG NSFCC

Regional Response Team

Areas where the RRT can
support Area Committees.

Endangered Species Act Consultations

+
•
0

ACPs must include names/contact info for reps from FWS & National Marine Fisheries Service & parameters of when to call them.

ACPs must include list of federally threatened & endangered species in AOR & list appropriate organization to consult with.

Essential Fish Habitats (EFH) Consultations

ACPs must include a list of EFHs & Habitat Areas of Particular Concern within the geographical area covered.

ACPs must contain names & contact info for EFH representatives.

Historic Preservation Act

Compliance & Pre-Spill Coord

- As part of ACP planning activities, FOSCs must engage with State Historic Preservation Officers, federal land managing agencies, and Federally Recognized Tribes.
 - ID previously recorded historic & cultural resources.
 - ID locations of specific historic properties that have been listed as eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.
 - Develop list of parties to be notified in the event of an incident.
 - ID names & contact info for Historic Property Specialists, State Historic Preservation Officers, Tribal Historic Preservation Officers & any applicable Tribal organizations for pre-spill & emergency consultation notifications.