



## **Managing and organizing volunteers in oil spill response**

Tommi TT Virtanen

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# Foreword

This document describes the use of volunteers in an oil spill response operation managed by an accident response authority. The proposed modus operandi (model) concerns cooperation during the initial phase between volunteers and the authorities in a large-scale, locally significant, or long-lasting oil spill response operation.

The accident response authority defined in the Rescue Act (379/2011) will be responsible for the oil spill response in all situations. When necessary, the authorities can request volunteer support for different tasks in an oil spill response operation if their own resources prove insufficient. Volunteers can operate in shoreline cleanup, oil reconnaissance, bird cleanup and in supporting operations.

The description of the model is a part of the *Volunteer Participation in Oil Spill Response project (2015)* produced by The Finnish National Rescue Association (SPEK). It is based on the lessons learned during oil spill response operations and exercises, both at home and abroad. The project produced the following documents:

- Report on the management of volunteers in oil spill response – legislation, compensation and administrative arrangements
- A guide for the tasks suited to volunteers in oil spill response
- A guide for accelerated volunteer training for oil spill shoreline cleanup
- A guide for oil spill incidents: How to act if you find oil in the environment?
- Training collage: Organisations' oil spill response trainings for volunteers, 2105.

Recent years have witnessed major legislative review regarding oil spill response; the Act on Oil Pollution Response (1673/2009) was repealed and the provisions concerning oil spill response were placed in the Rescue Act. Also for this reason the guide *Managing and Organising Volunteers in Oil Spill Response* was updated in September 2019 to comply with present legislation. Volunteer coordination and the prerequisites of volunteer activities are also continually being improved. The OIL SPILL project, co-funded by the EU's Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme for 2019–2021, focuses on developing the cooperation among the authorities, NGOs and volunteers in oil spill prevention in the Bal-

tic Sea Region. In the project the Finnish Red Cross concentrates of improving national shoreline cleanup preparedness, thus continuing the work started by the Volunteer Participation in Oil Spill Response project. *Kokonat* brought this document up to date, compiling the legislation associated with oil spill response activities and updating the documents' references to acts and decrees presently in force.

We particularly express our gratitude to the Reijo Rautauoma Foundation, which funded the project. We also thank Pertti Partanen, the chair of the steering group, for his active participation. We warmly thank the project group, i.e. Teemu Niinimäki, representing WWF Finland; Henrik Nystén, representing the National Defence Training Association of Finland; Tommi Virtanen, representing the Finnish Red Cross as well as Reita Waara, Sanna Pönni and Karim Peltonen, representing The Finnish National Rescue Association. We also greatly appreciate the assistance of Juha Virto, Rescue Chief at the Varsinais-Suomi Rescue Department, Senior Adviser Heli Haapasaari at the Finnish Environment Institute, and the Rescue Department of the Ministry of the Interior for providing the authorities' perspective on the operating model.

We are grateful to each and every one who participated in making this document possible and who commented on its content. We also thank all others who provided their input to creating this guide which promotes the usability of volunteering. In addition to improving the preparedness for assistance the guide will most likely deepen the multifarious cooperation of organisations in preparedness.

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# 1. Introduction

During a large-scale or long-lasting oil spill response, volunteers are needed for various tasks. Motivated and well-trained groups from different organisations make up the main portion of volunteers, at least during the initial phase. The goal is to form regional volunteer formations which can independently launch action in support of, and under the command of, the authorities.

The key organisations participating in the activity are WWF Finland (World Wide Fund For Nature), the National Defence Training Association of Finland (MPK), the Finnish Red Cross (SPR), the Finnish Lifeboat Institution (SMPS), and the Finnish Air Rescue Society (SLPS). These organisations actively took part in the *Volunteer Participation in Oil Spill Response* project.

In addition to the designated oil spill response volunteers, there is also the need for a large group of volunteers that will see to the smooth functioning of the entire operation. What is more, when a situation lasts a long time, untrained people from Finland and abroad will spontaneously volunteer to help. Experienced and trained volunteers are needed to provide accelerated training for these untrained volunteers.

Organisations belonging to the network of the Voluntary Rescue Service *Vapepa* (cf. Appendix 1) participate in managing disruptions such as oil spills within the limit of their resources. This model describes the role of the organisations in a long-drawn-out oil spill response operation, and in the continual recruitment of new volunteers. The principles of this model can be applied in the utilisation of other volunteers as well, for instance, when volunteers are assisting the rescue services or other authorities in widespread or long-lasting situations.

This document includes a description of how to manage a cleanup and recovery operation, the tasks that are assigned to the volunteers, the alerting procedure, and the formation of volunteer units. The document also presents the role of the key organisations participating in the activity, and the principles for organising communications. The model will also be applied to environmental remediation. The document is intended to be a guide for organisations and a description of the operating model for the authorities.

# 2. Key terms

## Management

Management includes leading the volunteer activity and the staff functions facilitating management, such as communications, maintaining situation awareness and public information. Management comprises the administration of the activity and other support services. In addition, it includes the formation of units.

## Command centre

The centre established for managing the activity or the formation.

## Environmental remediation<sup>1</sup>

Environmental remediation means a response to an oil spill undertaken in order to clean up and restore the soil, groundwater and shoreline contaminated by oil, after the necessary response action has been taken in order to limit the damage and recover the oil (Rescue Act 379/2011, Section 2 a §).

Environmental remediation begins when the head of response operations announces the termination of the initial phase and decides that the management responsibility is to be transferred to the relevant municipal authority responsible for remediation. However, if agreed, the rescue service department can execute the entire oil spill response operation from the initial phase to the remediation phase. The purpose of remediation is to clean and restore the polluted shoreline. The response authority is responsible for managing the action during remediation. Municipalities are responsible for remediation in their respective areas and the authority designated by the municipality manages environmental remediation. If the action extends across municipal borders, the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY Centre) directs and coordinates the remediation (Rescue Act 379/2011, Section 111 a §).

Environmental restoration is not a part of environmental remediation which is a continuum of the response operation. However, environmental restoration is not clean-up and recovery per se. Restoration means the measures which are taken should the response operation yield an unsatisfactory result in the condition of the environment. In this case the process must continue in the form of restoration, under the provisions of the Environmental Protection Act.

<sup>1</sup> Sometimes also referred to with the term 'recovery'. For purposes of disambiguation, this document uses the term environmental remediation for post-response measures.

Environmental restoration means returning the water body, coastal area, soil or groundwater contaminated by oil to the condition it was prior to the incident.

### **Operations**

Volunteer operations include cleanup and response, cleaning and handling oiled wildlife, and oil reconnaissance. Cleanup does not include the remediation of polluted soil.

### **Rescue activities**

In this guide, rescue activities mean the urgent tasks required, under the Rescue Act (379/2011 Section 2 a §), for rescuing and protecting people, property and the environment when there is the threat of an accident or when an accident occurs and to limit the damage caused by the accident and to mitigate the consequences of the accident.

### **Mobilisation centre**

The mobilisation centre is the place where the volunteer units are formed and maintained.

### **SPEK**

The Finnish National Rescue Association

### **Spontaneous volunteer**

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

### **SYKE**

The Finnish Environment Institute

### **Situational picture**

The situational picture for managing volunteers covers the necessary information on the present phase of the response as well as the condition of the volunteer personnel and their equipment, personal protection equipment included. The situational picture also includes information on the units' maintenance status, the sufficiency of volunteers and the recruitment of new personnel.

### **Overall commander**

If authorities from more than one sphere of authority participate in the prevention of and response to oil spills or chemical spills from ships, the head of response operations shall act as an overall commander and ensure that, at all times,

they have an overall picture of the situation. Different units function under the command of their own managers in such a manner that their operations, as a whole, contribute to the effective response to the incident. The overall commander may form a management team, composed of representatives of the authorities, municipal institutions and volunteer units participating in the prevention and response operations, to assist them. The management team shall include or reserve the opportunity for an environmental protection expert to be heard.

Volunteer activity in an oil spill response is always led by the authority for whom the volunteers work.

### **Accident response authority**

According to the Rescue Act (379/2011), the division of duties among the accident response authorities in oil related accidents is as follows:

- Regional rescue services are responsible for the prevention of and response to land-based oil spills and oil spills from ships within their area, on the coastline and in the archipelago. They also supervise preparedness for oil spill prevention and response in their area;
- The Finnish Border Guard is responsible for responding to oil and chemical spills from ships sailing in Finnish waters or in Finland's exclusive economic zone and coordinates response preparedness;
- Oil storage facilities must draw up contingency plans for responding to an oil spill on site and the plans must be submitted to the centre for economic development, transport and the environment;
- The Finnish Environment Institute, the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency and the Finnish Defence Forces shall participate in the response to oil and chemical spills from ships;
- When necessary, municipalities are responsible for remediation in their respective areas. Where necessary, municipal authorities and institutions must participate in remediation. The authority designated by the municipality manages environmental remediation. If the action extends across municipal borders, the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY Centre) directs and coordinates the remediation.

### **Support services**

Support services include maintenance, logistics, safety/security and other comparable activities which assist operations..

### **Volunteer**

In this guide the term volunteer means people who participate in the activity of

their own free will and by their own initiative and with no aim of financial gain. When agreed, volunteers or the organisations they represent can be compensated or remunerated for expenses. A volunteer may or may not be a member of a non-profit organisation. Furthermore, 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.

### Volunteer management team

In order to support the management of volunteers, a regular or ad hoc management team will be set up. It comprises the volunteer manager who acts as chair, platoon leaders or sector leaders, the heads of operations, communications and public information as well as the required experts who represent the key organisations.

### Vapepa

The Voluntary Rescue Service *Vapepa* is a non-registered network of voluntary rescue organisations. Vapepa comprises over 50 organisations, among others, all of the organisations that actively participated in the *Volunteer Participation in Oil Spill Response* project. The Finnish Red Cross coordinates the network, the Finnish Lifeboat Institution coordinates its marine activity and the Finnish Air Rescue Society its aerial activity.

### Oil spill

Oil spill means land-based oil spills and oil spills from ships. A land-based oil spill means a spill occurring on land that causes damage or harm to humans or the environment because the oil has seeped into the ground or water and that results in befouling, degradation or contamination of the soil, waters, vegetation, fauna, equipment or structures.

An oil spill from a ship means an incident or a series of incidents originating from a ship which leads to, or may lead to, the discharge of oil or which endangers, or may endanger, the current state of the water body, the marine environment or the coastal environment, or interests related thereto, and which requires urgent action (Rescue Act 379/2011 2 a §).

### Oil spill response

Oil spill response means all immediate action taken to limit the damage, or potential damage, and recover the oil from the environment following an oil spill on land, in inland waters or at sea. Oil spill response also includes management and support services.

### KEY ORGANISATIONS PARTICIPATING IN OIL SPILL RESPONSE

- MPK National Defence Training Association of Finland
- SLPS Finnish Air Rescue Society
- SMPS Finnish Lifeboat Institution
- SPR Finnish Red Cross
- WWF WWF Finland

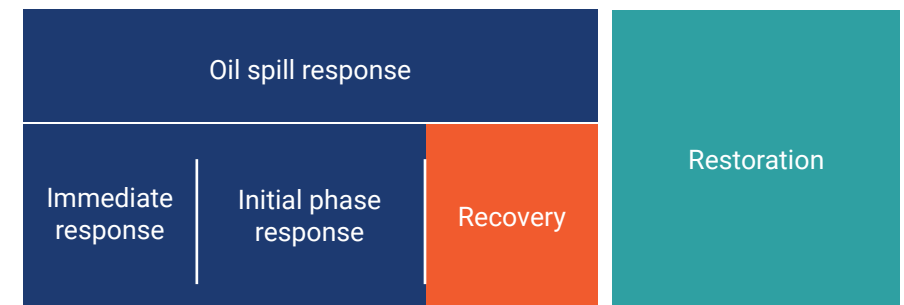


Figure 1. Phases of an oil spill response operation (South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences, SÖKÖ II manual).

When it comes to volunteering in an oil spill response operation, it is central to note that environmental remediation is not part of rescue activities. Rescue activities mean the urgent tasks required for rescuing and protecting people, property and the environment when there is a threat of an accident or when an accident occurs and to limit the damage caused by an accident and to mitigate the consequences of an accident. The authority responsible for rescue operations shall decide when the operation is transferred to the relevant municipal authority responsible for remediation. This is particularly important to spontaneous volunteers because compensation for participating or damage sustained in the response operations, as specified in the Rescue Act (379/2011), does not apply to volunteer participation in environmental remediation. More information on this topic can be found in another document titled *Report on Administering Volunteer Activity in Oil Spill Response - Legislation, Compensation and Administrative Arrangements*.

### 3. Managing volunteer activity

The third sector, i.e. associations and organisations, has a proud tradition in Finnish society. Likewise, free civic action in different sectors has always played a large role in society. Volunteering is based on the strong motivation of the participants to help, and to commit to an active group of volunteers.

Managing a group of volunteers is more about skilful leadership and fostering emotional motivation than about management, i.e. directly managing processes.

Managing *volunteers* in *oil spill* response is based on the rescue services' standard management model. The manager, supported by the management team and the staff, controls the situation. The personnel at the command centre and the management team facilitate the staff functions which, among other things, maintain the situational picture for the purpose of decision-making and, when necessary, maintain the relevant communications as well as public information.

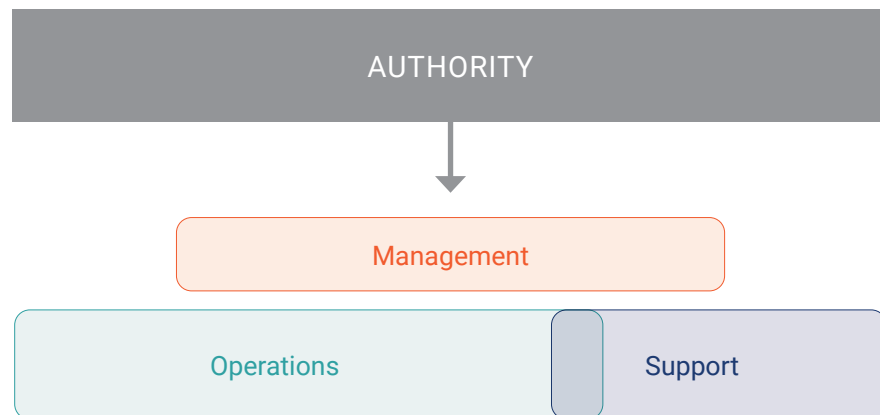


Figure 2. The management principle. Pursuant to the Rescue Act (379/2011), regional rescue services are responsible for response to spills on the coastline and in the archipelago. They also supervise preparedness for oil spill prevention and response in their area. The Finnish Border Guard, in turn, is responsible for responding to spills from ships sailing in Finnish waters or in Finland's exclusive economic zone and coordinates response preparedness.

All action, including that of volunteers, is always led by the accident response authority. For the most part, volunteers report to their own command. However, a team or a group of volunteers can be directly attached under the command of the authorities. It can entail, for instance, an aerial reconnaissance team operating under the Aircraft Coordinator or volunteer reconnaissance teams performing the same activity as the authorities.

In addition, also contract fire brigades that are organically a part of the rescue services under contract may participate in the initial oil spill response. The contract fire brigades normally operate within the organisation of the authorities in the same vein as they do during accidents defined in the Rescue Act.

#### 3.1. Volunteer manager, staff and management team

*Management* encompasses the management of volunteers, staff functions, financial and human resources management and the activity of the *mobilisation centre*. The overriding principle is that a paid employee of one of the participating organisations manages the entire volunteer force. In the early phase, the head of preparedness of the Finnish Red Cross responsible for *Vapepa* co-ordination or some other employee of a rescue service organisation assumes this function, in accordance with the regional contingency plan, or the situation.

If the situation becomes protracted, an employee can be hired for this duty from among the aforementioned groups, other experts or experienced volunteer leaders (e.g. *Vapepa* leaders or other team leaders). The volunteer manager acts as an intermediary between the volunteers and the authorities.

The size of the staff will be tailored to the situation. The chief of staff, often being the head/chief of operations, manages the staff. Staff functions comprise the maintenance of a situational picture and the incident log under the head of the situation centre, communications under the head of communications as well as public information under the public information (PI) manager acting as the spokesperson for the operation. The situational picture will be promulgated among the authorities to augment their official situation picture. The PI will supplement the public information issued by the authorities as regards volunteer activity, in line with the instructions and restrictions issued by them.

The personnel of organisations support the volunteer organisation, for example, through public information, recruitment, expert advice and other assistance



agreed with the authorities. The operational leadership of the organisations and experts participate in the *volunteer organisation's management team* which convenes regularly or on an ad hoc basis, in the capacity of experts.

The management team is led by the volunteer manager and includes platoon or sector leaders, the heads of operations, the situation centre, communications and the public information officer, and the required representatives from the key organisations participating in the oil spill response (the National Defence Training Association of Finland (MPK), the Finnish Air Rescue Society (SLPS), the Finnish Lifeboat Institution (SMPS), the Finnish Red Cross and WWF Finland.) A representative from the volunteer management team will participate in the work of the authorities' management team. Those representing the general management of organisations will form a liaison/cooperation unit which, when needed, coordinates the action of different organisations. The *command centre* of volunteer action is situated at the authorities' command post or at the mobilisation centre.

### 3.2. Command hierarchy

Oil spill response action, including volunteer action, is always led by the accident response authority. Within the volunteer organisation, however, volunteer groups, platoons and sectors (*management, operations and support*) are for the most part led by leaders from among the 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 in the *oil spill* response operation.

The group leader is responsible for the activities of up to nine people. They guide the work of the group and report on the progress and possible problems to the platoon leader. The group leader assigns the tasks to the members of the group. When it comes to oil spill response operations, groups are rapidly put together and it is likely that groups contain people previously unknown to each other. The group leader must become familiar with the skills of the members. The leader will ensure that the operating environment is safe and that the members follow instructions and occupational safety regulations. The group leader will also see to it that the volunteers working in the vicinity of oil are properly aware of the inherent dangers of hazardous waste.

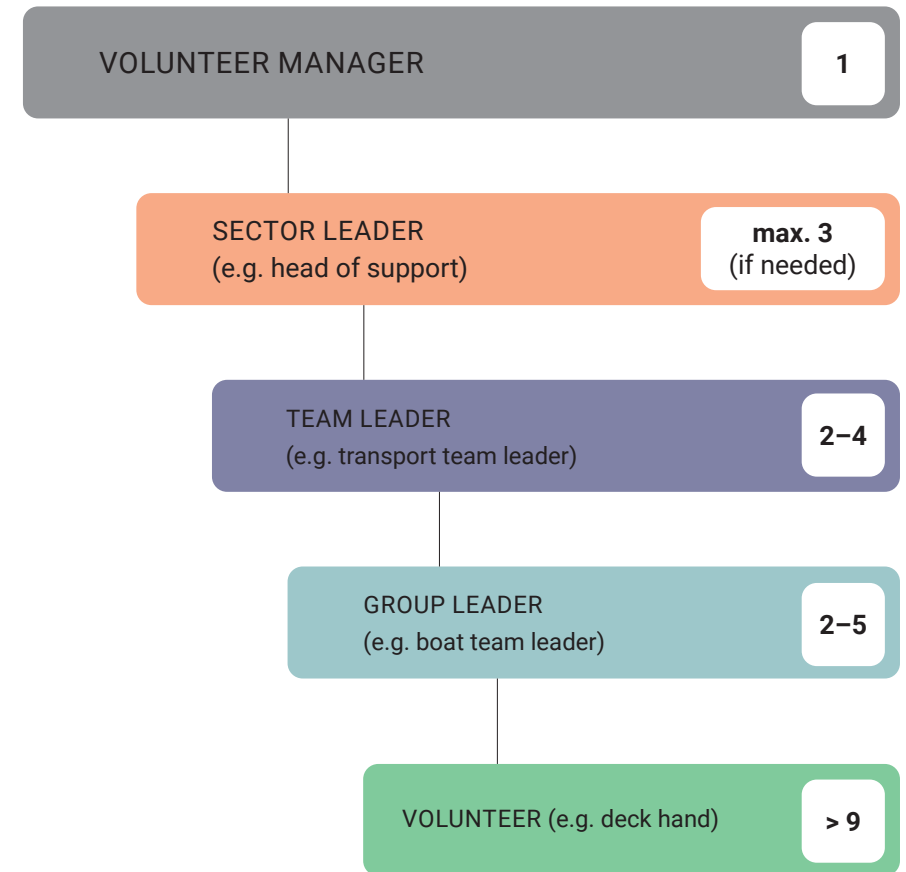


Figure 3. Command hierarchy.

The platoon leader is responsible for the action of 2–5 groups. The shoreline cleanup platoon leader, as an example, must be aware of the operating model of the oil spill response organisation and the relevant work plans. Platoon leaders document all pertinent information, ensure the welfare of their platoons (e.g. the need for logistics and its proper functioning), see to the smooth functioning of groups and maintain contact with group leaders.

Platoon leaders liaise between the platoons and the volunteer manager situated at the command centre (or between the appropriate head of a sector if a dedicated volunteer activities command echelon has been established). Platoon leaders report on their activities to the volunteer manager and to the staff for the purpose of updating the situation picture. When agreed, platoon leaders also report to the authorities' appropriate head of sector.

It is important for the volunteer manager to be thoroughly familiar with the entire volunteer organisation and its tasks so as to efficiently plan and manage the teams' operations in the best possible manner. If the number of volunteers approaches the maximum configuration, sector heads (management, operations and support) can be appointed to support the volunteer manager. These heads report to the volunteer manager, to the staff to augment the situation picture and, when agreed, to the relevant head of sector of the authorities. The volunteer manager executes the task under the authorities orders, within the available volunteer resources.

### 3.3. The operational model of management

Oil spill response is always managed by the authorities.

Normally, at least in the early phase of operations, the personnel led by the authorities and contracted teams under the direct command of the authorities operate alongside volunteer units.

When the operation lasts a long time the units can largely – or even for the most part regarding some sectors – be comprised of volunteers. In this case as well, the authorities remain responsible for the response operation.

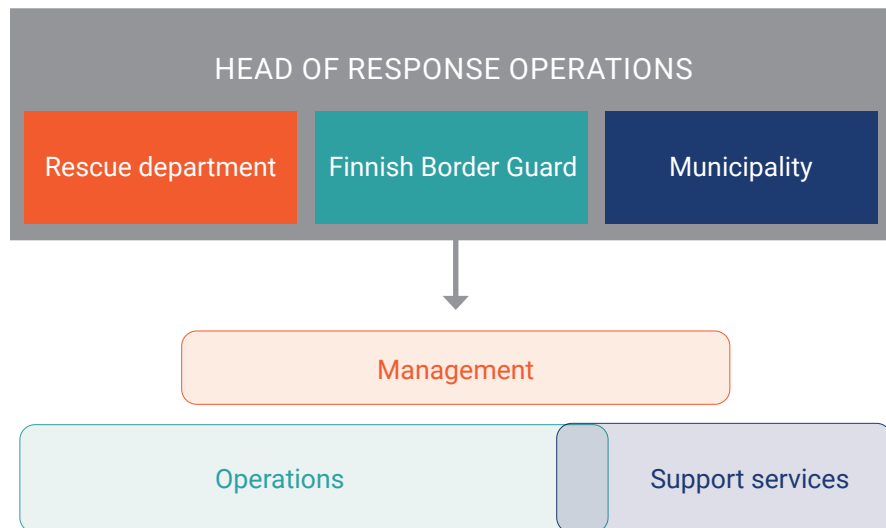


Figure 4. The basic model of management.

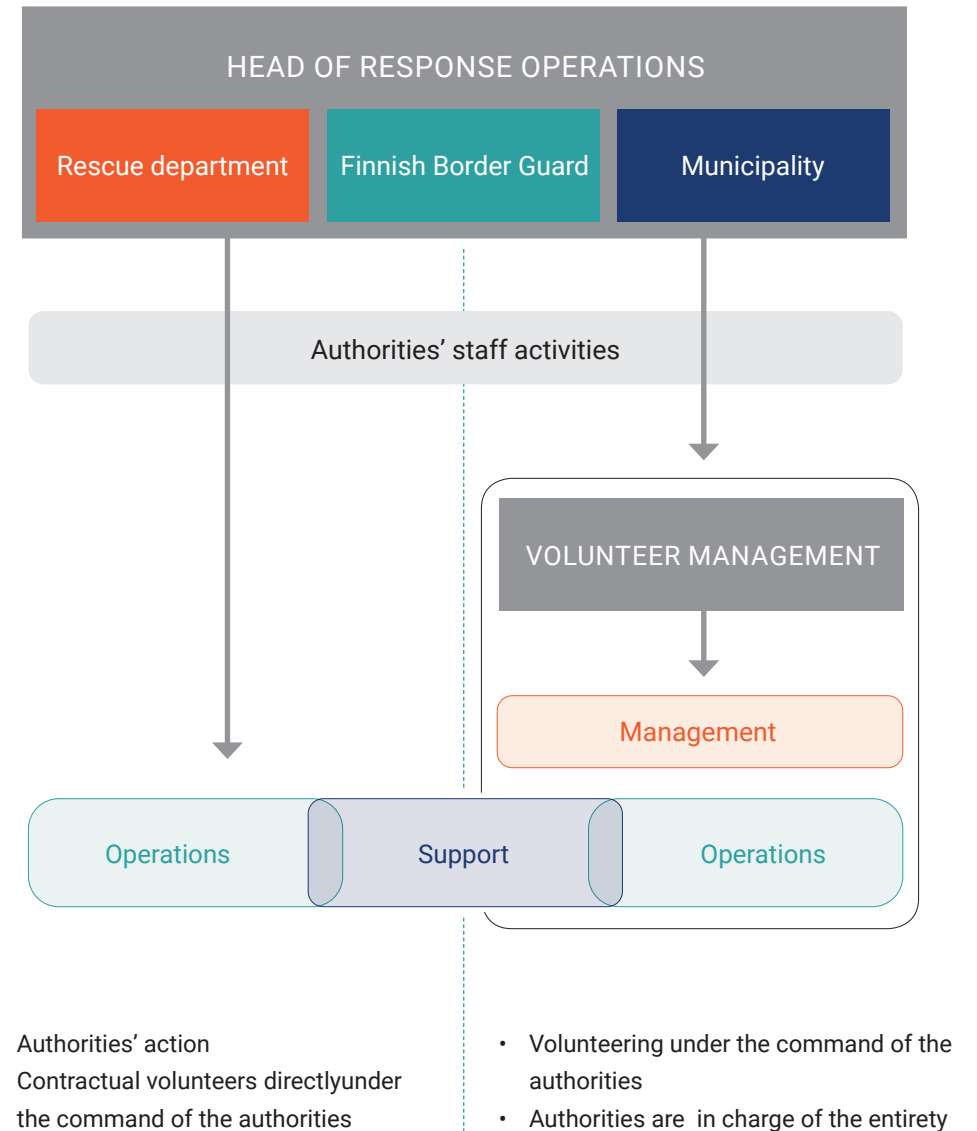
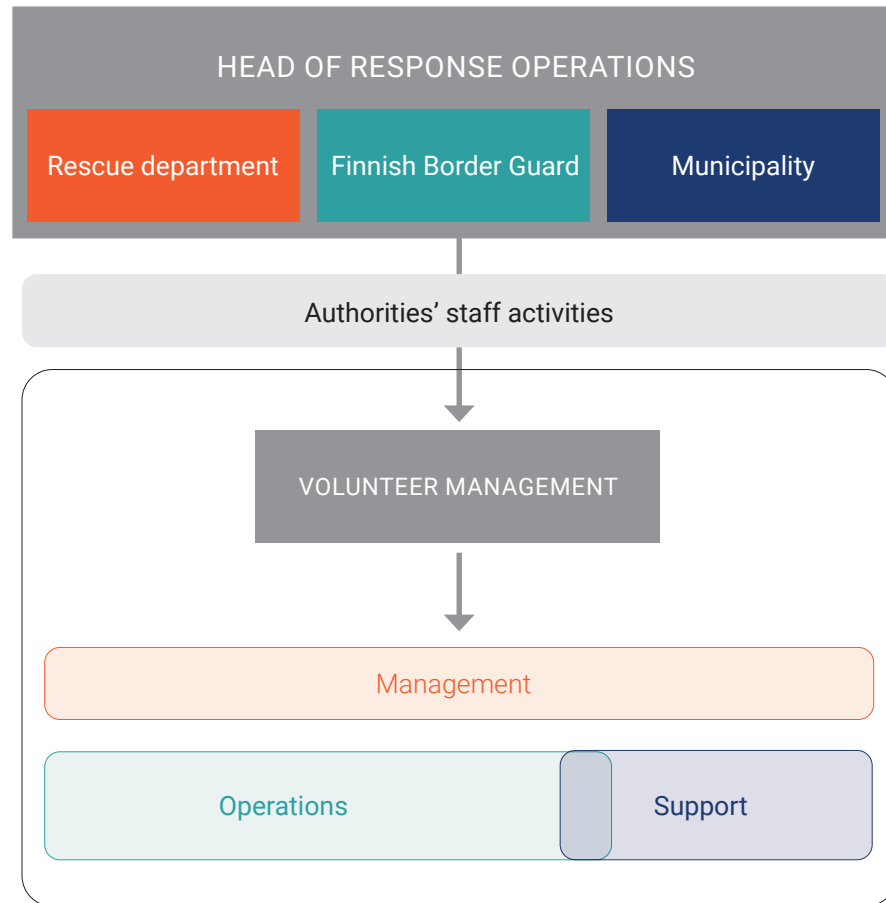


Figure 5. Operations in the early phase.



- Volunteering under the authorities' command Authorities are in charge of the entirety

Figure 6. Even when all of the personnel in the field operation are volunteers, the authorities are in charge.

## 4. Areas and tasks suitable to volunteers

Tasks suitable to volunteers in oil spill response are presented in this chapter. In all cases the authorities are responsible for them, under the head of response operations. These tasks can be assigned to people from voluntary organisations according to a plan or in accordance with ad hoc decisions. A more detailed picture of volunteer activities can be found in the guide for the Tasks Suited to Volunteers in Oil Spill Response (Waara and Lönnqvist 2015).

### 4.1. Operations

The shoreline cleanup teams constitute the largest single group of volunteers specialised in oil spill response. Another large group includes specially trained volunteers that clean oiled birds and other wildlife. In addition, in the early phase trained and previously earmarked volunteer groups may participate in deploying oil spill containment booms or in other prevention activities that directly assist the rescue services. They can also be used later in, among other things, guarding the stockpile of recovered debris.

Operations also includes the reconnaissance of the affected area from the shoreline, at sea or from the air. In accordance with the instructions of the authority leading the response operation, volunteers can also be used in providing advice to local personnel or in general, in advising citizens and in providing other public information.

#### OPERATIONS:

- Shoreline cleanup
- Oil spill response
- Bird care
- Oil reconnaissance

## 4.2. Support services

Support services include the provision of food, sanitation and other logistics as well as accommodation. The situation permitting, logistic activities will be placed close to the cleanup area, for instance at the mobilisation centre.

Support services covers storing, transporting and distributing the equipment. It also includes safety and security related activities like the preparedness to administer first aid and an A&E type first aid station, emotional (psychosocial) support as well as health and (occupational) safety. The latter includes, among other things, the distribution of, and training on, protective gear. Safety also includes fire safety at the incident area, at the accommodation and at the storage area. Volunteers can also be needed in guiding the units and performing traffic control as well as in providing access control and security for the area.

### SUPPORT SERVICES:

- Accommodation
- Feeding the units
- Sanitation and other logistics
- Land and boat transports
- Storage management and port operations
- Providing advice to the public
- Safety-related topics
  - First aid, psychosocial support and debriefing the response personnel
  - Fire safety
  - Access control and security
  - Guiding the units and traffic control
  - Health and safety

## 4.3. Management

Management incorporates the activities of the volunteer manager, the staff and the mobilisation centre. The staff are responsible for maintaining situational awareness about the progress of the volunteer work and any relevant issues, communications which facilitates management and for public information. For the most part management takes place at the command centre.

Management also includes the continual formation of volunteer units. An operation which may take weeks, or even months, demands the systematic administration and formation of volunteer units as well as a mobilisation centre that outfits them. The tasks of the mobilisation centre include recording the arrival and departure of participants and other administration as well as forming the functional units. Providing accelerated training to the personnel is a part of unit formation. This may be done as refresher training to previously trained groups or in a more thorough fashion to newcomers.

### MANAGEMENT:

- Maintaining a situational picture
- Communications
- Public information
- Human resources management
- Financial management
- Forming/mobilising the units
- Accelerated training

## 5. Alerting

The alerting of volunteers described in this model is done through Vapepa's alerting system. As in other cases, the authority alerts the volunteers, in which case the Emergency Response Centre (ERC) or the competent authority directly alerts Vapepa's duty officer. The duty officer (regional, district/municipal or local – depending on the area) will alert the required local, regional or national alert groups in accordance with the basic configuration or as per the request of the authority in question.

When necessary, in accordance with a separate agreement, the authority can also directly alert the organisations' operations groups. For example, the Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE) directly alerts WWF Finland's trained bird cleaning groups.

Each organisation determines the manner by which it alerts its own groups; it also keeps its alerting system up-to-date. The people belonging to the groups can be alerted through SMS or some other pre-agreed manner.

Depending on the sector in which the volunteer activity belongs, the response/deployment time of volunteers (time from the alert to the commencement of activity) ranges from a few hours to a couple of days. The alert groups are requested to arrive at the meeting point by a specified time or to report their availability (number of persons/response time).

Since 2017 Vapepa has used the OHTO system for alerting. OHTO can rapidly alert the required people. Furthermore, the system provides information to the management of the operation regarding available people and equipment. OHTO's alerting card with alert group members, their skills and equipment is included in the OHTO system. In order for OHTO to function properly, it must include information of as many volunteers and alert groups as possible.

In addition to the OHTO system, also Vapepa's alerting card (cf. Appendix 2) is available for manual information collection.

The card details the units and their equipment, deployment time, primary tasks and contact information. The alerting cards represent the basic configurations for different contingencies. The competent local authority may approve the basic structures in accordance with its requirements and contingency plans..

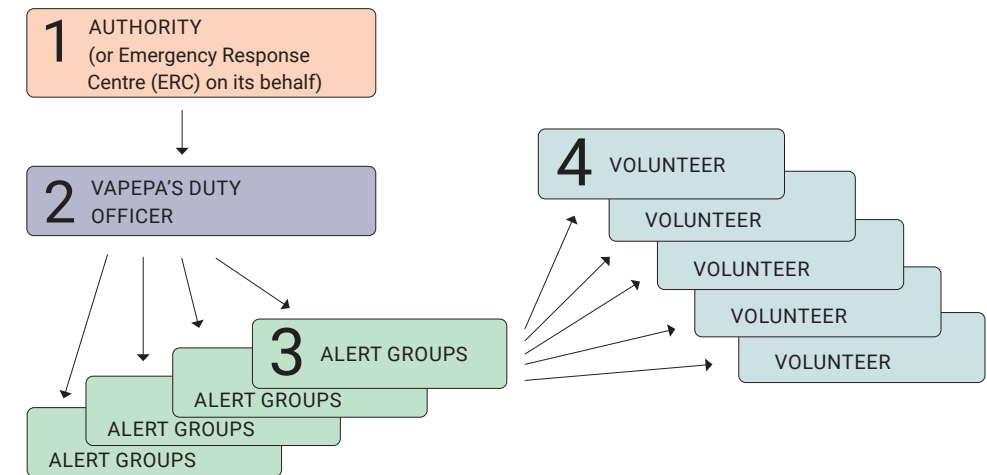


Figure 7. Vapepa's alerting system.

## 6. Volunteer formations

The strength of the oil spill response group and the platoon, comprising several response groups, depends on the given situation. A group comprises the group leader and 2–9 people. A platoon comprises 2–5 groups, in accordance with the universal principles of management.

Forming the platoon, just as with management and organisation, is done on the basis of the management model used in the rescue services, as applicable. According to the definition of the rescue services, a rescue unit has a leader and 3–7 members. A rescue platoon has a leader and 2–5 rescue units. A rescue company has a commander, a staff and 2–3 rescue platoons. A rescue formation has a commander, a command post/centre and at least 2 rescue companies, support elements included.

The personnel's ability to cope must be guaranteed in long-drawn-out situations; for this reason plenty of replacement personnel are needed. The deployability of volunteer teams is based on the sufficient oversupply of trained people in comparison to the required number of volunteers. The formations are fully operational for a few days without the need for additional recruiting. Nevertheless, should the operation become drawn-out, additional recruiting will become necessary.

Experience shows that a quadruple redundancy of personnel guarantees that the required numbers of people are available in unexpected situations. For example, contract fire brigades use a quadruple redundancy as the measure for volunteers. This means that, on average, 25 per cent of the strongly committed and motivated people can be deployed within a reasonable time. In other words, if the operation requires 150 people, at least 600 people must have been trained.

### 6.1. The minimum regional configuration

At its minimum, volunteer work comprises the operations of one platoon and one reconnaissance team (a total of 38 people), as well as the required management and support functions. Then the total number of personnel climbs to approximately 80, which means that three platoon leaders, 14 group leaders and 65 other people operate under the volunteer manager. The goal for the minimum configuration is that it be deployed within 24 hours from the alert, at the very latest.

### 6.2. The desired basic configuration

The starting point for training volunteers is to form a basic configuration for extensive situations; this means approximately 180 people. If required, the basic configuration is able to operate independently under the command of the authorities. The goal for the minimum configuration is that it be expanded into a basic configuration within 2–3 days from the alert, if needed.

### 6.3. The maximum configuration

It is estimated that the maximum volunteer formation could comprise approximately 260 people, including the person in charge. When the volunteer organisation grows large, heads responsible for different sectors (management, operations and support services) can be appointed to assist the volunteer manager.

Figure 8. Minimum regional configuration.

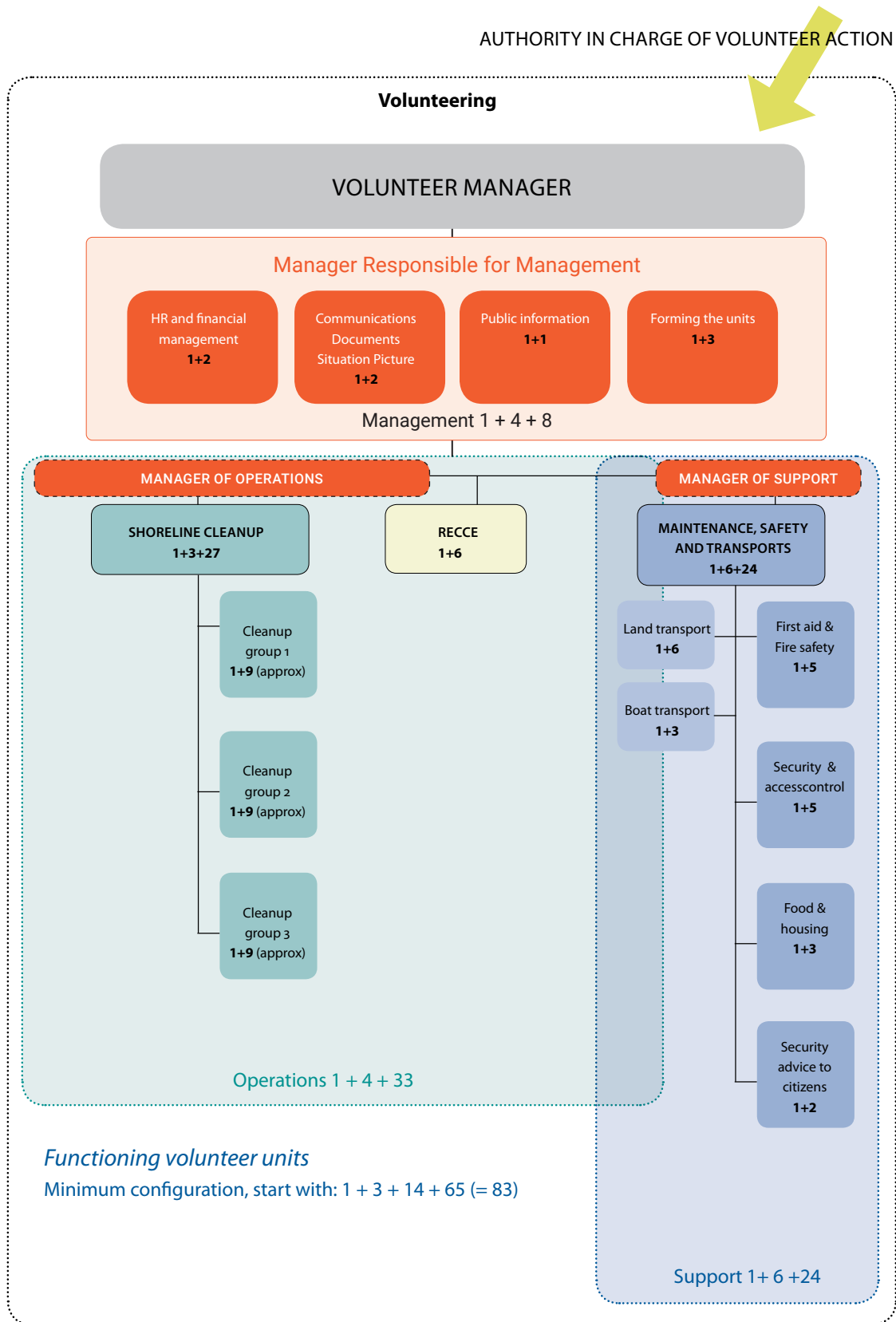


Figure 9. The desired basic configuration.

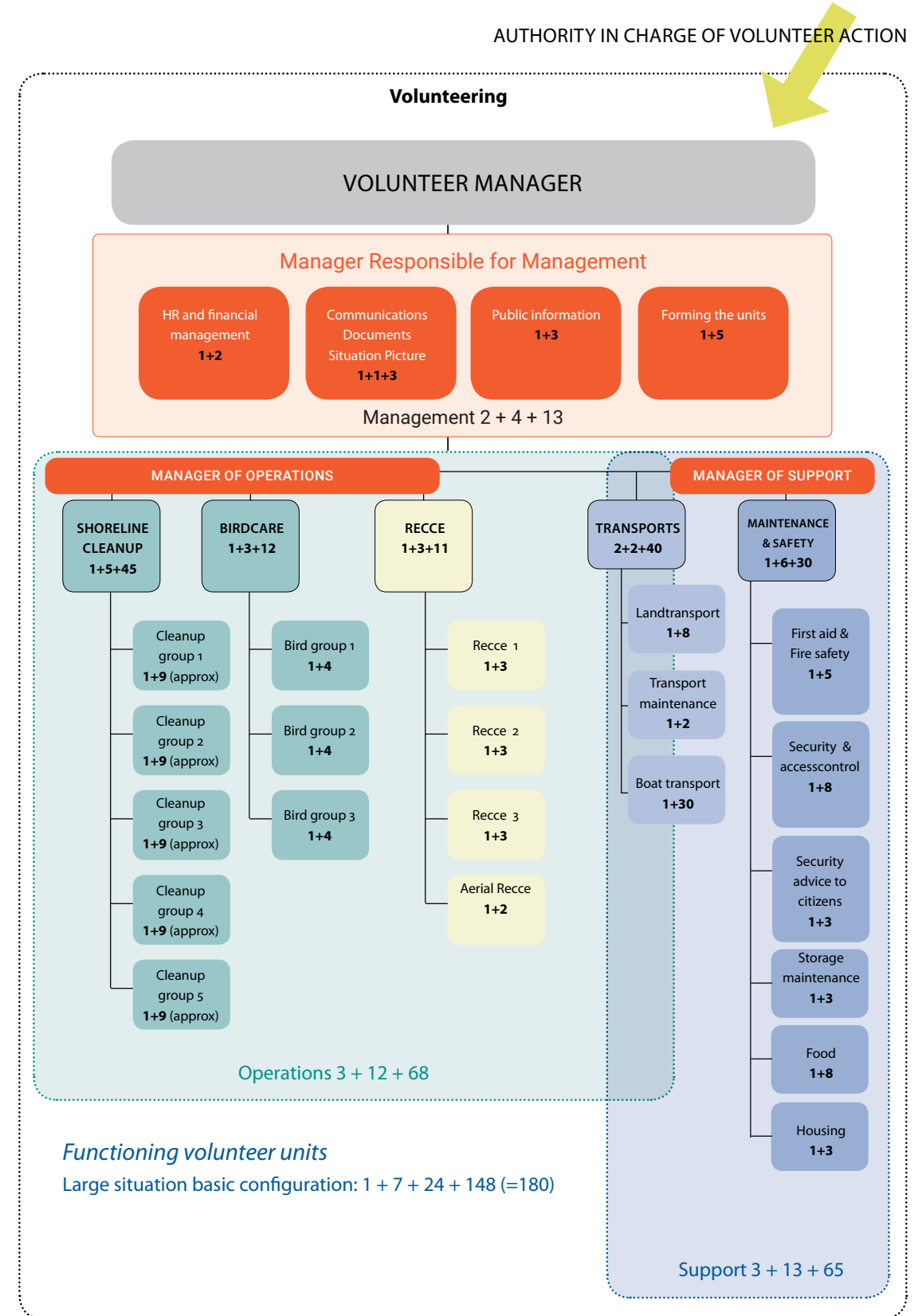
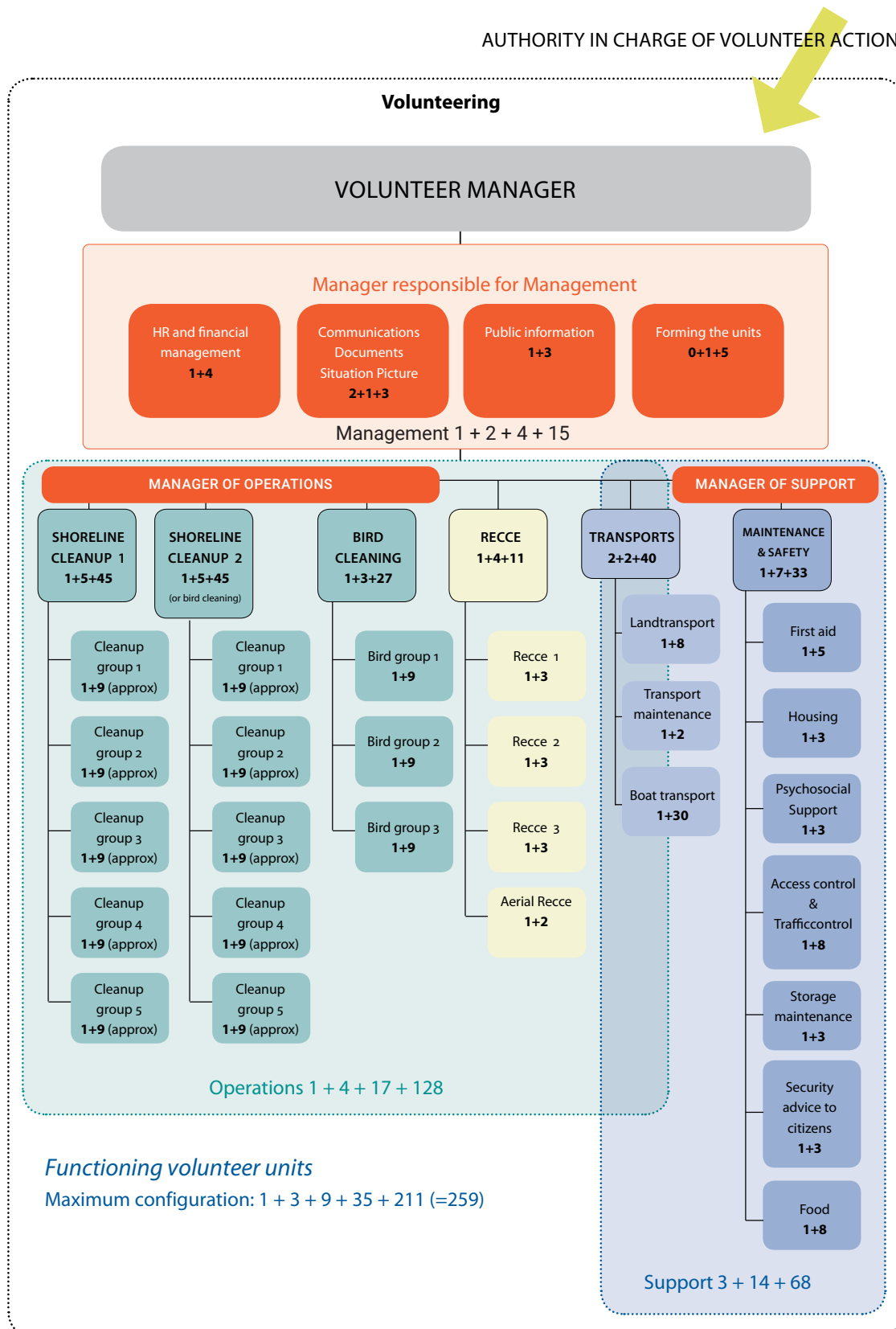


Figure 10. The maximum configuration



## 7. The role of the key organisations participating in the activity

As provided under Section 4 of the Decree of the Ministry of the Interior on rescue plans (1363/2018), rescue service plans shall include a listing on the required resources and how to alert them. These resources include the volunteers and organisations meant by Section 51(1) of the Rescue Act as well as the persons to be deployed to assist the rescue activities meant by Section 37(1) of the Rescue Act. Therefore, in practice, rescue departments should draw up the principles for using the personnel deployed to support the rescue activities and prepare a guide for the chief of the rescue operation for such instances. The chief of the rescue operation is responsible for the fact that the people deployed to supporting the rescue operation have the sufficient competency and skills. Their tasks must not require any professional rescue skills or other special competency, and they must contain low risks from the health and safety perspective.

Cooperation among the organisations lays the foundation for volunteer work. Organisations are invaluable in forming and training units and in carrying out operations. Without their input, it would be impossible to swiftly form such formations.

The most important role and responsibility of the key organisations in long-lasting operations involves providing public information about the volunteer effort, and along with it, the continual recruitment of new volunteers. Furthermore, the organisations' know-how and niche capabilities are important in assisting the volunteer manager in the management team.

The key organisations participating in oil spill response have agreed to form a national coordinating body under the auspices of Vapepa for the purpose of improving general oil spill response preparedness. There are plans for establishing regional cooperation groups which will provide platforms for dialogue among the organisation and develop regional activities.

It is prudent to plan and train early on a core number of regional actors whose operations are planned to extend across the boundaries of several rescue departments. Such a core comprises different actors and groups from organisations that are formed into a specifically tailored alert group. The responsibility of organisations over functions varies from region to region and, possibly, over the time period of a long-lasting operation.



Vapepa will compile a cooperation group consisting of regional volunteer organisations; the competent authorities will plan their cooperation in conjunction with it. The contingency plans will make known the tasks the volunteer groups are to prepare to carry out and which ones, from the outset, the authorities plan to execute on their own.

The formation of the cooperation group, as well as coordination and support, will be implemented in accordance with Vapepa's rules of procedure. Following the tasking, the organisations operating in the area will settle on the necessary preparations and training. Organisations, alone or acting in concert with each other, will for the most part carry out familiarisation and task-specific training for the volunteers.

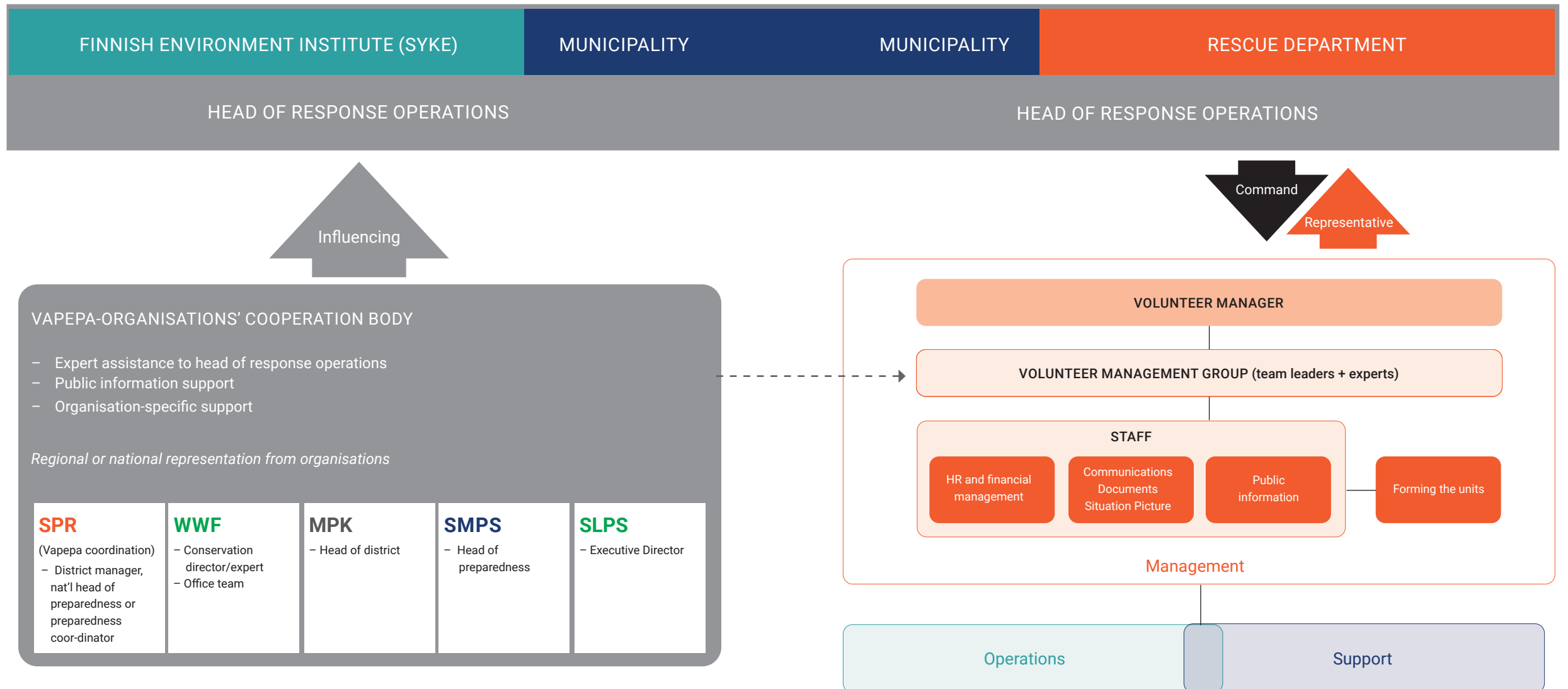


Figure 11. The key organisations participating in oil spill response and the tasks they implement.

## 8. Communications

In order to facilitate management and maintain situational awareness the different levels of volunteer formations (groups, platoons and command elements) must have access to well-planned communications. Some of the organisations use *Virve* (short for ‘Viranomaisradioverkko’, government terrestrial trunk radio network) data terminals, including specially programmed wireless network call groups. In practice the ‘general’ call groups are in use, which are meant for temporary communications among *Virve* users. In addition, organisations have access to VHF and professional/private mobile radios (PMR) operating on different frequencies.

The biggest part of the Vapepa organisations’ communications is based on *Virve* and 160 MHz or 68 MHz VHF radiocommunication. In addition to *Virve* terminals, marine VHF radios are used in sea areas. VHF aviation radio is the common means of communication in aviation. All actors also use inexpensive PMR radios for short-range communications.

Organisations train their own units in the use of communication equipment and sustain proficiency in communications. The communications training for group and team leaders is uniform for all of the organisations participating in the operation.

### 8.1. Basic operating principles in communications

The principles of communications are the following:

- Commanders and the units under their command must be able to talk to each other through adequate communication connections.
- Communications between the authority and the volunteer manager, as well as that between the authority and the group attached under its command, shall be implemented through *Virve* or some other dedicated medium.
- Communications between the manager and platoon leaders normally occurs through the *Virve* network.
- Call groups issued to the volunteer groups by the response authorities are to be used. The call groups must be pre-planned and, for the most part, pre-programmed into the volunteers’ data terminals. In exceptional circumstances other media, such as VHF radios, can be used.
- Platoon leaders and group leaders are to communicate with each other by means of *Virve* data terminals as well as VHF and PMR radios. In some cases *Virve* terminals or mobile phones can be used.
- Intra-group communication is implemented through the group’s own communication equipment or mobile phones, as is feasible.

Communications includes automatic map-based position tracking for some groups (e.g. oil reconnaissance teams) so as to maintain the situation picture as up-to-date as possible.

# Referencest

## DOCUMENTS

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## Legislation

- Rescue Act (379/2011)
- Decree of the Ministry of the Interior on rescue plans (1363/2018)

## Training materials

- National Defence Training Association of Finland (MPK), support unit
- Finnish National Rescue Association SPEK
- Finnish Red Cross
- Vapepa
- WWF Finland

## CONVERSATIONS

### Individual experts

- Burtsoff Ahti, Emergency Preparedness Chief, South Savo Rescue Department
- Halmeslahti Tuomo, Rescue Chief, South Savo Rescue Department
- Hatakka Ilona, Disaster Preparedness Adviser, Finnish Red Cross
- Hjelt Silvio, Board member, Finnish Federation of Contract Fire Brigades
- Horelli Ilkka, Director, Southwestern Finland Regional State Administrative Agency
- Laine Markku, Head of district, MPK
- Lokka Seppo, Rescue Director, South Savo Rescue Department
- Marjunen Jukka, Fire Chief, Varsinais-Suomi Rescue Department
- Niinimäki Teemu, Conservation Officer, WWF Finland
- Nystén Henrik, Head of Naval District, MPK
- Peltonen Karim, Director, Civil Emergency Preparedness, SPEK
- Savolainen Markku, Head of Training, SPEK
- Virto Juha, Rescue Chief, Varsinais-Suomi Rescue Department

## Workshops, seminars and other discussions

- Heads of preparedness at Finnish Red Cross districts and domestic preparedness employees
- Workshops for the project Volunteer Participation in Oil Spill Response organised in the provinces of South Savo and Varsinais-Suomi
- Other workshops and seminars on the Volunteer Participation in Oil Spill Response project
- Vapepa-leaders and preparedness instructors in the province of Varsinais-Suomi

# Appendixes

## Appendix 1. Vapepa member organisations

### Preparedness organisations:

- Automobile and Touring Club of Finland
- Swedish Martha Association in Finland
- Folkhälsan
- Rural Women's Advisory Organisation
- Association of National Defence Guilds
- National Defence Training Association of Finland (MPK)
- National Defence Guild for Women
- Mannerheim League for Child Welfare
- Martha Organization
- NADA-Suomi / Finland
- Reindeer Herders' Association
- Keep the Archipelago Tidy
- Finnish Reservists' Association
- SF-Caravan
- Finnish Divers' Federation
- Suomen Johanniittain apu (Finnish Order of St. John)
- Village Action Association of Finland
- Outdoor Association of Finland
- Finnish Air Rescue Society
- Finnish Lifeboat Institution
- Suomen Metsästäjäliitto (Finnish Hunters' Association)
- Finnish Association for Mental Health
- Suomen Moottoriliitto (Finnish Motor Association)
- Suomen Palveluskoiraliitto (Finnish Working Dog Association)
- Guides and Scouts of Finland
- Finnish National Rescue Association
- Suomen Pelastuskoiraliitto (Finnish Rescue Dog Association)
- The Finnish Red Cross
- Suomen Purjehdus ja Veneily (Association for Sailing and Boating in Finland)
- Finnish Amateur Radio League

- Suomen Rauhanturvaajaliitto (Finnish Peacekeepers' Association)
- Finnish Reserve Officers' Federation
- Finnish Wildlife Agency
- Finnish Orienteering Federation
- Finnish Taxi Owners Federation
- Suomen Tiepalvelumiehet (Finnish Road Service Workers)
- Suomen Tiepalvelumiesliitto (Finnish Association for Road Service Workers)
- Finnish Workers' Sports Federation
- Finnish Swimming Teaching and Lifesaving Federation
- Työväen Retkeilyliitto
- Finnish Sports Confederation
- WWF Finland
- Save the Children

### Members supporting the activities:

- Confederation of Finnish Industries
- National Council of Women of Finland
- Women's National Emergency Preparedness Association
- Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions
- Suomen Humanitaarisen Oikeuden Seura (The Finnish Association for Humanitarian Justice)
- Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities
- Finnish Medical Association
- SOK Corporation
- Tapio
- Centre for Occupational Safety

## Appendix 2. Vapepa's alerting card



### VAPEPA ALERTING FORM

#### GROUP/UNIT/TEAM INFORMATION

Name of group/organisation/association		Location	
Vapepa-committee	ERC	Administrative region	
<b>Alerters</b>			
1. Name	Telephone 1	Telephone 2	Telephone 3
2. Name	Telephone 1	Telephone 2	Telephone 3
3. Name	Telephone 1	Telephone 2	Telephone 3
<b>Personnel</b>	No.	Special skills (e.g. languages, doctor, nurse)	
Total strength of group			
How many in the group are deployable within 3 hours (estimate)			
<b>Sector</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> First aid	<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial SAR	<input type="checkbox"/> Firefighting	<input type="checkbox"/> Childcare <input type="checkbox"/> Rescuing property
<input type="checkbox"/> SAR	<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental disaster	<input type="checkbox"/> Housing <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic control
<input type="checkbox"/> Maritime SAR	<input type="checkbox"/> Transport	<input type="checkbox"/> Psychosocial support	<input type="checkbox"/> Food <input type="checkbox"/> Underwater SAR
<input type="checkbox"/> SPR domestic help	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

#### EQUIPMENT

Equipment	Number	Additional information

#### CONTACT INFORMATION FOR GROUP/UNIT

Name		
Address		
Post code	Post office	
e-mail		
Telephone 1	Telephone 2	Telephone 3
Additional information (e.g. limitations for the group's activity, meeting point)		
Date	Person that entered the information	

## Managing and organizing volunteers in oil spill response

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. 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. This document has been updated in 2021.