



**Department of
Primary Industries**

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Procedure - Oil/Chemical Spill Wildlife Response – Scaling Down and Demobilising Response

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1. Application / Scope

The decision to terminate an oil or chemical spill response is made by the Incident Controller in consultation with the Environment and Scientific Coordinator. The decision is based on an assessment of clean-up operations to determine when there is minimal benefit to be gained from continuing and whether the benefit is outweighed by the cost. Criteria for termination of a response can be found at Appendix 10 of the [NSW State Waters Marine Oil and Chemical Spill Contingency Plan](#).

Once the decision has been made to terminate operations, the Incident Controller will stand down individual participating and supporting agencies when parties agree that the incident/emergency has been satisfactorily controlled and their input is no longer required. This is likely to involve the progressive stand down of different sections as some may need resourcing for longer than others.

In the event of a spill that impacts on wildlife, ongoing resourcing may be required, beyond the termination of clean-up operations, to complete the rehabilitation of some affected animals and to conduct monitoring programs after their release. Demobilisation of the wildlife response will be guided by parameters established by the Wildlife Coordinator at the beginning of operations and incorporated into the Incident Action Plan in consultation with the Incident Controller.

This procedure assists personnel involved in the demobilisation of a wildlife response. It does not address any other aspects of a wildlife response which are covered in separate procedural documents. Refer to other procedures listed at the end of this document.

2. Abbreviations / Definitions

- AASFAC - Animal and Agriculture Services Functional Area Coordinator
- OEH - Office of Environment and Heritage
- SWMS - Safe Work Method Statement

3. Resources / Equipment

- Detailed information on numbers of animals still being captured or requiring ongoing care
- Personnel to undertake dismantling of facilities and returning stores and equipment to relevant owners

4. Warnings

The demobilisation of a wildlife response will include dismantling temporary facilities or returning built facilities to their pre-response condition. This could involve a range of physical activities such as dismantling marquees or other temporary constructions, removing electrical and plumbing installations, removing furnishings or cleaning facilities and equipment. Steps will need to be taken to minimise any hazards associated with the following:

- Manual handling – the moving of equipment, furniture, boxes of stores etc must be undertaken using the correct techniques and equipment. Refer to the Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS) [Manual Handling – inside](#) and [Manual handling – stores](#).
- Disconnecting electrical and plumbing connections – depending on the nature of the installations, this may need to be undertaken by suitably qualified tradespersons eg plumbers or electricians.
- Slips, trips, falls etc – disassembling work areas and animal treatment facilities will involve considerable activity by many people, some of whom may be unfamiliar with the areas and this could present hazards that could lead to slips, trips and falls. Hazards should be identified and measures implemented to prevent mishaps.
- Personnel involved in decontaminating and sanitizing facilities and equipment risk exposure to chemicals and disease (some may be zoonotic) and must be provided with adequate personal protective equipment including safety goggles, gloves, waterproof outer clothing and suitable

footwear. The installation of rubber mats in wet areas should be considered in order to reduce the risk of personnel slipping on wet floors

- Personnel may experience back strain, overheating, dehydration and exhaustion and should be rostered to take adequate rest breaks and provided with regular drinks. Refer to the policy [Fatigue Management in Emergency Responses](#).
- Disassembling facilities and relocating various stores items and equipment will require high volumes of vehicle movements into and out of the site. Personnel need to operate safely around moving vehicles. Vehicle movements need to be managed to remove the risk of accidents and prevent disruption to local traffic.
- Psychological effect/wellbeing – as people may have been working there for prolonged periods
- Incident Action Plans need to flag the end of the response weeks ahead of time if the incident extends over a long period of time (ie in excess of two months).

5. Procedure

Demobilisation of the wildlife response will be undertaken in accordance with parameters established in the Incident Action Plan and when the Wildlife Coordinator considers that all wildlife affected by the spill have been dealt with. The decision will be made in consultation with the Incident Controller, the Environmental Services Coordinator, the AASFAC and the Rescue and Rehabilitation Divisional Commanders from the Wildlife Unit.

Demobilisation of personnel, equipment and facilities used for the wildlife response will generally lag behind that of the wider spill response because cleaning, treatment and rehabilitation of wildlife can extend over several weeks. Factors determining the timing of demobilisation will include:

- the numbers of affected wildlife still being found (if any) and the cut-off below which formal rescue efforts will be suspended
- the numbers and state of health of captive wildlife and the need for ongoing cleaning and rehabilitation operations
- the state of clean-up of any impacted wetlands, shorelines or islands and their capacity to support released wildlife
- sign-off by the Environmental Services Coordinator providing assurance that habitats to which wildlife are to be returned are no longer contaminated.

Animals captured late in the response may require care after other response resources have been demobilised. As a general guide, rehabilitation facilities will be required for some three weeks after the admission of the last animal. During that time, as more animals are released, leaving fewer animals in care, personnel and equipment resources can be gradually scaled back.

In some cases, some animals will need to remain in rehabilitation after the majority have been released. Depending on the cost and feasibility of maintaining facilities established for the incident, consideration may need to be given to re-locating these animals to other facilities to complete their rehabilitation.

The Rescue Divisional Commander will be responsible for scaling back and demobilising activities and resources associated with wildlife search and rescue, triage and first aid and transport (although some transport resources may need to be transferred to the Rehabilitation Division if there are still animals awaiting release).

The Rehabilitation Divisional Commander will be responsible for scaling back and demobilising activities and resources associated with the rehabilitation and release of wildlife affected by the spill.

5.1. Rescue Division

As the numbers of affected wildlife being captured fall towards the agreed threshold for ceasing operations, the Rescue Divisional Commander, in consultation with the Wildlife Coordinator and the Rescue, First Aid, and Transport Sector Commanders, will oversee the scaling back and termination of wildlife rescue operations. This will include:

- Ensuring that all animals are accounted for and have been transferred to treatment facilities
- Standing down search and rescue resources – including vehicles, boats, hazing and other equipment which must be decontaminated, cleaned and serviced, if required, and returned to the relevant owner or custodian
- Debriefing and standing down rescue personnel
- Debriefing and standing down, or transferring, transport personnel
(NOTE: some vehicles and transport personnel may need to be retained to transport animals yet to be released or moved from the rehabilitation facility).
- De-commissioning of triage and first aid facilities. This will include ensuring that facilities are decontaminated and returned to their previous condition, including replenishing depleted stores and provisions if applicable. Temporary facilities will need to be cleaned, decontaminated, dismantled and returned to relevant owners.
- Ensuring that all contaminated waste has been removed from the site in accordance with waste management procedures for the incident.
- Debriefing and standing down triage/first-aid personnel
- Ensuring that completed incident records, personnel records and cost recovery paperwork have been duly authorised and forwarded to the Logistics Section for processing/archiving.
- Ensuring that any requested field samples, photographs or other evidence gathered have been provided to the OEH Investigation Team.

5.2. Rehabilitation Division

As rescue operations scale back, and treatment facilities are no longer required, the Rehabilitation Divisional Commander, in consultation with the Wildlife Coordinator and the Rescue Divisional Commander, will oversee the scaling back and termination of rehabilitation operations.

This will include:

- Ensuring that all animals have been accounted for, meaning that all fully rehabilitated wildlife have been released back into their natural environments and that animals requiring ongoing rehabilitation are transferred to another care facility if there are too few to justify keeping rehabilitation facilities operational
- Debriefing and standing down rehabilitation personnel
- De-commissioning rehabilitation facilities, including transport, washing and drying facilities and rehabilitation facilities.
- Ensuring that facilities are decontaminated, sanitized and returned to their previous condition, including replenishing depleted stores and provisions if applicable. Temporary facilities will need to be, decontaminated, sanitized, dismantled and returned to relevant owners.
- Ensuring that all contaminated waste has been removed from the site in accordance with waste management procedures for the incident.
- Ensuring that the contents of any Oiled Wildlife Response Kit used during the response are reviewed and replenished if required and the kits are returned to their holding locations. The [Australian Marine Safety Authority](#) (AMSA) website provides contact details for stockists.

- Ensuring that completed animal records, incident records, personnel records and cost recovery paperwork have been duly authorised and forwarded to the Logistics Section for processing/archiving.

5.3. Debriefing/After Action Review

Once the Wildlife Unit has been demobilised, the Wildlife Coordinator will arrange an OEH/AASFAC debrief to analyse their involvement in the wildlife response. A subsequent review of systems, including policies and procedures should be undertaken based on lessons learned during the response.

Once the major operational phase of the response is completed the Marine Pollution Controller will organise an 'all agencies' debrief/after action review of the incident/emergency response and follow this up with a formal report.

6. References

Policies

- NSW DPI policy - [Fatigue Management in Emergency Responses](#)
- NSW DPI policy - [Occupational health and safety in emergency management](#)

Procedures

- [Wildlife Response – Cleaning and Drying Wildlife](#)
- [Wildlife Response – Pre-emptive action](#)
- [Wildlife Response – Rehabilitation of Wildlife](#)
- [Wildlife Response – Release of Wildlife](#)
- [Wildlife Response – Scaling Down and Demobilisation Response](#)
- [Wildlife Response – Search and Rescue](#)
- [Wildlife Response – Set up and Use of Wildlife Treatment Facilities](#)
- [Wildlife Response - Transporting Wildlife](#)
- [Wildlife Response – Triage and First Aid](#)

Safe Work Method Statements / Job Safety Analysis

- [Manual Handling – inside](#)
- [Manual handling – stores](#)

Role descriptions

- [Rehabilitation Division](#)
- [Rescue Division](#)
- [Wildlife Coordinator & Logistics Support](#)

Information

- [NSW State Waters Marine Oil and Chemical Spill Contingency Plan](#)

Legislation

- [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011](#)

7. Appendices