

PARTNERING WITH THE OTHER SIDE; TRUST AND LOGISTICS

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Introduction

Why is it that some collaborative endeavors work, and some do not? Why do some organizations work well together, and others do not? How is trust established between people in different organizations, even when one regulates the other? How do you integrate two very different cultures to attain one overarching goal? The purpose of this paper is to answer these questions by explaining how industry and a government entity partnered through a 9-month planning process to execute two major exercises for over 200 participants including international observers, overcoming multiple challenges, achieving positive results and building cohesive relationships between industry and government for the improvement of preparedness in the Pacific Northwest as well as the greater Pacific as a whole.

The genesis of this collaboration began with communication between Scott Knutson of the USCG District 13 District Response Advisory Team (DRAT) and Barbara Parker, then the Director of the Maine State Oil and Hazardous Materials Response Team in 2010 during the Gulf of Mexico Deep Water Horizon response.

Jump to 2017, in the early stages of the exercise design process, Knutson approached Parker to discuss the possibility of allowing members of the North Pacific Coast Guard Forum (NPCGF) access to the Shell exercise through the U. S. Coast Guard's International Observer Program (IOP). Forum membership includes agencies from Canada, China, Japan, Korea, Russia and the United States. This became the nexus for a partnership with Shell and the access to their exercise. An actual exercise would give the observers a chance to see ICS in action, to offer them something beyond what they had garnered from reading material and group discussions. They, together with Agneta Dahl, a retired Coast Guard Commander, now a Master Exercise Practitioner with NJ Resources contracted to Shell, worked together on the design team for the 2017 Shell Harbor Island Terminal Tier III Exercise.

Knutson was requesting to bring an additional 50 people to the exercise. This presented a problem as the Command Post for the exercise already had to accommodate the 150 expected responders, plus exercise control and evaluation staff, and the support staff such as IT and communications. Knutson offered up a potential solution which became the first opportunity to realize the benefit of collaboration between industry and government. The USCG had access to facilities not available to any private entity such as Shell. The USCG offered up a large federal building, Federal Center South, in exchange for Shell accommodating the 50 IOP members. This would be the first of many benefits realized by all parties in this planning process.

Main Results

The tradeoff for Shell agreeing to expand the drill to accommodate some 200 persons was that the USCG would secure a location on federal property. The Federal Center South was a facility not ever used for such a complex drill and did not have the needed infrastructure in place to accommodate this influx of people. This is where the trust factor became critical. To reiterate, the exercise planners had professional dealings with one another dating back to 2010, and by agreeing to take on a joint exercise raised the trust bar for their relationship, person to person and agency to company. It also raised the logistics bar in such a way as to put the planners' management skills on full-view for all participants to see. By Shell and the USCG agreeing to enter into this partnership, both entities gave up overall control and entered a "both fail" or "both succeed" scenario.

The federal space was secured, and the logistics work began. There was access to 10 to 15 empty rooms with lights, power and heat, but no telephones or internet. A Shell contractor was activated to bring in fully contained satellite communications trailers. Off-site venues included the Coast Guard Museum and the Jackson Federal Building, as well as a 200-foot oil skimming vessel at the Federal Center dock. The design team had to coordinate moving exercise participants and the observers from the NPCGF between these venues, and ensuring all resources needed were available at every venue. Buses, vans, security escorts, translators, translation booths, parking passes, box lunches, visitor worksheets, airport arrival and departure assistance, building security from the Federal Protective Service, additional guards and their x-ray machines and magnetometers, and more were needed. All these logistical hurdles were resolved through cooperation, compromise and a lot of determination. The Coast Guard worked with the Federal Protective Service to determine the number of additional government-approved contracted guards to hire, while Shell resolved the details of actually hiring them. Both actions were squarely in the discomfort zone.

As it happened, in addition to observing the Shell Harbor Island exercise, the members of the NPCGF began the week with an exercise of their own; the "Pacific Guardian" Multi-lateral Multi-Mission Exercise (MMEX). The Forum's exercises have areas of emphasis such as maritime security, illegal trafficking, emergency response and fisheries enforcement. The MMEX exercise in Seattle addressed emergency response, specifically marine pollution response, with an emphasis on establishing command and control. Within the International Maritime Organization (IMO) guidance document entitled IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OPRC (International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation) CONVENTION AND THE OPRC-HNS (Hazardous and Noxious Substances) PROTOCOL AND RELEVANT CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS, the implementation of an incident management system is addressed.¹ Japan, Russia, China and South Korea have signed onto the IMO's ORPC Convention indicating a commitment to the implementation of an Incident Management System (ICS) following IMO guidelines. The guidelines conform to the standardized ICS model. Both the federal governments of Canada and the United States have

¹ IMO Marine Environmental Protection Committee circular 61/8/2 25 June 2010

adopted a command and control system based on the National Incident Management System (NIMS) ICS.²

To further the relationship building between the members of the IOP and Shell, the general manager of Shell's emergency management team joined in the program. The three-day MMEX started with a one-day candid discussion amongst participating countries concentrating on Statutory Missions, Authorities and Responsibilities, Command and Control, Funding Schemes and International Conventions, Agreements and Regional Cooperation. The second day began with an introduction to NIMS ICS with an overview presented by a Coast Guard Yorktown Training Center instructor followed by The Harbor Island Exercise's Industry Preparedness for Response Exercise Program (PREP) orientation presented by the Shell executive.³ The remainder of the day included viewing static displays and a tour of Elliott Bay onboard the Canadian Coast Guard Cutter Sir Wilfrid Laurier.

Con-currently during the MMEX program, the two-day Shell pre-exercise program was fully underway at the Federal Center South. This included workshops focused on response operations, marine wildlife, shoreline clean-up, response software, and ICS section specific training for all segments of the response organization. As is normal practice, Federal, State and Local government officials joined Shell in these training programs in an effort to build a cohesive response program where all response partners get to know each other and how to work together on common objectives.

The third day merged NPCGF members with the Shell Incident Management Team to observe and participate in the Tier 3 exercise. The day provided the opportunity for NPCGF members to witness Unified Command in action after having the ICS instruction the day before. There were 172 responders from Shell, contractors, and federal and State governments, the exercise control and evaluation staff, plus the 50 NPCGF members on site. In all, well over 200 people participated in the event.

Given the scope and magnitude of the dual undertakings, all parties had to deliver on their commitments while trusting their planning partners would do the same. It was this collaboration and trust that paved the way for a unique, effective and successful learning experience for drill planners and drill participants alike.

Conclusion

NPCGF members struggled for two years to articulate what the Command and Control concept meant. Prior to the exercises, our partners had little if any firsthand experience with ICS. The MMEX and the Shell Harbor Island exercise that we conducted in Seattle changed everything. The Forum IOP participants gained insight in to what NIMS ICS looked like in the United States compared to their understanding of the IMO Incident Management System.

² National Incident Management System, FEMA, Third Edition, October 2017

³ 2016 Preparedness for Response Exercise Program

The breakthrough came when the Forum guests observed a Command and General Staff Meeting wherein they were able to watch the high level of interaction between the various agencies and Shell, allowing them to really grasp the notion of Unified Command. What were previously just words on an IMO document came to life in what can only be described as “theatre before their very eyes.” It took two years and four trans-pacific trips to get Forum members to a one-day exercise that moved the group from an intellectual discussion of ICS to an actual observation of a Planning Section Chief skillfully managing representatives of multiple regulatory agencies during ICS planning process meetings.

This experience represented a giant leap forward as evidenced by the most recent meeting of Forum members in September of 2017, only three months after the exercises. The Forum work groups moved beyond the ICS-sparring stage to regular off-session breakfast meetings about how ICS works.

From Shell’s perspective, this partnership was clearly beneficial for spill preparedness world-wide. Shell operates businesses in the countries that are members of the NPCGF, and Shell is actively teaching and exercising ICS globally as the Shell emergency management system of choice. Having the governments where Shell operates understand and use ICS along with the business units would be a great benefit to overall response effectiveness if an incident was to occur. All parties had to deliver on schedule. This successful coordination, completely reliant on trust between government and industry, laid the foundations for a unique and effective international incident management learning experience.

$$\text{Trust} = \frac{\text{Credibility} + \text{Reliability} + \text{Intimacy}}{\text{Self-Orientation}}$$

All aspects of the Trust Equation were on display during the planning process. Self-Orientation is the most powerful factor. In other words, do you truly care about the outcome for the sake of other person or are you solely focused on your own objectives? If you care for and about what the other person needs and you are honest and transparent with each other through the process, a very strong bond of trust can be established, as was the case throughout this experience.

A crucial factor in this success was that these two vastly different organizations are both completely aligned with the common priorities of safety of people and protection of the environment. These collaborative efforts tested the boundaries of cooperation between a government agency and a private corporation. Overcoming the stress and uncertainty, depending on each other and producing a successful outcome allowed us to coin the title of this InterSpill Conference paper, "Partnering with the Other Side: Trust and Logistics."