

Oiled Wildlife Care Network North Valley Animal Disaster Group Information and Guidelines



OWCN Overview

The OWCN was established in 1994 and works closely with the Department of Fish and Wildlife, Office of Spill Prevention and Response (DFW-OSPR). The OWCN was administered within OSPR between 1994-1997, after which it was decided that the administration would move to the Wildlife Health Center, within the School of Veterinary Medicine at UC Davis, when a research component was added to the program.

Its mission is to provide best achievable capture and care to oiled wildlife within the state of California.

Funding for the OWCN comes from interest generated from the Oil Spill Prevention Administration Fund. When activated for a spill, funding for OWCN staff comes from various sources, including the Responsible Party, federal, and state.

The Advisory Board provides recommendations to the administration of OSPR regarding the operation, maintenance, and fulfillment of the OWCN's mission. The Advisory Board is composed of representatives from the oil industry, wildlife rehabilitation organizations, academia, and other research institutions. The Scientific Advisory Committee evaluates the scientific merit and quality of research proposals competing for grant funds.

The OWCN is an umbrella organization that brings together groups to work cooperatively. The OWCN is a network composed of 36 member organizations throughout the state. Organizations include rehabilitation organizations, universities, and non-governmental organizations. They can be of three types: primary care, stabilization and personnel.

Each of the member organizations has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with OSPR. The organization agrees to provide rapid cooperative response to oil spills within the ICS structure. In return, OSPR/OWCN agrees to equip, supply and train.

A primary care facility has the ability to take an oiled animal, clean it, and release it back into the environment. These facilities provide the largest capacity for oil-affected birds and sea otters in the state. Stabilization facilities don't have the capacity for washing. Instead, their task is to stabilize the animal and move it to a primary care facility. The stabilization facility is an intermediate step. Personnel facilities are those groups that provide personnel to the spill response effort.

There are three levels of personnel that the OWCN involves and coordinates in a wildlife response:

- ◆ Convergent (or spontaneous) volunteers are those people that come off the street to help out. The OWCN provides these volunteers with basic information and safety.
- ◆ Pre-trained volunteers are the people OWCN calls on first when there is a spill and they have a more extensive training record.
- ◆ Staff is more highly trained and typically fill supervisory roles. Training requirements for staff are more stringent, and these people typically get paid when activated for a response. Payment comes through the member organization that they are affiliated with.

When there is an oil spill within California, the Wildlife Branch sits within the Operations Section in the Incident Command System organization chart. Within the Wildlife Branch, there are five groups, and the OWCN manages four of those groups (Hazing, Wildlife Recovery, Field Stabilization, and Care and Processing).

- ◆ The first of the groups is the Reconnaissance Group (DFW-OSPR manages this group); this group evaluates the numbers, species, and locations of wildlife that could be or are impacted by the oil. Reconnaissance can occur by air, boat or shore, but typically, the aerial survey unit is activated for larger spills in the marine environment.
- ◆ The second group is the Hazing Group, which deters wildlife from entering contaminated areas. Typical techniques include pyrotechnics.
- ◆ The third group is the Wildlife Recovery Group. This is the group that goes out and collects animals. They collect not only live animals, but dead animals (source of secondary contamination and for evidence).
- ◆ The Field Stabilization Group is the newest group, added in 2012. Early intervention and care of oiled wildlife increases chances for survival, so this group provides first aid to animals near a spill area. In the past, field stabilization has been done out of makeshift barns and even cars and trucks. The OWCN now has a fully functional trailer (the MASH – Mobile Avian Stabilization Hospital).

- ◆ Care & Processing group collects legal documentation and provides care to the animals. The different steps to a response include: recovery and transport, field stabilization (if needed), processing and intake, pre-wash care, cleaning, conditioning, and finally release.

Once animals get to the facility, they go through processing, which refers to the legal documentation. Each animal collected (both live and dead) is used as evidence.

- ◆ Intake – upon arrival all live animals are given a full physical examination, including the degree of oiling. This is when a full medical record is started. The idea is to do a quick but thorough exam.
- ◆ Pre-wash stabilization – animals are warmed, fed and hydrated and allowed to get over the “shock” of being cold on the beach and then captured. Once they are medically stable (about 48 hours after intake), they may move to wash.
- ◆ Wash - cleaning is the most stressful part of the process (for both animals and humans). It is an art as well as a science. Animals are washed in a series of tubs filled with a mixture of a dilute cleaning agent and hot softened water using specific cleaning protocols. They are then rinsed and placed in drying pens.
- ◆ Pre-release conditioning – animals are placed in outdoor pools where they groom their feathers or haircoat to restore waterproofing. This process can take as few as 3-5 days and as much as several months if injuries are present.

Prior to release, animals are evaluated for waterproofing and the presence of a normal physical exam and species-appropriate behavior. Banding is done at this time too, and they are released into a clean habitat. Post-release survival study happens at this time too.

Activation

When an incident first occurs, Primary and Secondary Volunteer Coordinators for all state groups will receive an email, even if no response is requested. In NVADG's case, this means that only the NVADG OWCN Coordinator will be contacted, - usually via email. NVADG has the option of forwarding this email to NVADG OWCN trained members as a courtesy notification only - NOT a request for response at this time. Once it is determined by OWCN that a response is needed, then OWCN will contact the NVADG OWCN Coordinator who will then contact NVADG personnel for availability.

This is one possibility, but will not always be the case. There are actually several different ways that OWCN may request additional personnel, and it depends on the type/skills of personnel needed and whether the positions OWCN needs to fill are staff or volunteer, as well as the size, location, and complexity of the spill.

OWCN may contact the NVADG OWCN Coordinator; provide information on what numbers and type of personnel they are looking for. OWCN may request availability information directly

from all OWCN registered responders. If they need a large number of personnel very quickly, OWCN is more likely to use a combination method, where they contact all registered responders with a request for their availability and then discuss specific recruiting needs with the NVADG OWCN Coordinator. If a request is made to help find available responders, then OWCN would provide a list of currently registered responders affiliated with NVADG and their qualification levels, to aid in identifying trained individuals.

At this point, the OWCN Staff Coordinator will communicate to NVADG OWCN Coordinator what roles OWCN is seeking to fill (whether volunteer or staff), based on specific needs and training requirements for those roles. Although individuals must be affiliated with a Member Organization (like NVADG) to register and become pre-trained volunteer responders or staff, during a spill, personnel identified as volunteers sign a volunteer service agreement to become volunteers of the State. This is so the State can provide Worker's Compensation Insurance to them. Although NVADG personnel may be volunteering for OWCN "directly," it is the responder's responsibility to request permission from the Member Organization (NVADG) before responding.

When OWCN would like to put a responder into a staff-level position, there is an intermediate step, where OWCN Staff Coordinator will request approval from the NVADG OWCN Coordinator before hiring/contracting with the individual for the spill. This is because OWCN Management Staff does not hire individuals directly, instead relying on Member Organizations to hire and then "lend" those individuals to the spill effort, where they will be incorporated into the Incident Command System (ICS) structure.

To fill a spill staff position, OWCN Staff Coordinator will issue a request, which will include the person's name, the position, and the length of the proposed deployment, and NVADG would have the opportunity to approve before the individual is mobilized. NVADG would need to enter into an employment agreement of some type with the individual at that time, to be certain terms are clear and to ensure the individual is covered by the employer's (in this case NVADG) Worker's Compensation Insurance. After the spill, NVADG would be expected to invoice the Responsible Party at the rates reflected in the *OWCN Response Rates* document.

Selection of Personnel

NVADG personnel must be approved to respond to an incident by either the NVADG OWCN Coordinator or the NVADG President. To ensure that NVADG volunteers are current with NVADG minimum requirements, this must be done for each individual incident. It doesn't matter if NVADG personnel are contacted directly by OWCN, responding as untrained, volunteer, or Staff Level Positions, they must first be approved by either the NVADG OWCN Coordinator or the NVADG President for that specific event. Responding NVADG personnel will contact NVADG before they respond and request permission from either the NVADG OWCN Coordinator or the NVADG President to respond.

NVADG personnel are "at-will" and will serve at the discretion of the NVADG Board of Directors.

To qualify for activation thru the OWCN, NVADG volunteers must attend the Annual Training or the Annual Refresher training on a yearly basis. If for some reason they miss those trainings for the year, they will be required to take the follow classes:

- ◆ Forms
- ◆ Radio
- ◆ Small Animal Shelter
- ◆ Small Animal Handling
- ◆ Animal First Aid
- ◆ Annual Drill or Exercise

Volunteer and Staff Level Positions

NVADG personnel may be requested to fill either "Volunteer" or "Staff Level Positions." When NVADG members who are trained to OWCN standards are requested to work at a low level non-trained capacity, they may not get paid. If they work at a "Staff Level Position," they may possibly be eligible to be paid. Staff Level Positions will be paid (by NVADG) 50% of any (salary) monies received from the Responsible Party (RP – the “spiller”). If it is determined that there will be funding available for responders, NVADG will be paying NVADG personnel directly - after getting paid by the RP. NVADG will invoice OWCN after the incident and OWCN will act as a middleman between NVADG and the RP.

Paperwork During an Incident

Responding NVADG personnel will provide brief daily status reports to the Board of Directors. At the end of a deployment, a more detailed report on activities, lesson learned, etc. will be submitted to the Board (these reports are NVADG requirements, not OWCN).

It is the responsibility of the responder (whether volunteer or Staff Level Position) to submit to the NVADG OWCN Coordinator the following: Timesheets, Expense Reports, and a written report of events within seven days of returning from the incident. If this is not done within seven days, then no payments will be issued.

NVADG will provide an IRS 1099 Form to personnel when appropriate.

Reimbursement

Volunteers and Staff Level Positions may be eligible to be reimbursed for certain expenses. Whenever possible during a deployment, attempt to have staff on scene pay for any expenses directly. If any out-of-pocket expenses occur, fill out the appropriate Expense Forms included at the end of this document and provide them to the NVADG OWCN Coordinator within seven days of returning from the deployment. There is no promise or guarantee that your expenses will be reimbursed.

Worker's Compensation

NVADG personnel who respond as volunteers to an OWCN incident are unpaid employees of the State, and therefore their Worker's Compensation is covered once they sign a service agreement at the spill.

NVADG personnel who respond in a Staff Level Position will have their Worker's Compensation Insurance covered by NVADG.

Non-Trained NVADG Personnel

Depending on the needs of OWCN, all NVADG volunteers may be eligible to respond for non-trained positions, even ones that haven't signed up for OWCN. Any NVADG volunteer may register in OWCN's database and subsequently becomes eligible to fill volunteer roles even without taking additional trainings. However, unless OWCN opens up for spontaneous volunteers (a relatively rare occurrence), NVADG volunteers who are not registered in their database won't be able to respond, as registration is closed during a spill. So, if folks want to help during an oil spill, they need to register ahead of time, even if they do not plan to participate in the training program, or take any OWCN classes. They would most likely be responding as volunteer (non-paid) responders.

Registering in the OWCN Responder Database

Becoming a registered OWCN responder enables participation in OWCN's response activities, training program, and events. Registered responders are eligible to respond as affiliated volunteers with no additional training required, or may pursue training to qualify to respond in more advanced roles as pre-trained volunteers or paid staff.

To register, an individual must be:

- ◆ *Affiliated with an OWCN Member Organization.*
Affiliated individuals are active volunteers or staff with an OWCN Member Organization (in this case, NVADG, which is one of the 36 OWCN Member Organizations throughout California), where they gain skills important for oil spill response.
- ◆ *Interested and available to participate in oil spill response as part of OWCN response operations.*
Responders should be willing to commit to participating in response activities when possible. OWCN's mandate includes responding to spills that affect wildlife within the state of California, therefore, responders should be residents of the state.
- ◆ *At least 18 years of age.*

Spill responders must be at least 18 years old, therefore you must be 18 to register in the database and participate in OWCN trainings and other activities.

Member Organization Contacts are responsible for encouraging registration and assisting their organization's staff and volunteers through the registration process. Registration is not open to the public.

New Volunteers

There are four steps to become active:

- 1) Register with OWCN (contact the NVADG OWCN Coordinator for the link).
- 2) Take the following four online courses, which will qualify you as a pre-trained OWCN Volunteer:
 - a. OWCN Overview Registration Link:
 - b. Effects of Oil on Wildlife Registration Link:
 - c. Field Operations Overview Registration Link:
 - d. Intro to Facility Operations Registration Link:
- 3) If you wish to take additional trainings that will qualify you for getting potentially hired at the Staff level during an oil spill, you will need to take a 24-hour HAZWOPER class. The OWCN coordinates locations and schedules for these trainings and there are usually 3-4 that take place in various locations around California each year. If interested, contact spbuhl@ucdavis.edu for a schedule.
- 4) There are additional trainings that you will need to take, although OWCN is reorganizing their training program at the moment. Details on this new program will be out soon.

Contacts

Oiled Wildlife Care Network
One Health Institute/Wildlife Health Center
1089 Veterinary Dr. VM3B
School of Veterinary Medicine
University of California, Davis, CA 95616

Office: 530-752-4693

Fax: 530-752-3318

Reporting Hotline: 877-UCD-OWCN

www.owcn.org

Director: Michael Ziccardi DVM PhD
mhziccardi@ucdavis.edu

Field Operations Coordinator: Kyra Mills-Parker
kyparker@ucdavis.edu
Office: 530-752-4693
Cell: 530-979-7690

Field Operations Specialist: Scott Buhl
spbuhl@ucdavis.edu
Cell: 530-902-3484

Appendix/Forms included with this document

- ◆ Invoice for Work Performed on Oiled Wildlife
- ◆ Personnel Services and Travel Expenses
- ◆ Telephone and Miscellaneous Expenses

Invoice # _____
PCA # _____
Index # _____

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Today's date: _____

INVOICE FOR WORK PERFORMED ON OILED WILDLIFE

Name of OWCN Participant: _____ Taxpayer I.D.: _____

Address where payment should be sent: _____

Contact: _____ Phone #: _____ Fax #: _____

Spill Event _____ Inclusive dates of services: _____

In addition to submitting this form, please attach the Oiled Wildlife Care Network Intake Form and the Live Bird Data Log(Appendix A of your protocols) for each oiled animal treated. State procedures for payment of services require that the State can only pay for actual costs of services rendered and that all charges are supported by a detailed itemization. Billable costs include personnel services, supplies used, travel, telephone charges, and any other costs that are directly associated with the services provided. In addition, please complete the attached detailed expense sheets and enclose copies of all receipts.

Subtotal Personnel Expenses:	_____
Subtotal Travel Expenses:	_____
Subtotal Telephone Expenses:	_____
Miscellaneous Expenses:	_____
Non-University Differential Rate (10%)	_____
Subtotal Individual Animal Expenses:	_____
Total this invoice:	\$ -

If this invoice is being submitted by an individual for services performed, such as a veterinarian, you must sign below and provide your Social Security number

Signature

SS#

Invoice # _____

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Personnel Services Expenses

Date	Name	Classification	Task Performed (e.g., washing, rescue)	Cost per Day	Total # of days	Total Cost
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -

Subtotal: \$ _____

Travel Expenses (please attach all receipts)

Date	Per Diem	Transportation (Mileage, Airfare, etc.)	Lodging	Miscellaneous (Parking, Tolls, Fuel)	Total Cost
					\$ -
					\$ -
					\$ -
					\$ -
					\$ -
					\$ -
					\$ -
					\$ -
					\$ -
					\$ -

Subtotal: \$ _____

Invoice # _____

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Telephone Expenses (please attach and highlight telephone charges)

Date	Purpose	Reimbursement Total

Subtotal \$ _____ -

Miscellaneous Expenses (please list any miscellaneous expenses not covered on the previous pages and attach all receipts.)

Date	Description of Expense	Amount

Subtotal \$ _____ -