

Arctic/Great Lakes Oil Spill Response Exercise Working Group

Background: This project is primarily funded by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) to address response to oil in ice. Spills are rare in the Great Lakes but a large amount of work has been done for spills in the Arctic. While the conditions may be differ (fresh ice versus salt ice), the availability to response options (no dispersant for fresh water) and logistics different, it is hoped that Great Lake responders could benefit from Alaska research efforts. Ultimately, a program of exercises could be established to take advantage of the logistics (shorter distances) and capabilities (ice breakers available in Lakes) that could result in both regions benefitting.

This approach is based on work that the R&D Center did back in 1999-2002 for in-situ burning offshore. Many of the tactics/techniques had been developed and a few tried independently, but the total evolution had never been put together. The exercises off of Galveston utilized a full ICS structure, multiple air craft and vessels and resulted in a large amount of documentation that was developed into an operations manual. It is not clear operational requirements and plans are sufficient for oil in ice operations.

Objective: To briefly assess current state-of-the art of spill response in Northern and Western Alaska and determine what approaches could benefit from exercises and how these could be implemented.