

POLICY DIRECTIVE MEMORANDUM

Alert
State of Alaska

**Oil Spill Project
Coordination Office**

**Department of Natural Resources
July 24, 1989**

[Signature]
**Subject: Documentation Standards /
Physical Evidence Preservation**

REFERENCE: OSPCO PDM - 3

The DNR Oil Spill Project Coordination Office is responsible for collecting and archiving all DNR documentation related to the Prince William Sound T/V Exxon Valdez Oil Spill. The Oil Spill Project Coordination Office will track this documentation for use by the Attorney General's Office in oil-spill related litigation. There are two main types of material requiring documentation - written material including field reports, general correspondence, photographs, etc.; and physical evidence.

All divisions involved in the Oil Spill Project will provide the OSPCO Office with originals of oil-spill related documentation. Material should be sent to the following address:

Oil Spill Project Coordination Office
Department of Natural Resources
3601 C Street
P.O. Box 107005
Anchorage, Alaska 99510-7005

Attention: Plans / Documentation Officer

WRITTEN MATERIAL / PHOTOGRAPHS / MAPS:

This documentation may include, but not be limited to, the following items: memorandums; general correspondence - both within agency and interagency; photographs; video and audio tapes; field notes and books; MAC, ISCC, and other field response team minutes; permits; completed beach survey forms; mapping information; situation reports; Exxon cleanup plans and publications; CERCLA/damage assessment plans, data and study reports; and other data.

Divisions will provide the OSPCO with all available oil-spill related documentation, retroactive to the date of the spill, by August 1, 1989. Subsequent documentation will be submitted to the OSPCO on a weekly basis to maintain currency of information.

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If only one copy of a document is available and the division would like to retain a record of this document, OSPCO will file the original and return a xerox copy to the division. When transferring your documentation to the OSPCO office, please indicate if you would like a xerox copy for your records.

Two sets of Guidelines established by the Attorney General's Office in relation to the oil spill have been developed for state employees working on the spill (Attachment A). The Guidelines For Public Statements Regarding The Oil Spill By State Employees sets forth some guidelines to use in discussing the oil spill, the subsequent cleanup and damage assessments. The Guidelines For Collection and Preservation of Oil Spill Evidence By State Employees Involved in Response and Cleanup sets forth some guidelines concerning collection of evidence, chain of custody, and documentation of what has been observed and of what you have been doing.

Field notes and photos submitted will utilize the Tips For Field Notes & Photos (Attachment B) as a guideline for both preparation and submittal. This addresses both the basics of taking field notes, preparing a photo log and other helpful hints. Sample field notes are included in Attachment B to assist the field personnel in setting up their "Rite in the Rain" field note books. It is very important that you provide as much information as possible in the field books. Slides submitted shall note the location of the photo, what the slide is of, the date the slide was taken and who took the slide.

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE / CHAIN OF CUSTODY:

In the course of field reconnaissance DNR employees will frequently collect physical evidence of the spill in order to document issues of concern to the department. If physical evidence is taken it should be logged in field books and labeled to indicate where the evidence was taken, date, description of evidence and identification of the person obtaining the evidence. Physical evidence could include photographs, slides, tape recordings, videos, dead animals, oiled vegetation, or other forms of physical evidence.

Attached to this memorandum are copies of photograph log sheets, physical evidence log sheets, and chain of custody physical evidence tags. These should be completed in as much detail as possible and carefully transferred with the physical evidence. When evidence is transferred from one individual to another the record of custody blocks on the physical evidence tag must be filled in and signed. If physical evidence is transferred via the mail, it must be sent either certified or

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registered mail. When a chain of custody is required -
confidential material or highly sensitive material -
registered mail should be used.

If there are any questions regarding transfer of physical evidence or the preservation of documents related to the oil spill, please contact the DNR Oil Spill Project Coordination Office. When in doubt err on the side of preserving too much information.

This information should be provided to all DNR people involved in the oil spill.

Attachments