

Transport options for mobilizing equipment and personnel are summarized in Table 1-5 of the ODPCP. These options vary with the season and weather conditions, and include marine vessels, helicopters, fixed-wing aircraft, road vehicles, hovercraft, and Rolligons. ACS Technical Manual, Volume 1, Tactics L-1, L-3, L-4, and L-6, provide detailed information on transportation and are incorporated here by reference.

Onshore areas of Nikaitchuq are on the North Slope gravel road infrastructure, allowing transport via highway vehicles. During the open water season, SID is accessible via barge, crew boat, and other boats. During most winters, Eni may build an ice road from OPP to SID, allowing access by highway vehicles. When an ice road is constructed, it is usually available for use between early to mid-February to mid to late May. Start and end dates vary from year to year, depending on weather and other factors. During winters when an ice road is not constructed, Eni will give close consideration to accessibility to spill response equipment. Spill response equipment that cannot be transported to SID via available means (e.g., hovercraft or helicopter) will be maintained on site until adequate transportation means are available.

During the times of year when SID is not accessible via either marine vessels or highway vehicles, Eni plans to continue to use a hovercraft to transport personnel, supplies, and equipment to SID.

Transportation times would be unaffected by freeze-up and breakup conditions for modes of transport other than vessels. ACS bay boats can be used to transit in ice up to 4 inches thick during freeze-up, but with some limitations. Other vessels would not be used during this time. During breakup, ACS vessel response is limited to airboats. Other transport options then could be hovercraft and helicopter.

The ice road to SID would be generally unsuitable for surface travel after mid to late May due to melting of the surface of the sea ice and/or potential overflowing from the Colville River breakup. During freeze-up, ice is either unable to support surface traffic or is unstable because of ice movement. Normally, ice will not be sufficiently thick or stable for surface transportation until after mid to late December.

Transportation to SID during the spring breakup (May and June) period would be generally limited to helicopters, hovercraft, airboats, and possibly small-tracked/wheeled all-terrain vehicles (ATVs). ATVs would be less likely to be used during freeze-up due to the possible occurrence of thin ice or patches of open water due to relative instability of ice.

North Slope-based helicopters typically have limited capabilities but could be available relatively rapidly from various Alaska locations in the event of emergencies. If needed, larger, heavy-lift helicopters would likely be mobilized from the Lower 48 states and could require up to a week to arrive on site. General information on availability and capabilities of various Alaska-based helicopters are in the ACS Technical Manual, Volume 1, Tactic L-4.

Washout of the Kuparuk River bridge, which may occur for a few days between mid-May and mid-June, could impact spill response times. Deployment times vary, depending on availability, location, and weather conditions. When the river precludes bridge traffic, Nikaitchuq may rely more on Mutual Aid resources from Kuparuk, and some equipment could be transported to the area via aircraft landing at the Kuparuk airstrip.

Marine vessel access is available from approximately July through September to mid-October. ACS has contracts with the major North Slope marine contractors.