

# Northwest Oil and Hazardous Substances Spill Contingency Planning Updates

## Background

For decades, the Northwest Area Contingency Plan (NWACP) outlined oil and hazardous substances spill preparedness and response policies and practices in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. This one plan served as the regional contingency plan (RCP), inland and coastal area contingency plans (ACPs), and is the state plan for Washington and Oregon. In 2017, the U.S. Coast Guard directed each Captain of the Port to create standalone coastal ACPs that are distinct from RCPs. In 2021, both Sector Puget Sound and Sector Columbia River published their own stand-alone coastal ACPs. These changes have necessitated a change in how oil and hazardous substances contingency planning is implemented in the Pacific Northwest. As a result, the regional planning partners have been working through a process to develop a new framework for contingency planning.

## The New Pacific Northwest Oil and Hazardous Substances Spill Contingency Planning Framework

In July 2024, representatives of the U.S. Coast Guard District 13, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Coast Guard Sector Puget Sound, U.S. Coast Guard Sector Columbia River, Washington Department of Ecology, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Idaho Office of Emergency Management, Makah Tribe, and Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians agreed upon and signed a planning framework.

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*The Pacific Northwest Oil and Hazardous Substances Spill Contingency Planning Framework is available for review at <https://RRT10NWAC.com>, [What's New?](#)*

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The Framework outlines the hierarchy of plans, leadership, and membership of the Region 10 Regional Response Team (RRT) and the Area Committees of the Pacific Northwest. The Framework also outlines proposed meeting schedules for the various planning bodies. The purpose of this Framework is to ensure the planning requirements and objectives of state, federal, and tribal planning partners continue to be met amidst this change.

The signatory agencies of the new Framework are currently developing a standalone RCP. Additionally, the EPA is working with planning partners to develop a standalone inland ACP. The U.S. Coast Guard Sectors are working with planning partners to update the existing coastal ACPs to address U.S. Coast Guard requirements to standardize plan architecture across the country. As these plans are developed and updated, the planning partners will work to ensure that no substantive content in the existing NWACP and existing coastal ACPs is lost.

## How Does this Impact Industry Response Plans?

While the regional planning partners are working to develop new plans, and update existing coastal ACPs, the current contingency plans for the Pacific Northwest remain the Northwest Area Contingency Plan (NWACP) and the two coastal zone area contingency plans: Puget Sound Area Contingency Plan and Columbia River Area Contingency Plan.

Several sections of the 2020 Northwest Area Contingency Plan were updated in April of 2024. The most up-to-date sections of the NWACP should be used.

The updated NWACP can be found on the RRT10/NWAC website (<https://www.rrt10nwac.com/>) under Contingency Plans.

You will notice the RRT 10 NWAC website has a new look! While we tried to keep most of the website content unchanged, some of the links to specific sections of the NWACP in your company's contingency plan may need to be updated.

The Puget Sound Area Contingency Plan and Columbia River Area Contingency Plan, as updated by the 2024 Letter of Promulgation found on the RRT/NWAC website can be found on the U.S. Coast Guard's Homeport website ([Sector Puget Sound](#))( [Sector Columbia River](#)), as well as the RRT 10/NWAC website.

## Tentative 2025 Meeting Schedule

Changes in the planning framework resulted in additional changes to the meeting framework and schedule. As described in the attached Framework, each of the coastal and inland area committees will meet separately in their area of responsibility at least twice a year. The RRT 10 will also meet at least twice a year, and we will endeavor to co-locate these meetings with Area Committee meetings to minimize travel burdens. A joint meeting of all three area committees will be held in once a year in December. Meetings will be held throughout the Pacific Northwest to maximize participation by local planning and response partners.

The following table outlines the tentative 2025 meeting schedule for the regional and area committees. These dates are subject to change.

Month	Meeting	Location
<b>January</b>		
<b>February</b>		
<b>March</b>	*Puget Sound Area Committee Meeting *RRT 10 Meeting/Area and Regional Leadership Meeting (will alternate to Columbia River Area Committee in CY2026)	Puget Sound Area of Responsibility
<b>April</b>	Inland Area Committee Meeting	Inland Area of Responsibility
<b>May</b>	Columbia River Area Committee Meeting	Columbia River Area of Responsibility
<b>June</b>		
<b>July</b>		

<b>August</b>		
<b>September</b>	*Inland Area Committee Meeting *RRT 10 Meeting/Area and Regional Leadership Meeting	Inland Area of Responsibility
<b>October</b>	Columbia River Area Committee Meeting	Columbia River Area of Responsibility
<b>November</b>	Puget Sound Area Committee Meeting	Puget Sound Area of Responsibility
<b>December</b>	Joint Area Committees Meeting	Region 10 Area of Responsibility

## Next Steps

### *Public Meeting*

The Framework signatories are holding a virtual public meeting on December 12, 2024, at 1300 PST to provide an overview of these changes and answer any questions about the Framework and associated meetings and committees. We encourage you to join us if you have any questions about these changes.

### *Plan Development Timelines*

The development of the new standalone RCP and inland ACP and updates to the coastal ACPs are ongoing and projected to be completed in 2026. Each plan will have an associated public comment period before the final plan is published.