

The following is an abstract of the Section 2.16 of the [ECM Regulatory Reference Guide \(RRG\)](#) Edition Jan 2009, Rev.2.

OPA'90 Training & Exercise requirements for Tank Vessels

Training Requirements

A TVRP plan must identify the training to be provided to persons having responsibilities under the plan, including members of the vessel crew, the qualified individual, and the spill management team (33CFR155.1055).

The training shall also be provided to the spill management team, the qualified individual, and other personnel with specific responsibilities under the plan including tankermen and members of the towing vessel crew.

The training procedure outlined in a specific TVRP Section must address the training procedures and programs of the vessel owner or operator. The vessel owner or operator shall ensure that:

1. All personnel with responsibilities under the plan receive training in their assignments and refresher training as necessary, and participate in exercises required (please see here below sub-section). Documented work experience can be used instead of training; and
2. Records of this training are maintained aboard the vessel, at the U.S. location of the spill management team, or with the qualified individual. The plan must specify where the records are located.

A vessel owner or operator shall ensure the maintenance of records sufficient to document this training and make them available for inspection upon request by the Coast Guard. Records must be maintained for 3 years following completion of training.

Exercise Requirements

A vessel owner or operator required by 33 CFR 155.1035 and 155.1040 to have a TVRP shall conduct exercise as necessary to ensure that the plan will function in an emergency.

Both announced and unannounced exercises must be included.

Note. An unannounced exercise is one in which the personnel participating in the exercise have not been advised in advance of the exact date, time, and scenario of the exercise.

Announced Exercise Requirements (Internal Exercises)

The following are the minimum exercise requirements for vessels covered under OPA 90:

1. Qualified individual notification exercises, which must be conducted quarterly when in U.S. waters;
2. Emergency procedures exercises, which must be conducted quarterly;
3. Shore-based spill management team tabletop exercises, which must be conducted annually. In a triennial period, at least one of these exercises must include a worst case discharge scenario;
4. Oil spill removal organization equipment deployment exercises, which must be conducted annually; and

5. An exercise of the entire response plan, which must be conducted every 3 years. The vessel owner or operator shall design the exercise program so that all components of the response plan are exercised at least once every 3 years. All of the components do not have to be exercised at one time; they may be exercised over the 3-year period through the required exercises or through an area exercise.

Tabletop Exercise" (TTX) means an exercise of an oil spill contingency plan and the spill management response efforts without the actual deployment of response equipment. A tabletop exercise usually involves the enactment of a response to a simulated spill.

Qualified Individual Notification Exercise

The purpose of the qualified individual notification exercise is to ensure that the qualified individual (or designee, as designated in the response plan) is able to be reached in a spill response emergency to carry out his or her required duties.

Contact by telephone, radio, facsimile or email must be made with the qualified individual, and confirmation must be received from him or her to satisfy the requirements of this exercise.

For vessels, electronic notification (fax or email) will be acceptable, but the baseline should be voice communication. If an electronic means is used for this exercise, confirmation from the qualified individual must be received to properly satisfy the requirements of this exercise.

The qualified individual notification exercise is not intended to verify phone numbers, points of contact or the notification list contained in the plan. The plan holder is expected to update the notification list periodically as part of the normal course of conducting business.

For vessels, it is the responsibility of the plan holder to ensure that the qualified individual notification exercise is conducted. If a plan holder has a fleet of vessels covered by one response plan, the plan holder must ensure that each vessel in the fleet conducts this exercise.

ECM has developed the ECM OPA 90 (USCG) & CALIFORNIA QI NOTIFICATION EXERCISE FORM (Form No. 08) for the Master's use.

Emergency Procedure Exercise

The purpose of the emergency procedures exercises is to ensure that personnel are capable of conducting the initial actions necessary to mitigate the effects of a spill.

For vessels, it is the responsibility of the plan holder to ensure that the emergency procedures exercise is conducted. If a plan holder has a fleet of vessels covered by one response plan, the plan holder must ensure that each vessel in the fleet conducts this exercise.

Since vessels do not always sail with the same crews, it is important that each vessel conducts these emergency procedures exercises as listed in the VRP on a quarterly basis to ensure that the personnel on board are familiar with the procedures for mitigating a spill occurring from that vessel.

Shore-based Spill Management Team Tabletop Exercise (SMT TTX)

The response plan holder must identify a spill management team (SMT) in the response plan. This SMT shall conduct an annual tabletop exercise.

SMT TTX exercises must be held in accordance with the OPA 90 regulations or in conjunction with the NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS FOR RESPONSE EXERCISE PROGRAM (PREP) GUIDELINES will satisfy the vessel response plan exercise requirements.

The response plan must be utilized in the exercise to ensure the SMT is familiar with the plan and is able to use it effectively to conduct a spill response. At least one spill management team tabletop exercise in a triennial cycle shall involve a worst case discharge scenario.

If a response plan lists different types of spill management teams for varying sizes of spills—for example a local spill management team for small spills, a regional team for larger spills, and a national team for major spills—each team identified would be required to conduct an annual spill management team tabletop exercise. Plan holders must also participate in the SMT TTX annual exercise.

The Equipment Deployment Exercise

The equipment deployment exercise applies to all plan holders. It is the responsibility of the plan holder to ensure that the Equipment Deployment Exercise requirement is met.

The two primary requirements for the equipment deployment exercise are:

1. The personnel that would normally operate or supervise the operation of the response equipment must participate in the exercise. The personnel must demonstrate their ability to deploy and operate the equipment. All personnel involved in equipment deployment and operation must be involved in a training program.
2. The response equipment must be in good operating condition. The equipment must be appropriate for the intended operating environment. The equipment must operate during the exercise. All response equipment must be included in a maintenance program.

Unannounced Exercise Requirements (External Exercises)

Annually, each plan holder should ensure that one of the following exercises is conducted unannounced:

- Emergency procedures exercise for vessels and barges;
- Spill management team tabletop exercise; or
- Equipment deployment exercise.

An unannounced exercise is where the exercise participants do not have prior knowledge of the exercise, as would be the situation in an actual spill incident.

To ensure that the nation maintains an adequate posture for response preparedness, and to satisfy the OPA 90 requirement for unannounced exercises, it is necessary to have an exercise program which is comprised of both announced and unannounced exercises. The requirement for the annual unannounced exercise is necessary to maintain the level of preparedness necessary to effectively respond to a spill.

Response to an actual spill should be taken as credit for the unannounced exercise requirement, if the response was evaluated.

A vessel owner or operator shall participate in unannounced exercises, as directed by the Coast Guard COTP. The objectives of the unannounced exercises will be to evaluate notifications and equipment deployment for responses to average most probable discharge spill scenarios outlined in vessel response plans.

The unannounced exercises will be limited to four per area per year, an area being that geographic area for which a separate and distinct Area Contingency Plan has been prepared, as described in the Oil Pollution Act of 1990.

After participating in an unannounced exercise directed by a COTP, the owner or operator will not be required to participate in another unannounced exercise for at least 3 years from the date of the exercise.

A vessel owner or operator shall participate in area exercises as directed by the applicable on-scene coordinator. The area exercises will involve equipment deployment to respond to the spill scenario developed by the exercise design team, of which the vessel owner or operator will be a member. After participating in an area exercise, a vessel owner or operator will not be required to participate in another area exercise for at least 6 years.

The vessel owner or operator shall ensure that adequate exercise records are maintained. The following records are required:

- On board the vessel, records of the qualified individual notification exercises and the emergency procedures exercises. These exercises may be documented in the ship's log or may be kept in a separate exercise log.
- At the United States' location of either the qualified individual, spill management team, the vessel owner or operator, or the oil spill removal organization, records of exercises conducted off the vessel. Response plans must indicate the location of these records.
- Records must be maintained and available to the Coast Guard for 3 years following completion of the exercises.
- The response plan submitted to meet the requirements of this subpart must specify the planned exercise program. The plan shall detail the exercise program, including the types of exercises, frequencies, scopes, objectives, and the scheme for exercising the entire response plan every 3 years.

Compliance with the National Preparedness for Response Exercise Program (PREP) Guidelines will satisfy the vessel response plan exercise requirements.