

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



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DEC 07 2009

Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council
Attn: Kitty M. Simonds, Executive Director
1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1400
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Executive Director ~~Simonds~~ *Kitty*:

I'm writing in response to your letter of November 9th addressed to RADM Brown, the District Fourteen Commander, regarding debris removal in Pago Pago Harbor. As the Federal On Scene Coordinator for the waters surrounding American Samoa, I oversaw a specific part of the tsunami response for pollution and hazmat. Non-contaminated debris removal, which you describe in your letter, is an Emergency Support Function (ESF) mission number 3 under the National Response Framework. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is the responsible federal agency for ESF-3, which covers public works and engineering. Consequently, the Army Corps of Engineers would require a mission assignment directly from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to conduct the specific work you are requesting.

The U.S. Coast Guard's operations were conducted in American Samoa within the scope of our mission assignment under ESF-10, which exclusively covers pollution and hazmat response. Our contracts with the Pacific Environmental Company (PENCO) and SOLAR, Inc, were specific in nature and limited to the recovery and removal of oil and hazardous material spilled as a result of the tsunami. Under the ESF-10 assignment, our Coast Guard personnel managed the removal of 600 gallons of oil, 40 gallons of hazardous materials, 90 batteries, 28 cylinders, 26 drums, and 11 vehicles from Pago, Pago Harbor. Additionally, on scene Coast Guard representatives directed PENCO to conduct a survey of the harbor by using both divers and sonar throughout the search and recovery of hazardous materials. No significant hazards to navigation were noted during the survey, and I am currently unaware of any specific hazards to navigation in the harbor.

Furthermore, the Stafford Act applies following a Presidential disaster declaration. FEMA has the authority to provide assistance to affected parties to remove debris from public and private property. This is applicable during a high level of public interest and when it is necessary to eliminate immediate threats to public safety, or to ensure the economic recovery of an impacted community. In your particular case, the best recommended course of action to elicit removal of any remaining non-contaminated debris from the harbor is a direct application for assistance to FEMA by the American Samoa Government.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. A. Compagnoni".

B. A. COMPAGNONI
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
Federal On Scene Coordinator