3000 OPERATIONS

TOOLS AND RESOURCES
Federal Agency Guidance: • EPA IMH • USCG IMH **Operations:** • Operations Section Job Aid • Operations Section Organization Guidance

3010 OPERATIONS SECTION CHIEF

All incidents begin with operations. The Operations Section Chief must be both tactically competent and possess a thorough understanding of the Incident Command System (ICS). The Operations Section Chief is selected by Unified Command (UC). The position of Operations Section Chief should be filled by the person with the greatest technical and tactical expertise in dealing with the problem at hand.

For an explanation of how the Operations Section functions and organizes its work, see the United States (U.S.) Coast Guard (USCG) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Incident Management Handbooks (IMHs).

3020 WILDLIFE BRANCH

TOOLS AND RESOURCES
Wildlife: • Northwest Wildlife Response Plan • Managing Impacts to Fisheries • NOAA Guidelines for Assessing Exposure and Impacts of Oil Spills on Marine Mammals • Resources at Risk Response Tools • RRT10 Endangered Species Act Compliance Guide • RRT10 Southern Resident Killer Whale Deterrence • USFWS Best Practices for Migratory Bird Care during Oil Spill Response • USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation

The primary purpose of the Wildlife Branch is to provide the best achievable care for oil-impacted wildlife and to minimize wildlife losses during oil spills. This includes preventing injury to wildlife or habitats, from either the oil itself or from any response countermeasures.

The Wildlife Branch, working within the Operations Section, develops the operational strategies, tactics, and resource needs for its activities and submits these for inclusion in the incident action plan. It is the policy of the Regional Response Team 10 (RRT10) that representatives of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will assume the positions of Director and Deputy Director of the Wildlife Branch. State fish and wildlife representatives will assume these positions if a USFWS representative is not available or if designated by a USFWS representative. This designation may be made on a case-by-case basis or through a pre-existing agreement. Appointment of other parties, including Tribal or responsible party (RP) representatives, to one or both positions may be made by a USFWS representative or their designee at any time during an incident, and for such periods as may be deemed appropriate. Unless otherwise indicated by USFWS, these positions will be delegated to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife for spills that occur within the legal boundaries of Washington State.

The Wildlife Branch Director is responsible for implementing the Northwest Wildlife Response Plan (Annex D) for the Northwest Region, which describes the roles, responsibilities, and duties of the Wildlife Branch and its associated personnel. The Wildlife Branch Director is also responsible for ensuring compliance with applicable federal and state wildlife laws and mandates on behalf of the UC during a response. Tribes retain sovereign authority to manage wildlife resource issues within their respective reservation boundaries and the Wildlife Branch will consult with and coordinate any wildlife response operations with Tribal governments whose lands may be impacted by an oil spill.

The Wildlife Branch is activated whenever a federal or state trustee agency, RP, or the UC determines that an oil spill has occurred in the vicinity of wildlife resources (primarily mammals or birds), or when a spill's expected trajectory puts these wildlife resources at risk. Activation of personnel and equipment is based primarily on anticipated impacts to wildlife and will be appropriate to the size of the spill.