

# CHALLENGES FACING OIL SPILL RESPONSE OPERATIONS DURING THE RECENT COVID PANDEMIC

Petroleum Association of Japan

February 2022



*Oil Spill Response*

# Introduction

- 💧 Thank you to the PAJ for giving me the opportunity to present again at this important conference in the Oil Spill calendar.
- 💧 My name is Robert Limb; I have been the CEO of Oil Spill Response since 2013. I started my career in the Oil and Gas industry in 1980 after graduating with a degree in Chemical Engineering and I have been fortunate to lived and work across the globe throughout my career.
- 💧 I would like to thank my esteemed colleague Andy Nicoll who assisted me with this presentation and provided his insights from responding to the recent m/v X-Press Pearl incident in Sri Lanka.

# Overview of presentation

- 💧 Introduction to OSRL
- 💧 Risk Communications
- 💧 Industry working together
- 💧 OSRL experiences:
  - 💧 Information and Assurance
  - 💧 Exercises and Response Experience
- 💧 Final thoughts



# Who is Oil Spill Response Ltd. (OSRL)



Largest International  
Industry Funded  
Cooperative



Owned by Major Oil  
and Gas Production/  
Transportation Companies



Providing Resources to  
**Prepare** for and **Respond** to  
Oil Spills Efficiently and  
Effectively on a Global Basis

# Risk Communications

## Many Parallels Between the Pandemic and Oil Spills

- 💧 Speed of decision-making (and subsequent action) is a critical success factor
- 💧 Stakeholder engagement (through a wide variety of media) is essential throughout:
  - 💧 There can be a need to convince sceptical voices
  - 💧 A place for “independence” and a source of “truth”
  - 💧 Trade-offs need to be explained in a clear, non-technical way
  - 💧 Things may get worse before they get better
- 💧 Social media cannot be ignored the space must be managed
- 💧 Use it to build consensus and communicate openly.



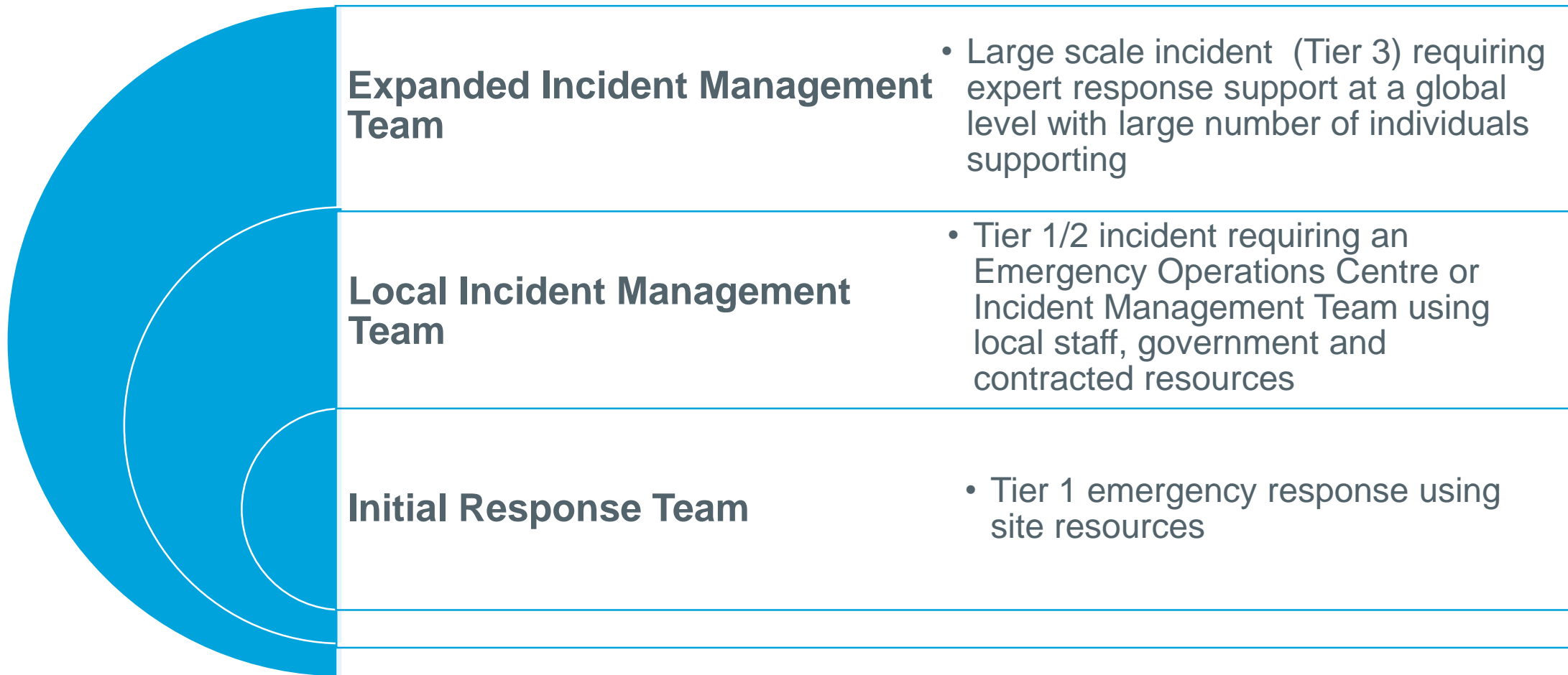
# Oil Industry Working Group

- Initial IPIECA meeting of the cohort was held July 2020
- Cohort split into 2 groups:
  - Pandemic **physical response**
  - Pandemic **virtual response**
- Identified response priorities:
  - Pandemic Response Models
  - Virtual Incident Management Team Etiquette, Hints, and Tips
  - Virtual Incident Management Team Lessons Learned
  - Virtual Training and Exercising Options
  - Physical Response Lessons Learnt
  - Mutual Aid
  - Tactical Response checklist

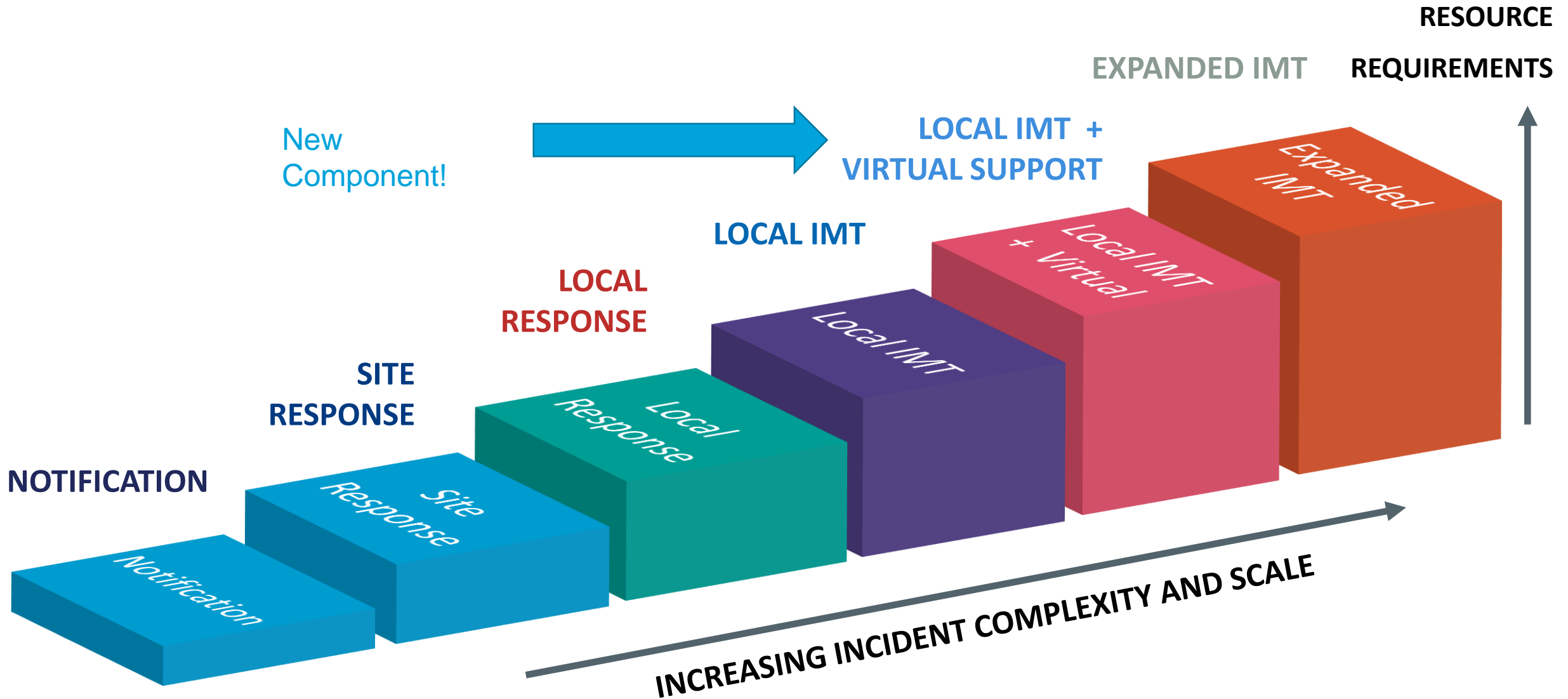
**Virtual IMT** – responders based at home using software to communicate and integrate into response structure

**Remote IMT** – responders work face to face, but from a command post that is at a different location from where the incident is taking place

# Concept: Response Teams as Units



# Escalating Incident Response





# Virtual Incident Management Teams

## Learnings from exercises

### Platform selection

- ⇒ Provide instructions, procedures and test them
- ⇒ Use systems that people are familiar with and use day-to-day

### Communication Protocol

- ⇒ Clear ground rules

### Maintaining situational awareness and a common understanding

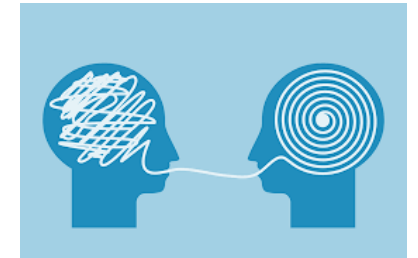
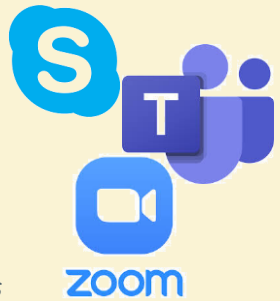
- ⇒ Careful scene-setting and sharing of relevant documentation are vital at the start
- ⇒ Use of 'liaisons' to prevent bottlenecking

### Fit for purpose IT

- ⇒ Plan for **when** IT issues happen not **if** they happen.
- ⇒ Provide a mechanism for back up dial-in numbers, audio calls, detailed meeting minutes after meetings.

#### v-IMT Platform Considerations:

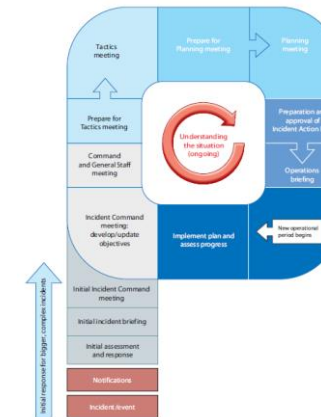
1. Security
2. Number of users
3. Instant comms / chat
4. Breakout rooms facility
5. Material sharing
6. Intuitiveness
7. External agencies access
8. Compatibility with other platforms



# Virtual IMTs (Continued)

## Learnings from exercises

- 💧 **Managing energy, fatigue, concentration, stress, wellbeing**
  - ⇒ *Develop wellbeing management guidance.*
  - ⇒ *Ensure people have time to take screen breaks etc (e.g. scheduled breaks)*
  - ⇒ *Assign a buddy system of 'checking-in'*
  - ⇒ *Encourage participants to indicate their availability/status (busy, available)*
- 💧 **Ensuring there are enough people - facilitation and information management need different consideration**
  - ⇒ *Assign a dedicated facilitator to own the process*
- 💧 **Core Incident Management principles still apply:**
  - ⇒ *Single open endless call vs. Planning 'P'*
  - ⇒ *Span of control*
  - ⇒ *Objective driven*



# OSRL approach

- Information dashboard
- Country Profiles
- Operational assurance
- OSRL protocols:
  - Office /support functions
  - Infield: response and exercises
- Actual response experience



# Readiness Dashboard



# Country profiles (~70 countries)

💧 Mobilization (entry requirements)

💧 Country specific information:

💧 Response roles:

💧 IMT technical advice

💧 Aerial surveillance operations

💧 Shoreline / Inland operations

💧 Offshore vessel-based operations

💧 Aerial dispersant operations

💧 Oiled wildlife response



## Japan COVID-19 Response Plan



### Purpose

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many governments and companies have imposed restrictions limiting the movement of people. This working document describes at a country level how OSRL will approach supporting Members during spill response incidents. It is intended to be referred to as guidance only, based on best-available information at the time of writing. It should be read in conjunction with the latest COVID-19 statement on OSRL's website: <https://www.oilspillresponse.com/news-media/news/coronavirus-statement/>

### COVID-19 Response Readiness Dashboard

OSRL Members' Information Hub - a single location to cover your needs, keep you up to date and provide you with the latest information on our response readiness. <https://www.oilspillresponse.com/external-links/covid-19>

To discuss the country plan or for further information please contact: the authors ([Yamuna@oilspillresponse.com](mailto:Yamuna@oilspillresponse.com) or [ThomasHeng@oilspillresponse.com](mailto:ThomasHeng@oilspillresponse.com)), the duty manager, or your OSRL representative.

# Covid 19 Operational Considerations



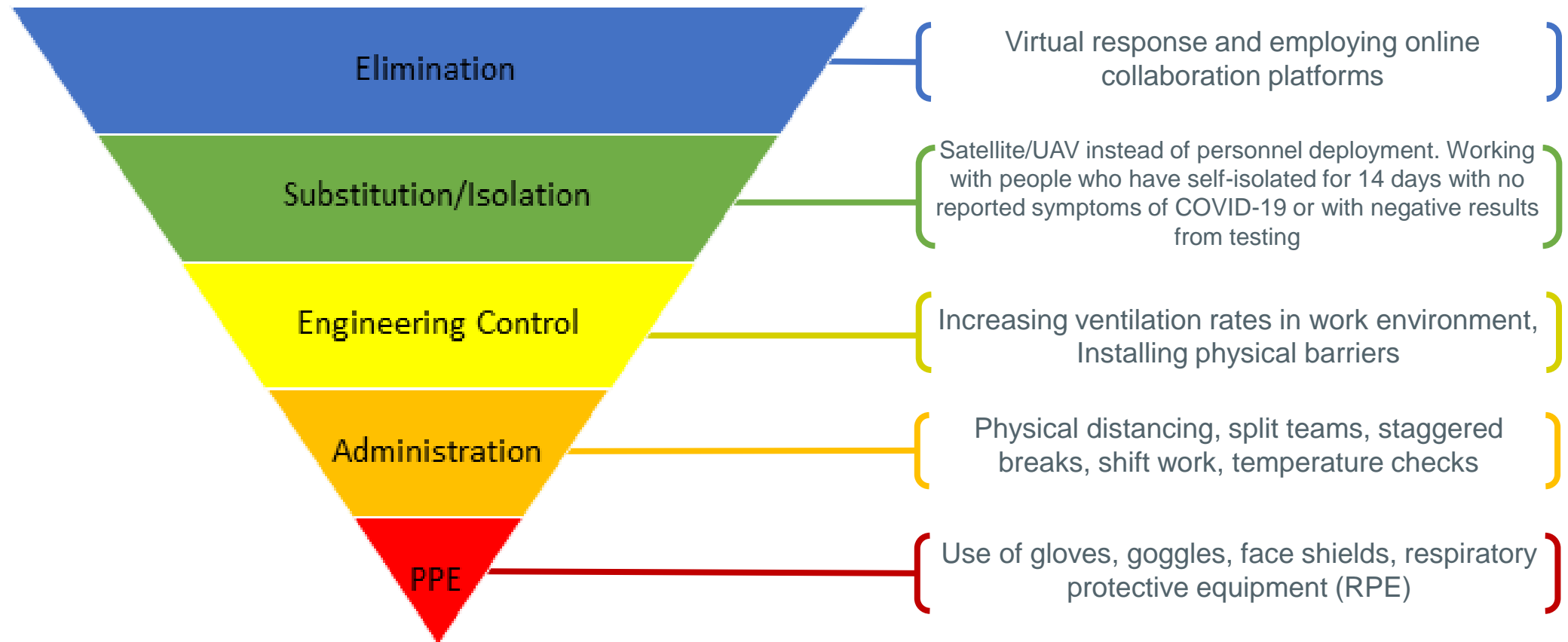
## COVID-19 Operational Considerations

A summary for responders conducting shoreline operations during the COVID-19 outbreak



- 💧 Appendices to existing guides:
  - 💧 Containment & recovery
  - 💧 Shoreline Clean-up Assessment Technique
  - 💧 Shoreline Ops
  - 💧 Inland Ops
  - 💧 Aerial Surveillance
  - 💧 Dispersant Application & Monitoring
  - 💧 Waste Management
  - 💧 Offshore In-situ Burning
  - 💧 NEBA Considerations
- 💧 Download : [www.oilspillresponse.com](http://www.oilspillresponse.com)

# Document Overview



# COVID-19 Operational Considerations

## Shoreline Operations

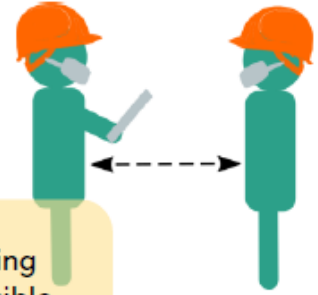


### Administration

Personnel are to be reminded to take their temperature daily before and after their work shift

### Administration

Personnel are to maintain physical distancing according to local regulation wherever possible and practicable



### Administration

Personnel are to conduct self-assessment and record their temperature/self-assessment in a log-book



### Administration

Regularly wash/sanitise hands preferably with clean warm water and soap or utilise alcohol-based sanitiser. Avoid touching the face/mouth/eyes/nose



Do refer to [Specific Measures for In-field Response](https://www.oilspillresponse.com/covid-19/) document which can be found at <https://www.oilspillresponse.com/covid-19/> for more specific details. Task specific risk assessment should be used to govern the specific measures implemented.



# COVID-19 Operational Considerations

## Shoreline Operations



### Administration

Personnel are to communicate via VHF radio when in-field and avoid in-person communication as much as possible



### Administration

Ensure that proper waste management is carried out at all sites. Respirators and masks are to be disposed of properly



### Administration

Avoid large gatherings – stagger meals and breaks where possible



### PPE

Don appropriate PPE based on risk assessment and do not share PPE and personal items



Do refer to *Specific Measures for In-field Response* document which can be found at <https://www.oilspillresponse.com/covid-19/> for more specific details. Task specific risk assessment should be used to govern the specific measures implemented.

# Practicalities



For documents that require to be passed around, methods to minimise cross-contamination



Use nitrile gloves when sterilising equipment to minimise direct contact of the disinfectant spray from skin.



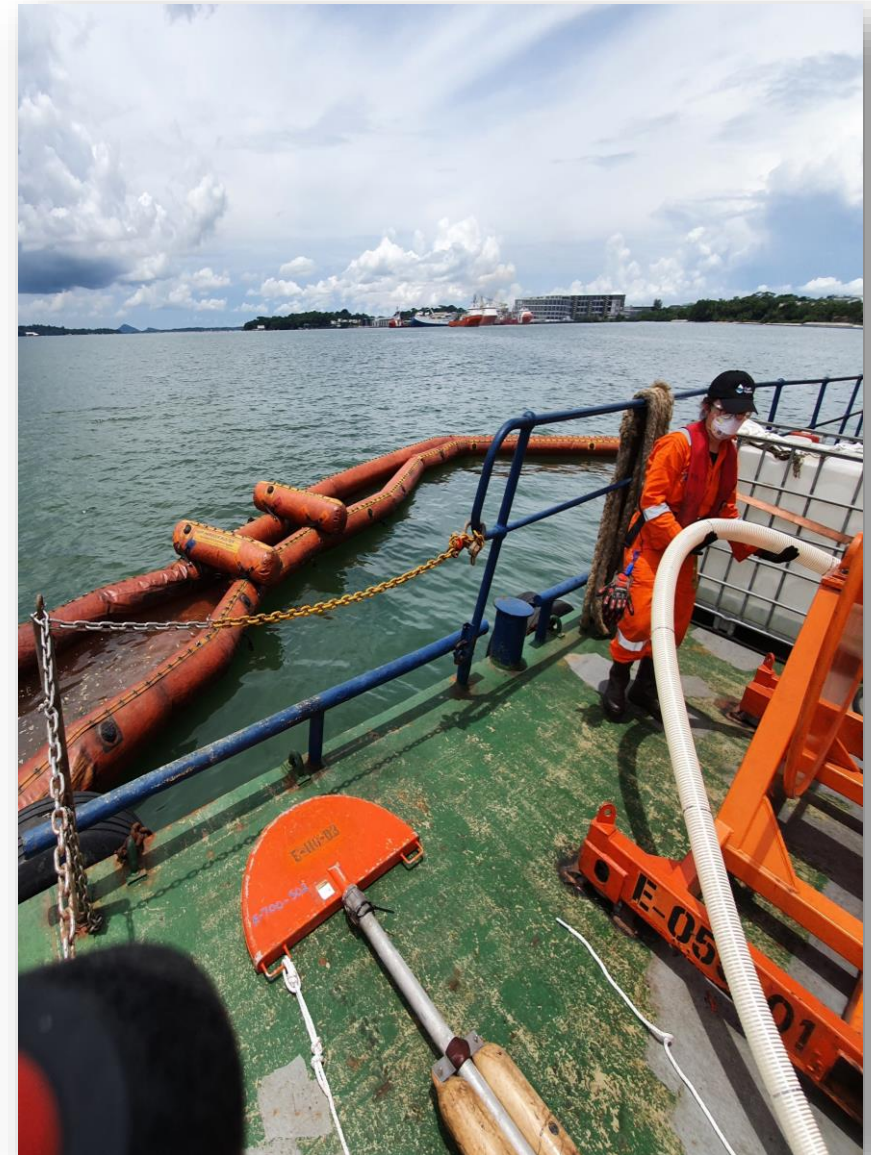
Surgical tapes to prevent fogging of safety glasses



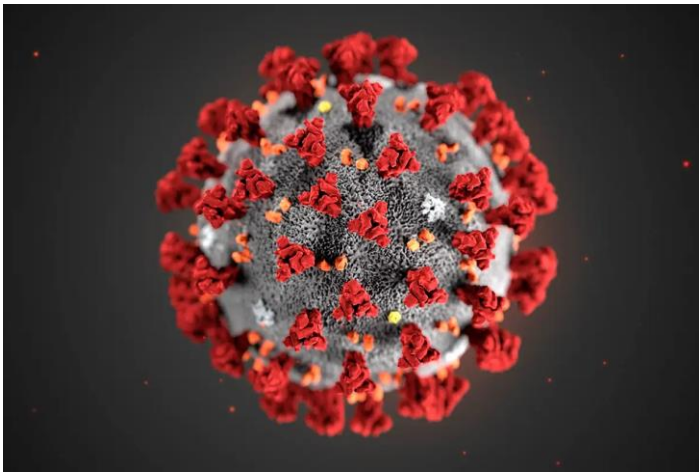
A cool down period is needed before conducting temperature taking after working in hot weather conditions.



More frequent breaks as it is more taxing when working with masks



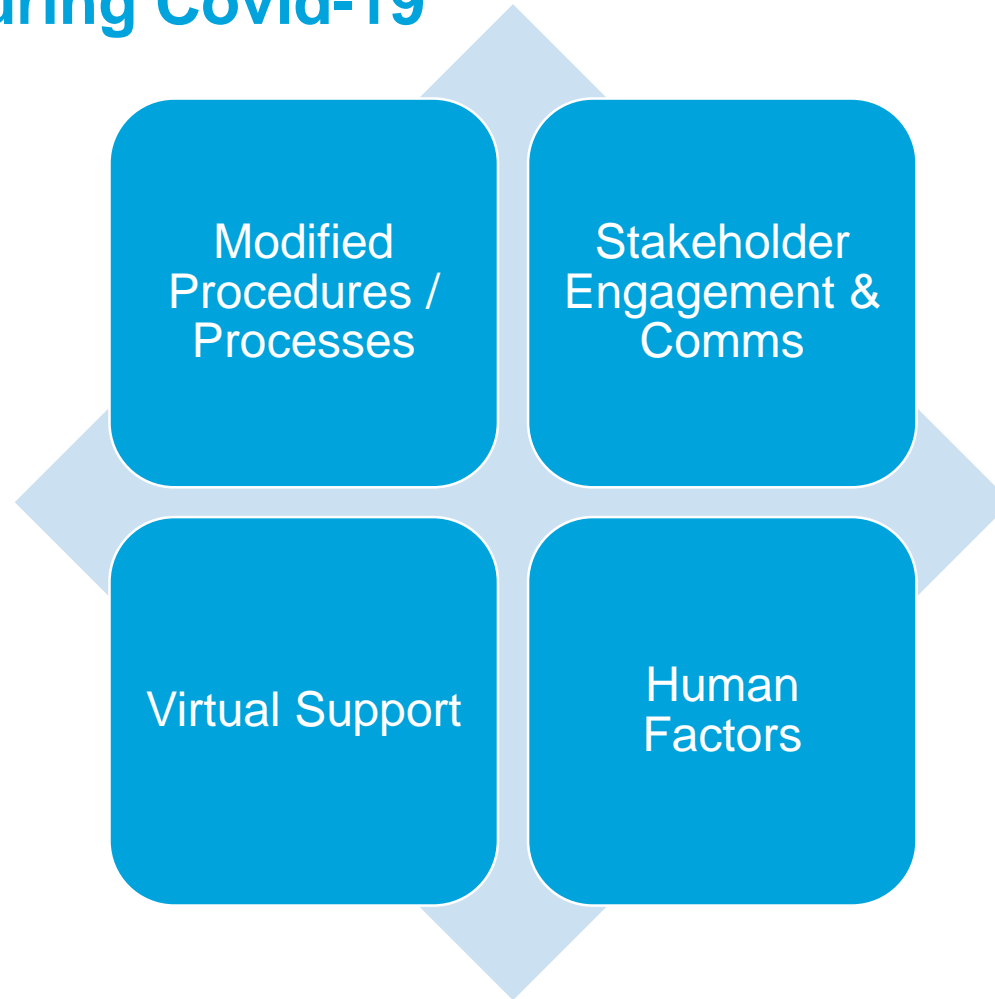
# Operational Guidance: Summary



- 💧 Guidance sits alongside the OSRL Field Guide appendices
- 💧 IPIECA Good Practice Guide on NEBA and SIMA still apply
- 💧 Human health has to come first (PEAR principle)
- 💧 COVID-19 adds an extra layer of complexity
- 💧 Are there less man-power intensive techniques that can be deployed?
- 💧 No one answer – this will vary according to a specific country’s infection rate, spill scenario etc.

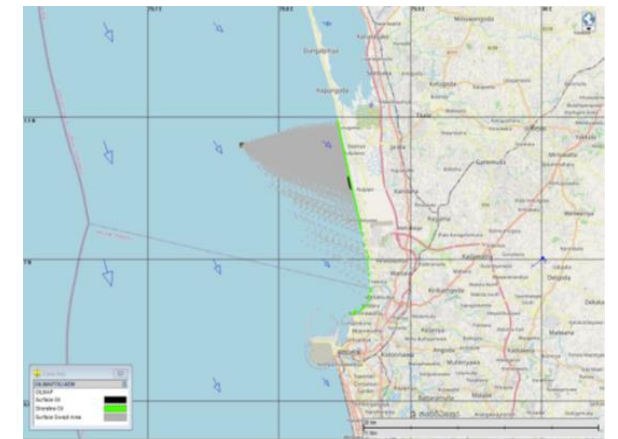
# Recent Case Histories

## OSRL Responses During Covid-19



# m/v X-Press Pearl

- 2700 TEU container feeder v/l (built 2021)
  - 1486 containers on board
  - 81 classified as 'Dangerous Goods'
  - 25 te. nitric acid and other chemicals
  - 300 m<sup>3</sup> Low Sulphur Fuel Oil
  - Virgin plastic pellets (nurdles)
- Incident timeline:
  - 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021 – Fire starts
  - 25<sup>th</sup> May 2021 – OSRL notified by ITOPF
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2021 – Vessel sinks
- Loss of cargo and risk of oil spill
  - 10 km north-west of Colombo, Sri Lanka
- OSRL mobilised on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2021 under BIMCO RESPONSECON 3<sup>rd</sup> party contract



# A Wide Range of Pollution Challenges

**Oils:** bunkers, hydraulic, lube, etc.

**Micro-plastics:** less than 5 mm in diameter, particularly in the form of virgin plastic pellets (nurdles)

**Macro-plastics:** between 5 and 50 mm in diameter (including melted nurdles)

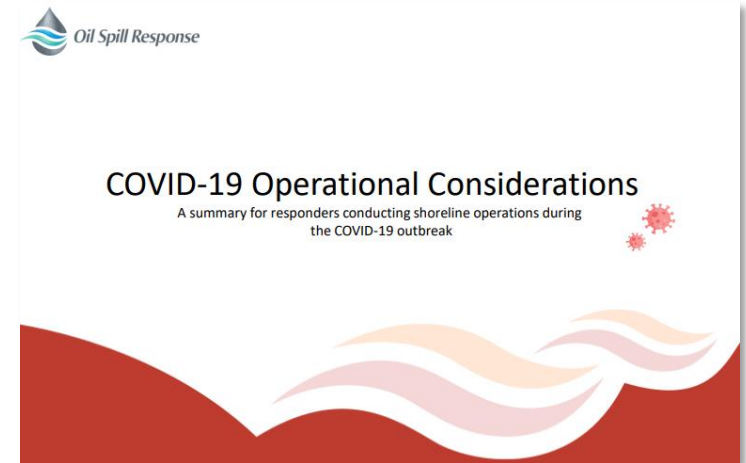
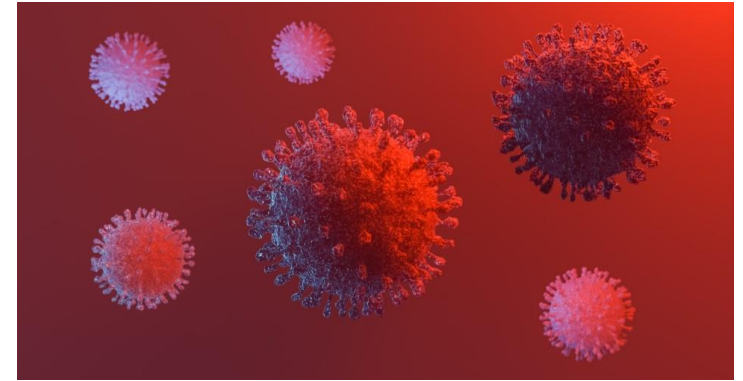
**Other macro pollution:** various forms of debris/pollution from the ship between 5mm and 50 mm in diameter

**Mega pollution:** any item > 50 mm in diameter, potentially reaching several metres in size (items include burnt plastic, whole or damaged containers, and loose, spilt cargo from damaged containers)



# Responding and COVID-19

- Acknowledging and overcoming the fear
  - Human factors, comms and assurance
- Bio-bubble arrangement for Quarantine Waiver on arrival
  - Approved accommodation with restricted access
  - Dedicated vehicle and driver
  - Movement restrictions
  - Military escort
- National lockdown impacts
- Vaccinated responders
- PCR tests
- Twice weekly LFTs
  - OSRL and drivers
- Isolate and monitor protocol for ‘close contact’ situations
- Advice from medical service provider ‘ISOS’
- Documentation:
  - Covid-19 specific measures and OSRL Covid-19 field guide



# Human Factors: A Responder's Perspective

## Concerns

### Wellbeing

- Medical Provision
- Risk Assessment
- Mental Health

### Travel Safety

- Air Travel
- Land Travel

### Family

- Family Support
- Returning Home

### Accommodation

- Quarantine
- Cleanliness

Human Factors consider the mindset, emotions and the personal worries, thoughts, concerns and motivations that Responders are likely to experience when responding during a pandemic.

## Mitigations

- ✓ Hospital standards and capacity
- ✓ Repatriation plans / assurance
- ✓ Awareness building and easy access to support
- ✓ Briefing on traveller safety measures
- ✓ Traveller numbers, mask use
- ✓ Land transportation (e.g. private car)
- ✓ Plain English language information packs
- ✓ Employee-family support networks
- ✓ Mitigations for 14-day quarantine
- ✓ Early scouting team for the assessment of conditions



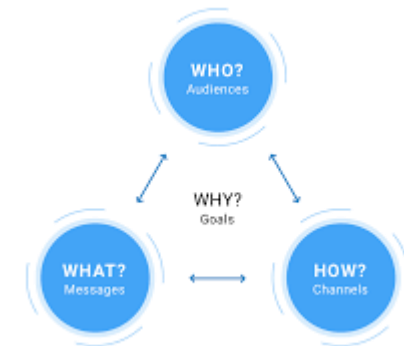
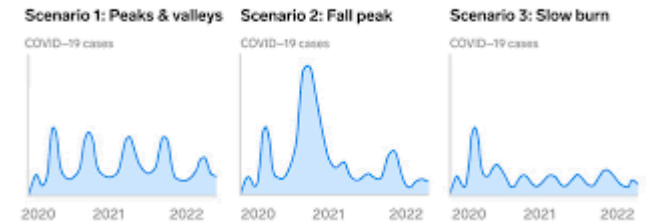
# Final thoughts

## Maintain Incident Management Core Principles

- Establish and maintain key priorities:
  - PEAR principle to build objectives, worst case scenario planning and inform decisions
  - 'People first' / 'Nobody gets hurt'
- Prudent Over-Response
  - Get Big Quick, Worst Case Scenario (WCS) planning, 'No Regrets'
    - ⇒ Be proactive, you can't buy time and rebuilding trust and confidence isn't easy
- Communication:
  - Communicate early, clearly, consistently and don't stop...
    - ⇒ Any communication vacuum is filled with hearsay, speculation and fear
    - ⇒ Don't let up, even if the crisis is abating; people rely on a steady reliable feed of info
    - ⇒ Messages must be clear, and unequivocal
    - ⇒ Unless everyone is on message (ALL of the time) the impact is diluted or destroyed



Possible coronavirus wave scenarios



# Thank You

[www.oilspillresponse.com](http://www.oilspillresponse.com)

## Subsea Well Intervention Service

- > [www.oilspillresponse.com/subsea](http://www.oilspillresponse.com/subsea)  
subseaservices@oilspillresponse.com

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