

## Emergency Action Plan Template and Guidance Document

This document was developed to assist at-sea monitoring (ASM) and electronic monitoring (EM) service providers in creating a complete and thorough Emergency Action Plan (EAP). EAPs are a critical resource when responding to emergency situations. The document describes critical elements that should be included in an EAP and includes a suggested Table of Contents providers may use to structure their EAPs.

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### Emergency Action Plan Critical Elements:

- EAPs should include the following information:
  - **Provider and National Marine Fisheries Service's Fishery Monitoring & Research Division (FMRD) list of contacts**
    - Contact information for provider staff and detail on the role of staff - list duties for each individual as they apply to emergency situations.
  - **Provider after hours coverage and business hours coverage details.**
  - **Communication plans** (between provider and FMRD, observer, United States Coast Guard (USCG), Office of Law Enforcement (OLE), emergency services, physicians, observer's/EM technician's emergency contact(s), and other parties) should be detailed, including which provider staff member is responsible.
    - Specify action items and responsible parties such as setting up check in schedules with observer/EM technicians.
    - Include 911 and VHF radio instructions (channel 16) in contacts.
    - Include a timeline for providers to take action if they are notified first of an emergency.
    - Include important contact info (OLE 24 hr hotline, USCG district contacts)
    - Provider staff handling each step in an emergency response should be clearly listed.
  - **Detail what action(s) the company would take in an emergency situation** (not just the observer).
    - Will the provider be able to meet observers/EM technicians at the dock in the event of a vessel emergency? Will they be able to coordinate travel between ports?
    - Providers should include a detailed checklist for Supervisory Staff emergency response, including multiple scenarios, who is responsible for which tasks, who they should be contacting within FMRD, or outside of the Agency such as the observers emergency contact.
    - Define emergency response staff hierarchy (i.e. Who is the primary contact at the provider company that should be contacted first by FMRD staff? Does this change with region or program? How will the provider designate emergency contact changes in the event that staff are unavailable? How will FMRD staff know who to contact in this situation?).

- Create a checklist or steps for staff to follow during an emergency and post-emergency steps.
- **Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) issuance, storage, maintenance, and documentation.**
  - Provider issued PLB information as tracked by provider, including employee name, unit Unique Identifying Number (15 or 23 digit alphanumeric code used to register PLBs), registration expiration, and battery expiration. Providers should also include who they have registered as the primary emergency contact and secondary emergency contact.
    - In NOAA Search And Rescue Satellite Aided Tracking (SARSAT) registration, it is highly recommended to include a comment along the lines of "This PLB is registered to a NOAA Fisheries Observer or Monitor. In the event of an emergency activation, responding agencies should make every attempt to directly speak to the NOAA Fisheries Observer or Monitor if in communication by VHF radio to confirm their wellbeing and reason for activation."
- **InReach usage** for emergencies at sea should be noted in the EAP.
- **How minor vs major injuries will be documented, communicated, and addressed.**
  - Include examples of minor and major injuries.
- **Provider support** for observers/EM technicians after an incident (there are many resources available - please reach out to FMRD staff for information).
- **Contagion control plan** at-sea and on land (MRSA, bed bugs, etc.)
- **Provide details on reporting requirements** by provider and observer/EM technicians to NMFS and how reports will be submitted.
  - Any internal tracking and documentation by the provider
  - This includes the submission of incident reports to NMFS by observers/EM technicians.
  - Timeline for observers/EM technicians to a) report incidents to FMRD and b) report incidents to provider staff
  - Detailed information explaining how observers/EM technicians will report information to provider staff and how provider staff will document and communicate to FMRD, including: physical/sexual harassment, intimidation, vessel safety concerns, and injuries.
- **List emergency scenarios and provider response**, including: illness, injury, harassment, sexual assault, sexual harassment, intimidation, death of crew, death of observer/EM technician, fire, vessel breakdown, flooding, sinking, medevacs and other at-sea emergencies.
  - Timelines for communication should be specified for each emergency scenario.

## Suggested Table of Contents for Service Provider’s Emergency Action Plans

1. Contact list - provider, FMRD staff
2. Coverage plan (after hours and business hours)
3. Communication plan
4. Action plan
5. Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) plan
6. InReach plan
7. Documentation of major/minor injuries
8. Provider support post-incident
9. Contagion control plans
10. Reporting
11. Emergency scenarios (see sample table)

### Sample Emergency Scenarios Table\*

Scenario	Response	Response Timeline
Illness	<i>Example: Assuming the observer is conscious, in the event that an observer falls ill at sea, the following steps should be taken: 1) The observer should notify the captain of illness and symptoms, and 2) attempt to contact the supervisor using Inreach. The supervisor should: 1) contact FMRD, and 2) arrange to meet the vessel upon landing.</i>	<i>All steps should be taken immediately (6 hours or less) following notification of illness.</i>
Injury	<i>Example: Assuming the observer is conscious, if an observer is injured at sea, the following steps will be taken: 1) The observer notifies the captain that they have been injured; 2) the observer reaches out to their provider and FMRD using their InReach; 3) the provider establishes a communication plan with the observer and evaluates next steps to address the injury; 4) the provider reaches out to FMRD to discuss next steps</i>	<i>All steps should be taken immediately by the observer and provider staff member on duty.</i>
Medical Evacuation (Medevac)	<i>Example: In the event an observer suffers a severe injury or illness, it may be necessary to consult the USCG as a part of the evaluation of the injury to determine if the observer needs to be medically evacuated from the vessel. The following steps will be taken: 1) After determining the injury or illness warrants immediate medical attention, the provider should instruct the observer to ask the captain</i>	<i>All steps should be taken immediately by the observer and provider staff member on duty.</i>

	<i>to contact the USCG via VHF radio Ch. 16 for a medical evaluation; 2) if the USCG determines the observer should be medically evacuated, the observer should communicate this to the provider; 3) the provider should inform FMRD of the planned medical evacuation, and the planned destination and ETA as it becomes available; 4) arrange to meet the observer at the healthcare facility.</i>	
Death of observer		
Death of crew		
Intimidation		
Harassment		
Sexual harassment		
Sexual assault		
Vessel breakdown	<i>Example: The vessel suffers a mechanical failure of some kind that impedes the vessel's ability to return to port or continue fishing. The following steps will be taken: 1) the observer notifies FMRD and their provider using their InReach; 2) provider staff determines if the USCG has been notified and if help is on the way and establishes a communication plan; 3) the provider initiates communication with FMRD staff; 4) provider staff monitor the situation until the vessel lands and meet the boat at the dock</i>	<i>Steps 1-3 should be initiated immediately, step 4 once the situation has been resolved.</i>
Fire		
Flooding		
Vessel Sinking		

\* Geared toward at sea observers, can be modified for EM technicians.