



# **DEBRIEFING REPORT**

**FOR:**

**2023 INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM  
TABLETOP EXERCISE (IMT TTX)**

**Singapore**

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Prepared by:  
ECM Maritime Services, LLC  
The Kent Building, 43 Danbury Road  
Wilton, CT 06897

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## **Introduction**

On October 17, 2023, ECM Maritime Services, LLC (ECM) conducted an Incident Management Team (IMT) Tabletop Exercise (TTX) pursuant to the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Preparedness for Response Exercise Program (PREP) guidelines. The exercise was conducted in-person at the Parkroyal Collection Marina Bay in Singapore.

The exercise started with opening remarks from ECM. The TTX scenario was based on a simulated vessel casualty and spill in San Francisco Bay, California. The purpose of the exercise was to test the various components of the plan holder's USCG Vessel Response Plan (VRP) including:

1. Notification procedures regarding the Qualified Individual (QI), USCG, affected State (California), Oil Spill Removal Organizations (OSROs), Salvage and Marine Firefighting (SMFF) provider, etc.
2. Spill mitigation procedures concerning shipboard response, casualty actions, damage stability and health and safety issues.
3. Shore-based response activities such as the QI's responsibilities, company crisis management team involvement and use of the Incident Command System (ICS) for response management.
4. Response contractor activities and capabilities including spill containment, recovery, and environmental protection.
5. Salvage activities involving the SMFF provider.
6. Media management.

The TTX was designed to provide a realistic expectation of the response issues that would be encountered based on the actions taken by the USCG, State of California, ECM, OSROs, SMFF provider and others to a simulated vessel casualty/spill using an ICS-based management organization. The exercise started with a briefing of the spill scenario followed by a discussion of simulated initial notifications to agencies, the vessel owner/operator, OSROs, SMFF provider and others. Following the initial scenario briefing and notifications, ECM covered various response issues associated with the spill scenario in a lecture format. The TTX was composed of PowerPoint slides, discussions, video clips, a spill trajectory movie, and other multi-media materials.

The exercise simulation included all tasks completed by the Unified Command (UC) during the initial phases of the event, as well as the meetings and planning tasks associated with moving towards a planned project phase of the response. The exercise incorporated all operational and planning tasks for the simulated incident from the initial response briefing through the successful completion of the planning meeting and subsequent development of an incident action plan (IAP).

## **Basic Scenario**

On March 7, 2023, the M/T PACIFIC EMPRESS, partly laden with 446,000 bbls of Oriente crude oil, arrived at Anchorage 9 in San Francisco Bay, coordinates 37°45'36.70"N; 122°19'50.96"W, to take on stores and lube oil bunkers before proceeding to Chevron's Longwharf Terminal at Richmond to discharge all cargo. Prior to her San Francisco Bay arrival, she discharged 500,000 bbls of Oriente crude at Chevron's El Segundo Terminal in Southern California, having loaded the entirety of her 946,000 bbls of cargo at the OCP Terminal in Esmeraldas, Ecuador ten days earlier.

On the early morning of March 8, 2023, while still at Anchorage 9, the vessel's COT #2 P&S are 90% capacity, COT #4 P&S at 85% capacity and COT #6 P&S at 70% capacity with Oriente crude. The PACIFIC EMPRESS is at 32 feet even keel draft, with all ballast tanks empty except for the forepeak and afterpeak.

At around 0630 LT, there is intense fog in San Francisco Bay. The outbound container ship M/V MELBOURNE EXPRESS is arriving at Anchorage 9 under her own power when a fire breaks out in the galley. The bridge team of MELBOURNE EXPRESS, distracted by the fire, suddenly notice the PACIFIC EMPRESS as the fog clears. The Master of the MELBOURNE EXPRESS attempts to take a series of evasive actions, but to no avail. The bow of the MELBOURNE EXPRESS impacts the port side of the PACIFIC EMPRESS at a speed of 8 knots. The impact onboard the PACIFIC EMPRESS is severe and felt by the entire crew.

As the MELBOURNE EXPRESS disengages and drifts away from the site of the impact with visible damage to the bow, the sulfurous smell of sour crude oil is noticed almost immediately. A sheen is noted to be forming on the port side of the PACIFIC EMPRESS. The Chief Mate does a visual check from as close as possible on deck and notices crude oil escaping from the region abreast of No. 4 port COT, which indicates the inner hull has been breached. Based on initial soundings, it is estimated that 8,000 bbls of crude have been discharged. The No. 4 port COT contains 78,543 bbls of crude. There are no injuries reported.

## **Summary of Exercise Activities and Actions**

The initial scenario information was provided to the companies' representatives and notifications were initiated through simulated phone calls, videos, and discussion-based actions. Following this, ECM presented various response and salvage issues associated with the scenario. Videos of UC meetings from the California exercise were shown to demonstrate how objectives would be set and the ICS organization would address response issues. In addition, short movie clips, Google Earth images, charts, maps, and other multi-media tools were used to demonstrate the movement of oil, deployment of cleanup assets and other response issues related to the incident. Salvage issues were covered throughout the exercise including initial damage assessment activities, vessel stability calculations and salvage plans. The exercise covered all meetings involved in

the ICS Planning Process from the initial UC Meeting to the Planning meeting and development of an IAP.

**A. Notifications**

The exercise began with simulated exercise notifications from the Master to ECM's QI and the QI to the National Response Center and California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES). The OSRO (National Response Corporation) and the SMFF provider (T&T Salvage) were also notified and activated under the vessel's response plan. During the exercise another OSRO, Marine Spill Response Corporation (MSRC), was activated by the USCG as part of a Basic Agreement (BA). The priority, importance, and sequence of notifications to ECM, USCG, California, NRC, SMFF, P&I Club and others was covered at length during the presentation.

**B. Shipboard Response**

Following initial notifications to the QI, the Master conducted immediate response actions to determine the safety of his crew, assess damages, mitigate the spill through internal tank transfers, take tank soundings and maintain strong communications with the QI and Company's CMT.

**C. IMT's Access to Contracted OSRO and SMFF Organizations**

Specific spill response operational activities were assigned to contracted OSROs depending on their response capabilities and resource assets. Task forces and strike teams were assigned to address open water recovery, shoreline recovery/protection, source control, containment/diversion booming, water intakes, vessel-cleaning stations, etc.

Because the spill occurred in a major shipping port, OSRO and SMFF resources were readily available to quickly respond. The OSROs arranged to cascade additional resources from other areas in the region to respond to the incident as needed to address specific issues/concerns. NRC (supported by MSRC) as the vessel's contracted OSRO, provided all necessary response personnel, equipment, and materials for the response. The designated SMFF provider performed damage assessment activities, vessel stability calculations and developed a draft salvage plan that was approved by the UC.

**D. IMT's Coordination with Federal/State On-Scene Coordinator (FOSC/SOSC)**

A representative from USCG Sector San Francisco was the Federal On-Scene Coordinator (FOSC) and the California Department of Fish & Wildlife – Office of Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR) assumed the role of State On-Scene Coordinator (SOSC). ECM was the Responsible Party Incident Commander (RPIC). To the maximum extent possible, all federal and state response issues were addressed by the UC throughout the day. This included command and operational issues as well as support issues.

### **Recommendations/Comments**

Overall, the drill was developed and implemented very well. It was a plausible scenario and tested the communications and coordination that would occur between the vessel owner/operator, ECM as QI, USCG, State of California, SMFF provider, OSROs and other members of the response community. The exercise also provided an opportunity for company representatives in attendance to participate in a simulated ICS-based incident response exercise and review appropriate emergency procedures.

We will continue to develop scenarios and issues that involve the P&I Club correspondent, Class representative, Ship Emergency Response Services (SERS), SMFF provider and others in the response community, if possible.

In addition to participating in ECM's IMT exercise, we also suggest that each client plan holder consider holding an annual in-office exercise(s) with their CMT, vessel fleet, ECM, SMFF provider and/or other parties to train for U.S. and global incidents. These training sessions should be documented and lessons-learned shared with staff and vessel personnel.

### **Conclusions**

Overall, we thought the drill went very well and that it provided an excellent training opportunity to all present. The willingness of your company's representative(s) to participate in the exercise demonstrates your company's dedication to enhancing its preparedness for emergencies.

This report confirms that participating companies have met the stated objectives of this IMT TTX. As a result, vessel plan holders in attendance at the exercise have met the intent of the USCG PREP guidelines. Finally, companies should complete the required self-certification process and letter to document full compliance with PREP's annual exercise requirements.

We hope this summary has been helpful. If you have any questions, please contact us. It was our pleasure working with you on this exercise.

Best Regards,  
ECM Maritime Services, LLC