



TASKS SUITED TO VOLUNTEERS
IN OIL SPILL RESPONSE

Texts

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PROJECT: VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION IN OIL SPILL RESPONSE**Cover photos**

Voluntary Rescue Service (Vapepa) (top left), Jouko Liikanen / National Defence Training Association of Finland (MPK) (top right), Sampsa Vilhunen / WWF Finland (bottom left) Finnish Lifeboat Institution (SMPS) and Finnish Air Rescue Society (SLPS) (bottom right).

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Foreword

If needed, the authority can request volunteer assistance for various duties in a large-scale, locally significant or long-lasting oil spill response operation. This document describes the areas that are suitable for volunteers in supporting the authorities.

The description of the model is a part of the Volunteer Participation in Oil Spill Response project, produced by the Finnish National Rescue Association (SPEK). The structure of tasks is based on the information provided by the participating key organisations as regards the tasks suitable for them and the training that they provide. The project also produced the following documents (in Finnish):

- *A guide for managing and organising volunteers in oil spill response*
- *Report on the administration of volunteers in oil spill response: legislation, compensation and administrative arrangements*
- *A guide for the accelerated training of volunteers in shoreline cleanup*
- *A guide for oil spill incidents: How to act if you find oil in the environment?, and*
- *Training collage: Organisations' oil spill response training for volunteers, 2015*

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1. Introduction

Approximately 2,000 oil spills occur in Finland annually, most of which release small amounts of oil onto the ground. Nevertheless, in conjunction with the expanding volume of shipping, especially in the Baltic Sea, the risk of a major accident has grown. However, accidents that demand long-lasting oil response measures can also occur in inland waters. The worst oil spill accident in Finland's recent history took place in Raahe in the summer of 2014, when heavy fuel oil leaked from a steel mill into the sea, polluting, among other things, a nearby *Natura* nature protection area.

Hundreds of kilometres of shoreline can become contaminated by oil following an oil spill from a ship. This would threaten the health and property of people and the environment. The number of oiled birds and other wildlife could rise into the thousands, even tens of thousands. It is likely than in the aftermath of such an extensive accident it would be impossible to recover or contain all of the oil at sea, rather, the shoreline would be contaminated. The rescue services would probably be overwhelmed in trying to cope with such a large spill and, therefore, hundreds or even thousands of volunteers may be required in the ensuing cleanup operation.

The Government Decree on Oil Pollution Response (249/2014) lays down provisions on drawing up four regional cooperation plans on preventing and responding to oil and chemical spills from ships in Finland. Pursuant to the Decree, the prevention and response cooperation plan must also include information on the volunteer organisations which are available for use in the region that the plan covers. In other words, the authorities must make contingency plans for using volunteer organisations in oil spill response. By using the form appended to this document (cf. Appendix 1) the authorities can quickly see which tasks are suitable for volunteers. It is possible to use this form as a tool in contingency planning, on top of which it can also be useful during an actual oil spill response operation.

This guide provides a general overview of the tasks suitable for volunteers in an oil spill response operation. There are also other tasks that can pop up in the aftermath of an accident, which this guide does not address. Nevertheless, this document, created for the rescue services and other response authorities, provides a good assessment of present-day volunteer tasks. The material can also be utilised in the oil spill response planning and training of organisations.

It is possible to use volunteers from the initial phase all the way through to

the recovery phase. Volunteers working in oil spill response and in other duties always operate under the command of the authorities. The authority responsible for the operation decides in which duties volunteers will be used. Most of them will probably be needed in shoreline cleanup, i.e. decontaminating the shore sullied by oil. When the oil no longer poses a risk to the environment, the response operation is transferred to the 'recovery' phase. The municipality is often responsible for recovery, in which case volunteers operate under the command of the municipal authorities. The role of volunteers in a case where the municipality transfers the operation over to a business, or businesses, is yet to be decided.

WWF Finland has created the operating model for shoreline cleanup; it is also possible to recruit shoreline cleaners through the organisation. The Finnish Lifeboat Institution (SMPS) and the Finnish Air Rescue Society (SLPS) can support the authorities in oil reconnaissance. An oil spill response operation also needs a well-functioning support organisation. Its many tasks can be executed by, among others, the National Defence Training Association of Finland (MPK) or other organisations belonging to the network of the Voluntary Rescue Service (Vapepa). The volunteer units are able to operate as independent modules as well, so the authorities can ask them to help, for example, in shoreline cleanup only.

Unless otherwise provided in regulatory decisions on the allocation of resources, the personnel of contract fire brigades are bound to being on duty in accordance with their contracts. However, for the purposes of this document the personnel in contract brigades that are not first responders can well meet the characteristics of volunteers. In this respect the contract fire brigades can provide a limited, albeit organised and trained, resource which can operate in, among other things, firefighting tasks at waste handling ports.

Regional disparity may be significant and all organisations are not necessarily present in each region. For this reason it is beneficial for several organisations to be able to handle many of the tasks suitable for volunteers. It is important for rescue departments to proactively chart and identify the volunteer organisations in their region and define the tasks that are suited to them. Still, there are some sectors which are only suitable for certain organisations due to the required high level of expertise and specialisation. Aerial reconnaissance is an example of such a sector; crews of the SLPS are properly trained for this task. Organisations are constantly improving their activities and in the future they will be able to focus their resources on tasks which, at the moment, are beyond their scope. This document provides an overview of the tasks suitable for volunteers at the time of writing.

2. Key terms and concepts

Spontaneous volunteer

A spontaneous volunteer stands for an untrained Finnish or foreign volunteer who does not belong to the alert group of an organisation.

SÖKÖ II project

The SÖKÖ II project, from 2007–2011, generated the SÖKÖ II Manual, which provides guidance on shoreline cleanup for the authorities following an oil spill from a ship.

Volunteer

According to a generally accepted definition volunteering is an activity performed of a person's own free will and own initiative, with no aim of financial gain. When agreed, the volunteers or the organisations they represent can be compensated or remunerated for expenses. A volunteer can be a member of a non-profit organisation. However, in this document the term 'volunteer' only refers to a person who, pursuant to Section 36 of the Act on Oil Pollution Response (1673/2009), has been approved to participate in an oil spill response organisation by the accident response authority.

Vapepa

The Voluntary Rescue Service (Vapepa) is a non-registered network of voluntary rescue organisations. The Vapepa network comprises more than 50 organisations, including all of the organisations that actively participated in the *Volunteer Participation in Oil Spill Response* project. The Finnish Red Cross coordinates the network and its activities on the ground, the Finnish Lifeboat Institution coordinates its maritime activity and the Finnish Air Rescue Society its activity in the air.

3. Volunteers in positions of leadership

An authority always manages the entirety of an oil response operation as well as the participating volunteers. Volunteers, for the most part, report to their own leadership, which manages groups, teams or sectors made up of *volunteers*. The objective is for it to be as straightforward as possible for the authorities to employ the volunteers, and that the volunteers bring added value to the authorities.

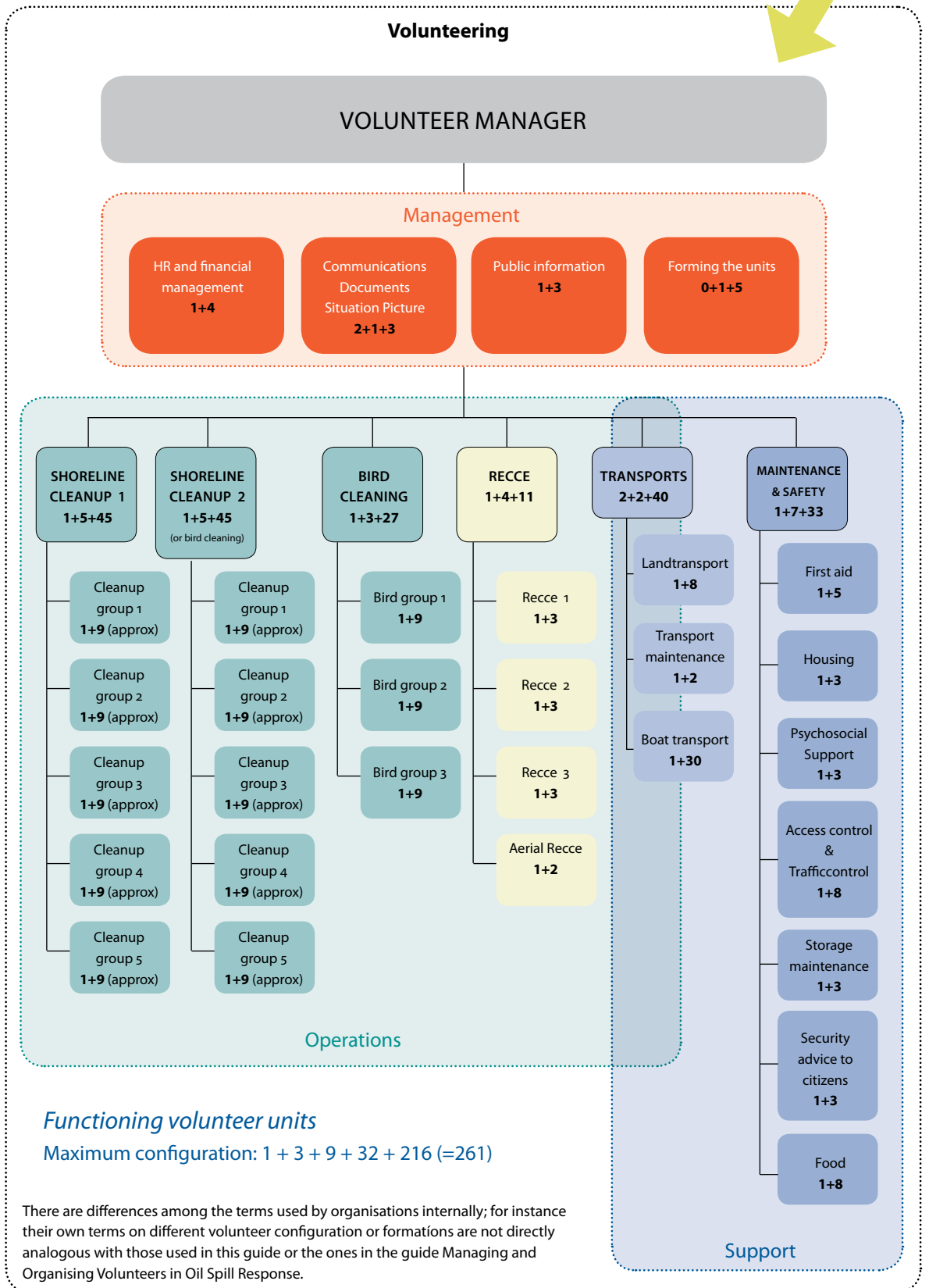
The general principle of the model defined for the *Volunteer Participation in Oil Spill Response* project is that an employee of one of the organisations participating in the effort manages the entire volunteer force. The volunteer manager is responsible for the volunteer units taking care of the tasks issued by the oil response authority. The manager normally operates at the command post/centre, situated at the staff premises. The manager is in charge of, among other things, shoreline cleanup and different support functions such as food and housing. In the early phase of the operation, as per the regional plan or the demands of the situation, the preparedness manager of the Finnish Red Cross (SPR) responsible for Vapepa coordination, or an employee of some other participating organisation, functions as the acting volunteer manager.

A team or group of volunteers can also be directly attached under the command of the authorities, without there being any general management of volunteers. For example, in an oil spill response operation the voluntary maritime and inland waters SAR, coordinated by the Finnish Lifeboat Institution, and the aerial reconnaissance, carried out by the Finnish Air Rescue Society, will most likely be directly attached under the command of the authorities. These sectors have their own leaders, comprising employees of organisations, experienced volunteers or the authorities. They operate at the command centre.

Volunteer management and its hierarchy are described in more detail in the *Guide for Managing and Organising Volunteers in Oil Spill Response* (Virtanen 2015).

Figure 1 The present maximum configuration of the volunteer organisation under the authorities.

AUTHORITY IN CHARGE OF VOLUNTEER ACTION



4. Operations

Operations include oil reconnaissance, cleanup and recovery as well as the care of oiled birds.

The largest single group consists of volunteers cleaning contaminated shorelines. Another large group comprises the volunteers that are specially trained in caring for oiled birds and other wildlife.

In the early phase trained and previously earmarked volunteer groups may participate in deploying oil spill containment booms or in other tangible prevention measures as part of the rescue services. It is also possible to use them at the mobilisation centre or in providing food and housing, transports, first aid, communications and public information as well as in different port operations. Moreover, volunteers are also trained in storage management, traffic and access control, security, waste management and firefighting. They can also be utilised in providing advice to those living or visiting the affected area.

4.1. Reconnaissance and situational awareness

For the purpose of decision-making the oil spill response leadership need as detailed information as possible about the extent of the oil contamination. Volunteers can greatly assist the authorities in augmenting the situation picture.

4.1.1. Aerial reconnaissance

Aerial reconnaissance over the sea normally operates under the Aircraft Coordinator appointed by the Head of response operations. The Finnish Border Guard is normally responsible for carrying out aerial reconnaissance.

It is possible to rapidly get an overall impression of the extent of oil pollution by means of aerial reconnaissance. The Finnish Air Rescue Society (SLPS) is the national operator in volunteer aerial SAR; it coordinates and trains Va-

pepa's aerial activities. Reconnaissance flights associated with oil spill response are a part of the training curriculum of the SLPS.

TASKS FOR VOLUNTEERS

The SLPS maintains up-to-date information about preparedness at aerodromes. During an alert the officer on duty alerts the nearest suitable air base and provides expert advice on the implementation of the mission. The commander of the base takes the decision whether the aircrews and aircraft are able to fly the sortie(s). The prevailing weather conditions and forecasts limit the utilisation and endurance of aircraft.

The aircrew always include the pilot and the mission commander. The pilot is the aircraft commander and is responsible for the safety of flight. The mission commander, in turn, leads the reconnaissance mission and plans the flight together with the rest of the crew. Spotters that are specially trained for aerial observation can also be used on these flights. Following a flight, the mission commander either reports the observations to the coordinator at the command centre or directly to the authority in charge of the oil spill response.

It is possible, for example in the case of a major accident occurring in inland waters, for the authority to appoint a volunteer as the aircraft coordinator to manage the employment of voluntary aerial resources. The coordinator, situated at the command centre, relays the situational awareness generated by the missions to the authority in charge of the response operation. The coordinator also maintains contact with other sectors such as the manager of volunteer surface vessels and, when needed, to air traffic services.



FINNISH AIR RESCUE
SOCIETY IS ON CALL 24/7 AT
THE FOLLOWING NUMBER

020 728 9500

4.1.2. Offshore and onshore reconnaissance

The Marine Coordinator appointed by the head of response operations leads seaboard activities. The rescue department issues the tasks to volunteers on the shoreline and in coastal areas.

The purpose of reconnaissance (recce) on waterways and on land is to gather more detailed information than aerial reconnaissance can provide on the water bodies and to augment the situation picture generated by aerial recce. Assistance can be obtained from, among others, volunteers trained in oil reconnaissance by the National Defence Training Association of Finland (MPK), orienteers, reservists, guides and scouts as well as members of boating and canoeing clubs.

The crews and equipment of the SMPS, the MPK or fire brigades can be used in transporting the personnel.

TASKS FOR VOLUNTEERS

Oil reconnaissance is commenced as soon as possible. The authority informs the volunteer manager as to where and when the recce will be carried out, the sort of information needed and by when. The first task is for recce to chart the areas most contaminated by oil or those particularly sensitive to oil. The volunteers can also assist in taking samples if they are trained for the task.

Scores of recce patrols can be deployed in major oil accidents. The typical size of an onshore recce patrol is three people: the first person leads the team, the second carries out measurements and the third one records the information. The leader is responsible for the action of the team and maintains contact with the command. The measurer positions the team vis-à-vis the area or the section and the clerk records the observed information on a form. Shoreline recce proceeds, on average, at the rate of one kilometre per hour, which, in the Boris situational awareness system of the Finnish Environment Institute, corresponds to one section.

It is risky to use motorboats in oiled areas because oil can enter and clog the cooling system of the engine. For this reason, near-shore recce can be carried out by, among other things, canoes or kayaks. A 2-person kayak carries a clerk and a paddler. They proceed at approximately five kilometres per hour.

4.2 Cleanup and recovery

4.2.1. Shoreline cleanup

In each rescue service region the rescue department and the regional manager of the rescue service region are responsible for the response. The manager can subdivide the region into smaller segments, one being the coastal area, for example. These areas are further divided into sections, and ultimately into work locations.

Shoreline cleanup is an arduous and time-consuming effort and thus demands a sizable workforce. Volunteer cleaners can be obtained through, for example, WWF Finland, which has created an operating model for systematically cleaning the shoreline of oil. The organisation maintains its own oil response ‘volunteer brigade’, in which thousands are registered.

TASKS FOR VOLUNTEERS

The volunteers participating in shoreline cleanup are divided into groups and teams. One group consists of approximately 10 people, one of whom is the group leader. The leader is responsible for the action of the group and reports on the progress and possible problems to the team leader. The team leader acts as an intermediary between the volunteers and the authorities, and commands 2–5 groups.

Each group is assigned a strip of the shoreline to cleanup. According to the type of shore and the quality of oil the work is carried out using the most suitable oil gathering equipment and absorption mats. The oily waste is collected into buckets following which it is transported to the processing point. The volunteers must see to it that they only remove oily material and avoid mixing clean sand, rocks and plants with the oily waste.

It is difficult to clean oil-sullied reed beds. Therefore, it is best to mow them once the areas have been contained by booms. After the mowing any oil found in the water or on the shore is removed. Oily reeds and other polluted aquatic flora in the water are collected for later destruction, as is the oily waste collected from the shore.

Shoreline cleanup is an activity which is disposed to accidents. For this reason each group must have a person trained in first aid. They are identified by

arm bands, for instance, and are ready to perform first aid duties when needed. However, they also participate in the other action of the group.

Additional information on the shoreline cleanup model and practical arrangements can be found in WWF Finland's Oil Spill Response Guide (in Finnish) (www.wwf.fi/oljyntorjunta).

4.2.2. Oil recovery in coastal areas

The Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE) is responsible for oil recovery on the open sea. Volunteers are only used there in exceptional circumstances. Recovering oil in coastal areas or on the shore is the responsibility of the regional rescue department and its regional manager.

Volunteers can assist the authorities in near-shore oil recovery, both on the sea and in inland waters. For example, the Finnish Lifeboat Institute's training curriculum includes oil spill response. The MPK also trains its volunteers in oil recovery.

TASKS FOR VOLUNTEERS

In coastal areas and in inland waters volunteers can, among other things, deploy absorption materials and tow and connect oil containment booms. Deploying the booms is the primary measure for containing the further spreading of oil, channelling the oil towards the oil recovery units and protecting important and sensitive areas. This operation requires at least three vessels. Once the booms have been deployed, especially after dark, the area should be guarded by security personnel.

If needed, the volunteers can also participate in seining the oil. The preferred seining technique depends on the prevailing conditions and the vessels available. It is recommended that three vessels be used: the first two vessels deploy the seine which ends in a purse kept open by wires. The third vessel follows the first two and collects the oil that pours out of the purse opening.

When containment booms are being deployed the crew should at least consist of the master of the vessel, who commands the operation, and two deck hands. In addition to the master, the actual deployment of the booms requires five hands on deck.

During seining, each vessel should be manned by the master and two deck hands, at the very least.

Samples should be taken from the affected area as early as possible, and during the operation as well, so as to be able to identify the party that caused the damage. Properly trained people participating in reconnaissance or shoreline cleanup can take samples at the behest of the authority in command.

4.3. Oiled bird care

The Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE) is responsible for the care of oiled birds and other wildlife.

Typically, it is birds that suffer the most from oil spills. Therefore, we use the term 'bird' in this guide. Many experiences from around the world show that it is worthwhile to clean oiled birds and that many birds can be returned to the wild following successful treatment.

SYKE has signed a memorandum of understanding with WWF Finland on the care of oiled birds which, in turn, has trained volunteers for this task. Oiled birds evoke passions and if trained and organised units are not invited to participate in the operation, unexperienced individuals may spontaneously start up 'care facilities' of their own. Unorganised action, at its worst, stands in the way of general oil spill recovery and can result in oil spreading to previously unpolluted areas.

Additional information on the practical arrangements of caring for oiled birds can be found in the *Guide for Oiled Wildlife Care* (in Finnish) (www.wwf.fi/oljyntorjunta).

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The volunteers participating in bird care are people trained in capturing and treating birds. In addition to them the units comprise dedicated veterinarians and ornithologists. Many volunteers are needed because the treatment of more than one hundred birds alone takes weeks.

The management of oiled bird care has total responsibility for the birds. Different sectors have their own leaders. For example, the transportation coordinator works under the capturing and transport sector. His/her responsibility

is to coordinate the animal transports to and from the care facility. The people in charge of feed, birdcages and pools, among others, operate under the head of the cleaning unit.

The care facility operates under a strict daily routine, in which the volunteers participate. Included are, among other things, feeding, administering medicines, weighing, washing up and cleaning. Cages are cleaned on a daily basis, as are the other premises. The bird feed for the birds in care is prepared and served at the care facility. Preparing the feed takes a lot of effort and, therefore, the feed kitchen must have sufficient manpower.

The roles in caring for oiled birds include:

- Search
- Capture
- Transport
- Stabilisation
- Washing
- Drying
- Rehabilitation
- Release

5. Support

Operations demand different support services. They include, among other things, the work performed at the mobilisation centre as well as food and housing and first aid. Many support functions are placed as close as possible to the cleanup area, for instance at the mobilisation centre. They comprise a part of the response and the competent authority is responsible for them.

The support unit of the National Defence Training Association of Finland (MPK), among others, can assist the authorities in many ways; it can provide support services to the force engaged in operations. When it comes to unit formation, there are different functions which, for the most part, are analogous in all extensive assistance operations. For this reason, many organisations participating in Vapepa's network are able to execute these duties. Fire stations, too, can offer their assistance.

5.1. Action at the mobilisation centre

The response authority will appoint an accountable officer at the mobilisation centre to supervise its action.

When a major oil spill occurs, hundreds or even thousands of volunteer helpers are needed at the site. The authorities may not always have the resources for processing the arriving volunteers or for other mobilisation activities, in which case volunteers trained in the mobilisation of units are needed. The MPK is one of the organisations which train personnel for duties at mobilisation centres.

The mobilisation centre is established at the very beginning of the response operation. The centre may be situated in, for instance, a storehouse, in the premises of a religious congregation, in a school or a specifically erected large tent. The most convenient location for a mobilisation centre is a large building that has hygiene facilities.

Volunteers are issued their equipment at the mobilisation centre. During the early phase organisations are prepared to operate with their own gear and equipment or with that issued by the authority, in accordance with the regional contingency plan. WWF Finland, for example, has enough equipment for 100 people working for three days, the Finnish Red Cross (SPR) has all of the first

aid related equipment it needs and different Vapepa organisations have the required communication equipment.

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The number of people working at the mobilisation centre, such as with all other duties, largely depends on the total number of volunteers that have signed up for the operation. In order to properly assist the authorities the mobilisation centre should at least have groups dedicated to processing and recording the volunteers, as well as groups concentrating on forming units, and on informing and equipping them.

The mobilisation centre will receive organisations' volunteers and *spontaneous volunteers* alike. The possible exception involves the bodies operating directly under the command of the authorities (such as those representing the Finnish Lifeboat Institution (SMPS) and the Finnish Air Rescue Society (SLPS), of whom the authority keeps account.

Volunteers are asked to provide their personal information, health situation and other needed data for the purpose of the personnel register. At the same time, their potential niche capabilities are established which are then taken into account in task planning. Following this, the volunteers receive bracelets or other comparable means of identification which indicate that they belong to the authority's approved response organisation.

Volunteers are required to fill in oil response timecards and equipment cards on a daily basis. Among other reasons, it is important to fill in the timecards in order to be compensated pursuant to the Act on Oil Pollution Response. Additional information on this topic can be found in the document 'Report on the management of volunteers in oil spill response – legislation, compensation and administrative arrangements' (Pönni 2015).

Tasks are issued to volunteers at the mobilisation centre where they are divided into groups and, if needed, teams. Most of them will be directed to

Among other things, at the mobilisation centre the volunteers will:

- Report to action
- Fill in the required forms
- Be processed at arrival and departure
- Be divided into groups and teams
- Be equipped.

shoreline cleanup, which demands a large workforce. At the mobilisation centre they receive accelerated training for their tasks as well as information regarding any potential risks. Following this, the equipment is issued to the volunteers. In the case of shoreline cleanup the gear includes, among other things, protective overalls, rubber boots and oil-resistant gloves, and goggles. Records are kept on the equipment given to the volunteers, as are on the equipment that the organisation's alert group brought along.

5.2. Food and housing

It is an enormous effort to feed a large number of volunteers, and, if necessary, authorities. Many pairs of hands are needed in this task so as to feed those helping in the response operation, special diets included. In addition, water supply plays a large role.

The volunteers will primarily be housed at a place assigned by the authorities, such as a school or corresponding accommodation.

For instance, the MPK's support unit can take care of food and housing. Both sectors are also addressed in the joint first-aid training of the Finnish Red Cross and the Voluntary Rescue Service.

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Following a major accident the authorities will likely seek to outsource the catering. In this case trained volunteers can transport the food to the cleanup site and serve it out.

The field kitchen can order the raw materials and prepare the food if it proves necessary to do it on site. In this case they must receive an estimate for how much food will be required in the coming days. At best, the MPK's units can feed and provide shelter to 1,000 people working outdoors.

Volunteers also take care of food and water deliveries. Once the operation has begun it is important to deliver both water and food in order to guarantee the hydration and coping abilities of the volunteers. The delivery of water will commence no later than

For example, the following personnel can operate in field kitchen duties:

- MPK
- Women's departments in fire brigades
- Members of the Martha organisation (organisation providing advice in home economics)
- Members of the Rural Women's Advisory Organisation

two hours, and food supply six hours, after the arrival of the first volunteers.

If it is not possible to provide indoor accommodation, with the MPK's assistance volunteers can be housed in, among other things, Defence Forces tents. This, however, should be considered as the last option. Each place of accommodation will have a person in charge who takes care of practical arrangements and guiding. Transports shall be arranged to and from the accommodation.

5.3. Transports on land and by boat

Transports conducted by volunteers include the transport of personnel, food, equipment and many other necessary transports¹. The member associations of the SMPS and the MPK can carry out transports by boat as both organisations have vessels of their own. The rescue department may also allow volunteers to use its transport equipment.

When necessary, the authority can hire a coach or other vehicle from a commercial operator whose transport activities and other arrangements the MPK, among others, is able to conduct. In conjunction with a major accident it may be possible to organise regular shuttle bus service between a nearby town or another hub and the mobilisation centre.

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From the standpoint of the smooth functioning of the oil spill recovery it is imperative to properly organise transports. If the authority assigns transports to organisations, the support unit of the MPK, for example, has a dedicated transport group for this purpose. In this case there will be a transport centre at the command centre which handles and carries out transport requests. The centre will maintain situational awareness as to where the vehicles are and when they will be free for further tasks. If the transport centre operates a large number of land vehicles and boats, the respective functions may be divided into two categories.

The boat transportation coordinator ensures that route plans are prepared to the authority's pre-planned sites. When necessary, he/she also arranges

¹ Nevertheless, only professionally qualified and appropriately licenced volunteers can carry out transports of dangerous goods.

maintenance, supervises compliance with regulations and assigns tasks to the vessels. In addition, among other things, he/she establishes the transport requirements for the day, schedules included, the proper functioning of communications and that the boats are appropriately equipped.

The minimum manning for vessels involved in transportation is the master and one deck hand. The master sees to it that the route plans are made and that all food, equipment and people that were transported are appropriately recorded on a form. A daily transportation log is maintained; it contains information on each transport, the people, food and equipment transported.

Fuel deliveries will probably be outsourced to a commercial vendor. However, on the authority's request, the MPK can also deliver fuel and act as an intermediary between the authority and the vendor.

5.4. First aid and psychosocial support

The response organisation must be able to provide first aid and psychosocial support. The local chapters of the Finnish Red Cross (SPR), for example, can maintain this preparedness. Cleanup, recovery and shoreline reconnaissance on foot are activities disposed to accidents, and even support functions pose the risk of mishap. Moreover, it is possible for an oil spill in Finland to occur during the cold season when the risk of catching a cold is real. No matter how conscientious people are about hygiene, it is possible to become ill as a result of conditions in sanitation and at field kitchens.

The significance of psychosocial support is great in conjunction with a major oil spill. It is particularly necessary when large numbers of birds perish. The situation is not only traumatic to the shoreline cleaners, but also possibly to other actors.

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A first aid team acts as a part of the support activities. It is responsible for providing on-call first aid for the volunteer units in cases of illness or accident, such as sprained ankles or other similar injuries. The minimum size of the team depends on the total number of volunteers and on how widely dispersed they are. At the very least, the mobilisation centre must be able to provide first aid on a 24/7 basis. Furthermore, each response area, meeting point and maintenance site or other location where more than one group operate must have at least one

first-aid trained person. The minimum configuration for a first aid team comprises a leader and two first aid pairs.

As regards more serious injuries and bouts of illness the authorities' organisation will provide the support. However, a first responder unit, operating as a part of the first aid team or independently, will provide the necessary initial care. At its minimum the unit will have a leader and two first responders working as a pair. First response is maintained and trained by the SPR and its local chapters, voluntary fire brigades/SPEK as well as the maritime SAR chapters (sea and inland waters) of the SMPS.

A psychosocial support team operates as part of the overall support activities; the minimum configuration of the team comprises a leader and two pairs. The volunteers working in the team make it possible to organise defusing sessions with individuals or in small groups. *Defusing* means the possibility for volunteers to talk about their experiences. *Debriefing* means a specific group discussion led by a professional trained in psychosocial support. Should the volunteer need further therapy, he/she can seek help from the health care services of a municipality or a joint municipal authority.

5.5. Communications

Communications among the different echelons of the volunteer force must be regulated and planned. Organisations train their volunteers to operate on their own communication equipment. Team leader communications training is uniform for all organisations participating in the activity. The principles of communications are explained in more detail in the *Guide for Managing and Organising Volunteers in Oil Spill Response* (Virtanen 2015).

TASKS FOR VOLUNTEERS

The MPK is one of the organisations able to manage communications. The size of the MPK's communications group depends on the need; a team, for example, may comprise a group leader and 1–4 other volunteers. It maintains a communication log at the command centre into which all important incoming messages as well as outbound instructions and orders are recorded.

Call groups issued to the volunteer groups by the response authorities are used. The call groups must be pre-planned and, for the most part, programmed into the volunteers' data terminals beforehand. In exceptional circumstances other media, such as VHF radios, can be used.

Volunteers that manage communications will provide express and standard charging stations for battery-operated radios. It is important to take good care of the radio equipment and to see to it that batteries remain charged so that they are ready for use when needed.

5.6. Public information

A major oil spill quickly gains national prominence. Following the accident the authority in charge of the response operations, or possibly the company who caused the spill, will provide public information on the incident and its consequences.

On the other hand, the purpose of volunteer public information (PI) is to promote the cause of the volunteer oil spill response, publicise the participants' experiences and make known the possible need for additional recruits. The organisations may second their own PI officers to the site to publicise their role in the response operation.

All public information must take into account the required obligation of confidentiality and the authorities' issued instructions. In complicated situations it is always prudent to directly contact the employee of the coordinating organisation or its PI unit.

TASKS FOR VOLUNTEERS

A PI officer responsible for volunteer information will be appointed from the outset. Particularly in a large incident the spokesperson of the coordinating organisation will most likely execute this duty. However, the task may also fall on a volunteer, such as a Vapepa leader.

The contact information of the appointed PI officer and the information regarding the alert will be delivered to the PI unit of the coordinating organisation, as per the contingency plan. Simultaneously, the person responsible for PI will provide the contact information of the person(s) giving interviews to the media about the activities of the volunteers. He/she will agree on the main guidelines of PI, such as content and responsibilities between the volunteers and the authority in charge of the operation.

It is important for the PI officer to coordinate actions among his/her counterparts in the organisations. This will help avoid unnecessary duplication and inconsistency.

5.7. Port operations

The port/harbour is the hub of transports and an integral part of the transportation chain comprising goods and waste. While the authority is responsible for port operations, if needed it can request assistance from the MPK, among others, which has trained its volunteers for different tasks at ports.

TASKS FOR VOLUNTEERS

The job description of port workers includes supporting the reception of waste and debris, guaranteeing the smooth flow of food and goods as well as assisting in the bunkering of vessels. During operations the minimum manning at port comprises two people. They must be trained in navigation and possess practical experience on, and familiarity with, the equipment.

While the person responsible for port operations is an authority, upon the request of the authority a qualified volunteer can also carry out this duty. The tasks of the volunteer entail organising port activities and logistics into a functioning entirety, and to be responsible for, among other things, the arrival and departure of vessels. Furthermore, he/she will deliver the day's material records to the person in charge of situational awareness who, in turn, maintains the situation picture and the oil spill response log and remains aware of the port's capacity at any given time. When the operation ends, the person responsible for port activities will see to it that all relevant records have been handed over to the authorities.

When it comes to the functioning of the port, it is important for the security personnel to guard and monitor it during the entire response operation. The focus is on preventing the movement of unauthorised persons within the harbour area and to ensure that goods and equipment are not stolen.

5.8. Other potential tasks

On top of the abovementioned tasks, volunteers are also trained in a myriad of other duties. Among other things, they can carry out tasks in storage maintenance, traffic control, guarding, waste management and firefighting. In addition to these, there may be other sectors where the authority deems it needs assistance and from where suitable people and configurations can be found among the volunteer organisations. In all cases the authority remains responsible for executing and managing the activity.

STORAGE MAINTENANCE

When needed, volunteers can maintain stores under the supervision of the authorities. Their tasks include receiving, recording, storing and distributing material needed in the oil spill response. It is recommended that the stores contain enough material for at least three days. The depletion of consumables is continuously monitored and compared vis-à-vis the strength of the response force. Central and local stores are replenished on a daily basis. For the purpose of the final accounting it is important to maintain detailed records of received and distributed material.

TRAFFIC CONTROL

One sector volunteers can manage involves traffic control, which facilitates the unimpeded flow of vehicles and people at the site of the incident. Traffic is directed by humans unless it is deemed appropriate to install traffic signs and traffic lights at the area of operations. Only those volunteers that have been trained and approved for the duty (such as those having undergone traffic control or military police training) can participate in this task.

ACCESS CONTROL AND SECURITY

Volunteer traffic controllers and other appropriately trained people may participate in security and access control. Their job descriptions include monitoring the area of operations and preventing the entry of unauthorised persons to, for example, the mobilisation centre, storage area, the port and the accommodation site. When necessary, they can also see to it that only authorised personnel are permitted to enter the command centre.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

The response operation requires an efficient waste handling port as well as the functions of sorting and delivering the waste and debris from the site to its final repository. Volunteers, operating under the authorities, may participate in establishing and maintaining the waste handling port as well as the reception and transport stations for oiled waste and debris situated elsewhere on the shore.

Waste management does not necessarily require a dedicated waste team or separate groups. Rather, the task can be amalgamated among other functions. To an extent, waste management is a part of the duties of the transportation groups. In large formations a waste management group can be included in the configuration of the cleanup team. Sanitation management is a support function, and it is considered to be a part of the arrangements at the accommodation.

Waste management includes, among other things, establishing the locations of transport points, the waste handling port, reception points and the equipment issued by the authorities. When needed, the volunteers, at the behest of the authorities, will ensure that waste transport vessels and vehicles, as well as the required radiocommunication equipment and other relevant equipment, will be available at the site. The tasks may also include receiving, sorting, and recording the oily waste according to its class and transferring it to the land transport units. In this case the volunteers must be qualified for handling hazardous waste.

FIREFIGHTING

The evaporating oil may present the danger of fire and explosion. While the risk for a flare-up is remote, it cannot be ruled out. Whereas offshore firefighting is the duty of an authority, volunteer fire brigades may operate in firefighting duties at, for example, waste handling ports.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Model form for the authorities to support the planning of volunteer duties in oil spill response.

Tasks Suited to Volunteers in Oil Spill Response

To support contingency planning and be an instrument in planning oil spill response

Operations		WHICH ORGANISATION?	DEPLOYMENT TIME OF THE ORGANISATION (x hrs or days)	PERIOD THAT ORGANISATIONS CAN STAY IN THE AREA (x hrs, days or wks)	WHAT SUPPORT IS LIKELY NEEDED? (estimate)	NUMBER OF PERSONNEL/ VESSELS NEEDED (estimate)
RECONNAISSANCE						
1.	Onshore recce →	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	Offshore recce →	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	Aerial recce →	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
CLEANUP AND RECOVERY						
4.	Shoreline cleanup →	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	Coastal area response →	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	Bird care →	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
SUPPORT						
1.	Mobilisation centre →	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	Food →	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	Housing →	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	Land transports →	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	Boat transports →	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	First aid and psychosocial support →	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7.	Communications →	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
8.	Port operations →	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
9.	Storage maintenance →	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
10.	Traffic control →	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
11.	Access control and Security →	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
12.	Waste management →	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
13.	Firefighting →	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

THE SUBSTANCE OF OPERATIONS

1.	ONSHORE RECCE	Volunteers can carry out reconnaissance on the shore and on islands as well as maritime and aerial recce.
2.	OFFSHORE RECCE	
3.	AERIAL RECCE	
4.	SHORELINE CLEANUP	Shoreline cleanup means the collection and recovery of oil by hand.
5.	RESPONSE ON THE COASTLINE	Suitable oil spill response tasks for volunteers on the coastline include, among other things, deploying and anchoring oil containment booms.
6.	OILED BIRD CARE	Oiled bird care includes washing and drying the birds and administering other care and treatment.

THE SUBSTANCE OF SUPPORT

1.	MOBILISATION CENTRE	At the mobilisation centre, among other things, the volunteers are received and processed and their personal information is recorded in the personnel register.
2.	FOOD	Those working at the field kitchens prepare the hot food and snacks, etc., for volunteers and, if required, the authorities.
3.	HOUSING	Housing includes the provision of tents or other accommodation/shelter for the volunteers.
4.	LAND TRANSPORTS	Land and boat transports include transports of personnel, equipment and food, among other things.
5.	BOAT TRANSPORTS	
6.	FIRST AID AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT	Those working in first aid and psychosocial support help volunteers after, among other things, accidents and stressful situations.
7.	COMMUNICATIONS	Communications makes available the volunteers' internal and external communication.
8.	PORT OPERATIONS	Volunteers operating at the port can provide support in, among other things, the reception of waste and debris.
9.	STORAGE MAINTENANCE	Storage maintenance includes, among other things, the reception, recording, storing and distribution of materiel.
10.	TRAFFIC CONTROL	Volunteers can direct traffic away from the polluted area, for example.
11.	ACCESS CONTROL AND SECURITY	Those working in access control and security see to it that no unauthorised persons access, among other things, the stores.
12.	WASTE MANAGEMENT	Waste management includes, among other things, taking care of the equipment at waste handling ports.
13.	FIREFIGHTING	Firefighting covers, among other things, fire safety at interim/temporary oil storages.

It is the responsibility of the authorities to prepare for oil spill response. However, volunteers play an important role in practical duties, especially in a large-scale, long-lasting or locally significant oil spill response operation. Nonetheless, no comprehensive plans have previously been made for third sector participation in oil spill response.

From 2014–2015 the [Finnish National Rescue Association \(SPEK\)](#) coordinated the Volunteer Participation in Oil Spill Response project which explained the utilisation of volunteers in an oil spill response operation and developed an operating model for cooperation among the authorities and organisations.

The project generated six documents, produced in concert with the authorities and organisations.

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