



Why This Matters

According to the United States Coast Guard (USCG), since 1978, it has captured lessons learned and best practices identified during contingency exercises and actual events, and it has recommended actions to improve its response. The USCG, through its Coast Guard After Action program, documents and acts on lessons identified in exercises and contingency operations, which are incidents, threats, or events requiring capabilities beyond that of normal operations. After action reports issued following the Deepwater Horizon incident provided perspectives and opinions that the USCG could evaluate to identify opportunities for positive, effective preparedness improvements.

DHS Response

The USCG concurred with both recommendations. It plans to clarify USCG policy for reviewing post-incident reports. The USCG Headquarters office with oversight responsibility for the policy will determine and prioritize which report recommendations the USCG will act on and track these recommendations in the Contingency Preparedness System.

For Further Information:

Contact our Office of Public Affairs at (202)254-4100, or email us at DHS-OIG.OfficePublicAffairs@oig.dhs.gov

The USCG's Oversight of Recommendations from Deepwater Horizon After Action Reports

What We Determined

The USCG did not provide effective oversight of recommendations made to it in Deepwater Horizon (DWH) after action reports, nor could it provide reasonable assurance that corrective actions for the DWH incident addressed the recommendations in these after action reports. The USCG had difficulty tracking the status of specific recommendations contained in after action reports prepared in response to the DWH oil spill. This occurred because management of the process was not fully coordinated and after action report recommendations were not centrally or specifically tracked.

In addition, according to a USCG after action report, the USCG could not be certain that actions resulting from previous oil spills had been implemented, and thus, it encountered some of the same issues in response to the DWH incident. This may have affected the response to the oil spill and could affect the USCG's response to future disasters.

What We Recommend

We recommend that the Assistant Commandant for Response Policy:

- 1) Identify or develop a process to ensure that USCG initiatives and subsequent corrective actions, especially those developed as a result of recommendations from DWH after action reports, can be tracked back to individual recommendations.
- 2) Evaluate the use of the Contingency Preparedness System or other USCG systems of record for tracking recommendations and corrective actions from oil spill response after action reports. Consider expanding the use of the identified system of record to all USCG after action reports.