



The Coast Guard Director of Emergency Management (CG-5RI) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Office of Response and Restoration Director (NOAA OR&R) celebrate the signing of an agreement wherein our offices have agreed to partner in the development and use of the NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration's Environmental Response Management Application (ERMA®) as the Common Operational Picture (COP), reaffirming the designation of ERMA as the USCG COP for Marine Environmental Response planning and preparedness activities in support of the attainment of the USCG statutory Marine Environmental Protection mission.

The attached text in Enclosure 1 associated with this agreement provides background, purpose, terms, and conditions that are relevant to our communities of practice. This further explains ERMA use in exercises, training, and events, best practices in data management, important types of data sharing in the preparedness phase, and general concepts for core capabilities and regular enhancements to be provided by NOAA. We further recognize that this collaboration on incident preparedness complements a NOAA OR&R agreement with the National Pollution Fund Center applicable to Federal On-Scene Coordinator support during spills (Enclosure 2).

We look forward to seeing the continued partnership and benefits of data management, sharing, and visualization advanced by this important agreement. Congratulations to the staff for the teamwork embodied in this renewed agreement fully signed on September 28, 2023.

Handwritten signature of Dana Tulis in black ink.

Dana Tulis  
United States Coast Guard  
Director, Emergency Management

Handwritten signature of Scott Lundgren in black ink.

Scott Lundgren  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
Director, Office of Response and Restoration

Enclosures:

- 1) [Agreement between U.S. Coast Guard Emergency Management Directorate, Office of Marine Environmental Response Policy and NOAA National Ocean Service, Office of Response and Restoration regarding the Environmental Response Management Application: Statement of background, purpose, terms and conditions associated with 7600A Agreement #12744 dated September 28, 2023](#)
- 2) [Agreement between NOAA OR&R and Coast Guard National Pollution Funds Center for funding and reimbursement in support of Federal On-Scene Coordinators for oil and/or hazardous substance removal and federal trustees to initiate assessment of natural resource damages. MOA-2020-103 #12022 dated September 11, 2020](#)

## **ERMA COP Agreement (7600A); NOAA Tracking # 12744**

### **Attachment 1:**

#### **Background and Purpose; Terms and Agreement Statement between NOAA and USCG**

##### **Background and Purpose:**

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the United States Coast Guard (USCG) have agreed to partner in the development and use of the NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration Environmental Response Management Application (ERMA®) as the Common Operational Picture (COP). This agreement will serve to reaffirm the designation of ERMA as the USCG COP for Marine Environmental Protection mission attainment.

The purpose of this agreement is to standardize the use of ERMA® as the COP for USCG-led training, exercises, and responses to discharges of oil and releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, and contaminants as mandated by the National Contingency Plan (NCP), the National Response Framework, and authorizing legislation (Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90) and the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). Additionally, the ERMA COP can be used to support natural disaster responses, such as hurricanes or tsunamis in the navigable waters of the United States and territories, whether under the Stafford Act or NCP authorities. This agreement intends to provide a formal framework for policy decisions, in-kind and developmental funding, and using the ERMA COP to support USCG activities in order to improve the COP and the ability to support decision-making in response timeframes.

NOAA designed ERMA with a focus on environmental and scientific information. It can display a wide variety of information, such as operational weather information, vessel tracking, field sensors, and other near real-time information. However, this is contingent upon the information being served for ingestion and display. ERMA is principally for visualizing spatial information on basemaps and underlying spatially linked data. While ERMA does not automate the incident planning process, documentation capture, or similarly critical response functions, it can share spatial data with systems that perform and augment these functions. Automated work-flows can be established, and secure data sharing can be implemented to facilitate transfer to and from other systems.

##### **Terms and Conditions**

- A. Activities listed below in subparts B - D will be completed using a combination of USCG resources and NOAA in-kind services determined by NOAA and USCG. Activity in subpart E will be contingent on the scope of enhancements. As the enhancements significantly increase the development cost of ERMA in such a way that NOAA cannot support such expenditures with base resources, NOAA will collaborate with USCG to determine feasibility of enhancements, and develop the appropriate scope of work (SOW) and cost estimate for – potential USCG funding for these enhancements. Agreed upon enhancements may be executed through a 7600B SOW under this umbrella 7600A ERMA COP agreement.

- B. ERMA and NOAA tools during Exercises/Training and Events: NOAA supports training and exercises for USCG Units nationwide. ERMA may be used as the COP for the following:
- a. USCG's National-Level Preparedness for Exercise Program (PREP) exercises;
  - b. Table top, functional, or full scale exercises and drills;
  - c. Incident Command System (ICS) Type I and Type II exercises/training and events;
  - d. Provide data visualization of Geographic Response Strategies (GRS) or Abandoned and Derelict Vessels (ADV) for USCG Units; and
  - e. Annual training coordinated between NOAA and USCG personnel.
- C. Promote best practices in data management: ERMA is most effective with response support for data sharing agreements and information management as per Chapter I 2 of the Incident Management Handbook (U.S. Coast Guard COMDTPUB P3 I 20. I 7 series) and the U.S National Response Team (NRT) Response Data Sharing Plan template for Marine Spills (nrt.org). ERMA draws upon numerous authoritative data sources (e.g., EPA, FEMA, NOAA, USCG, States, other federal agencies, and responsible party information systems).

These requirements provide an opportunity for NOAA/USCG interface and particularly to work with the responsible party's data management systems to ensure that the federal government has access to and stewardship of that data.

- D. Critical Data Ingest and Sharing for ERMA employment: NOAA will work with USCG to develop standardized approaches for data integration including Geographic Response Strategies (GRS), Abandoned and Derelict Vessels (ADV), remote sensing/UxS systems/data, as well as leveraging data sharing agreements/data management plans, and data management systems (DIVER, Field Data Server). NOAA will aid USCG in its data collection/ingest and data stewardship requirements in support of the Director, Emergency Management (CG-5RI), the Federal On-Scene Coordinator for exercises and other preparedness activities and/or USCG units requesting specific development.
- E. ERMA Core Capabilities: NOAA OR&R has committed to continuing the ongoing core capabilities and priorities for required software and hardware maintenance, including application testing, hardware and software refresh (updates, replacement), systems backup, systems configuration and software infrastructure (operating system and updates), and non-event based user account and management as well as adherence to all NOAA IT protocol and requirements.
- F. ERMA Enhancements: NOAA expects to continue to enhance ERMA related to the parties' mutual interests and will seek to accommodate partner needs within these improvements. Such enhancements may relate to the ERMA display and tools, data exchange approaches and arrangements with USCG or other partners, and

development of displayed data, such as environmental sensitivity or priority protection data and underlying predictive tools or models that generate spatial data. Requested enhancements beyond NOAA's core development priorities will need to be funded through a targeted 7600B SOW developed under this interagency agreement. This agreement does not commit USCG funding towards ERMA enhancements without these specific SOW-described activities.