Interview Process Overview

I. Pre-Interview Process

- **Identify Focus Areas**: Team members identified focus areas during the Initial Planning Conference.
    - Individual(s) Responsible: Team members
    - Timeline: Complete
- **Identify Initial List of Interviewees**: Team members identified potential interviewees during the Initial Planning Conference.
    - Individual(s) Responsible: Team members
    - Timeline: Complete
- **Draft Focus Area Questions**: Team members will draft interview questions for each focus area. Each focus area will have its own question generation form saved on Homeport. **IF TEAM MEMBERS DO NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE QUESTION GENERATION PROCESS, THEY WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO ASK QUESTIONS FOR THEIR ASSIGNED FOCUS AREAS DURING THE ACTUAL INTERVIEWS.** ***See Interview Question Generation Form for additional details***.
    - Individual(s) Responsible: Team members
    - Timeline: Ongoing
- **Initial Phone Call to Interviewee**: Potential interviewees will be contacted to discuss their participation in the process.
    - Individual(s) Responsible: Team Vice Chairman
    - Timeline: To occur 14-21 days before potential interview
- **Formal Invitation Letter to Interviewee**: Interviewees will be sent a letter outlining the process and inviting their participation. ***See Interview Invitation Letter for additional details***.
    - Individual(s) Responsible: Team Support Leader
    - Timeline: To be sent no less than 14 days before potential interview
- **Formal Confirmation Letter**: Letter will confirm interview details (e.g., location, time, and the focus areas covered during interview).
    - Individual(s) Responsible: Team Support Staff Leader
    - Timeline: To be sent by the Team Support Leader 7-10 days before interview
- **Link Specific Focus Areas/Questions to Specific Interviewees**: Finalize interview form for each interviewee. ***See Interview Summary Form for additional details***.
    - Individual(s) Responsible: Team members and support staff
    - Timeline: To occur 3-7 days before potential interview
- **Reminder E-mail and Phone Call**: E-mail and phone call will reconfirm all interview details.
    - Individual(s) Responsible: The Team Chairman, Vice Chairman, or Team Support Staff Leader
    - Timeline: E-mail to be sent 1-2 days before interview; phone call to be made one day prior to scheduled interview

II. Interview Execution Process

See Interview Script for additional details.

- **Introduction of Team Members**: Introduce each individual Team member and provide a brief background for each individual present. This should take no more than 3-5 minutes.
- **Brief Review of the Purpose of the Team**: Review the purpose of the Team.
- **Process Overview**: Review the process and timeline. NOTE: Ensure every person interviewed is informed that the intention of the Team's report is to improve processes and procedures, correct that which needs to be corrected, and capitalize on successes (best practices) for future events. The final report will essentially be the Team's analysis of what was heard during interviews process and a thorough assessment of all incident-related documentation. **ENSURE THAT EACH INTERVIEWEE UNDERSTANDS THAT SPECIFIC INFORMATION OBTAINED DURING THE INTERVIEW WILL NOT BE DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO ANY ONE PERSON IN THE TEAM'S FINAL REPORT, ALTHOUGH ALL INDIVIDUALS NAMES WILL BE MENTIONED IN THE LIST OF INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEWED SECTION OF THE REPORT.**
- **Interview Time Limit**: Although the Team Support Staff has scheduled 2 hour blocks, each interview should last no more than 1 hour. A member of the Team should be appointed timekeeper to ensure the interview stays on schedule. NOTE: There may be some exceptions to this time limit, depending on circumstances such as numbers of interviews scheduled at a particular place, availability of interviewees, changes in schedule, all of which may affect available time (may have more or less time). Also, if there is a particular focus area for which you need more information from a key individual, you may require additional time.
- **Initial Interview Questions**: The following general questions should be asked of everyone to get a baseline of information. Where this information is known in advance, use this as an opportunity to verify that the information is correct:

  1. What was your job title/role during the first 30 days of the DEEPWATER HORIZON (DH) Incident?
  2. To whom did you report during the first 30 days of the DH Incident?
  3. Who reported to you?
  4. Where were you physically located during the first 30 days of the DH Incident?
  5. What were your primary duties during the first 30 days of the DH Incident?
- **Focus Area Interview Questions**: The interview should be limited to 10-15 questions only (per interview) to keep the interview brief and focused. Identify which Team member will ask each question prior to the initiation of the interview. While it is expected that the pre-determined questions will guide the entire interview, as things evolve, you may find you are developing your own expanded list of questions. This is okay as long as you document why you are deviating from the agreed-upon interview questions.
- **Final Interview Questions**: Ask each interviewee these three final questions:

  1. What were the top 2 "best practice(s)" during this incident, from your perspective?
  2. What do you assess to be the top 2 "areas needing improvement" (or downright "failures") from your perspective, and do you have any related recommendations regarding these areas?
  3. Who else should we interview?
- **Prompter Questions:** Interviews may bog down for a variety of reasons. For example, the interviewee may be non-responsive to posed questions or the interview could potentially end too early. Use these "prompter" questions to keep the conversation moving:

- *How was your experience with regard to your assignment?*
- *Did you have all the tools you needed to do your job, including sufficient training?*
- *Did you understand the organizational structure and how you fit into it?*
- *Were your responsibilities clearly delineated?*
- *What were your biggest challenges?*
- *What gave you the greatest satisfaction?*
- *If you could change anything, what would it be?*

III. Post-Interview Process

- **Provide Interviewee Team Support Staff Contact Information**: E-mail each person interviewed. Provide them the opportunity to submit any further information or additional commentary. This e-mail will also advise each person interviewed that they may be contacted again if additional questions arise as the interview process continues.
    - Individual(s) Responsible: Team Support Staff Leader
    - Timeline: One day post-interview
- **Draft Interview Notes**: The Team Support Staff will generate a summary of each interview in a question and answer format. ***See Interview Summary Form for additional details***.
    - Individual(s) Responsible: Team Support Staff
    - Timeline: Within one week post-interview
- **Send Formal Thank-You Letter**: Interviewees will be sent a letter thanking them for their participation in the process. ***See Interview Thank-You Letter for additional details***.
    - Individual(s) Responsible: Team Support Staff Leader
    - Timeline: One week post-interview
- **Draft Focus Area Summary Sheets**: The Team Support Staff will compile all similar interview answers and generate a summary sheet for each focus area. ***See Focus Area Summary for additional details***.
    - Individual(s) Responsible: Team Support Staff
    - Timeline: One week after all interviews are completed
- **Draft Team Report**: The Team Support Staff will compile all focus areas into the draft the Team's Report.
    - Individual(s) Responsible: Team Support Staff
    - Timeline: TBD

Interview Script

The following script should be used to guide each interview:

- **<u>Introduction of Team Members</u>:**

  I am ________, the Chair/Vice Chair/Team member for the Deepwater Horizon Incident Specific Preparedness Review Team. The Team is comprised of persons from outside the Coast Guard, to allow an independent perspective of the response. All members of this Team have signed confidentiality agreements.
  (Introduce each individual Team member.)
- **<u>Brief Review of the Purpose of the Team</u>:**

  The purpose of this Team is to examine the implementation and effectiveness of the response to this spill within the confines of the applicable plans-the ACPs, One Gulf Plan, the NCP, etc. The Team has identified key issues they believe are most important to assessing preparedness and evaluating oil spill response, as mandated by the NCP and its intersection with the NRF and HSPD-5. This Team will serve as a fact-finding body to review response and recovery operations in connection with this incident. It will also identify strengths and weaknesses of the overall preparedness system in effect at the time of the incident. It may be used to inform actions by the Coast Guard and others to produce positive, effective preparedness improvements that will be used to inform the preparedness process of the Coast Guard, its agency partners, industry and the Nation.
- **<u>Process Overview</u>:**

  The Team is in the process of conducting a series of personal and/or telephonic interviews with Federal and State leaders and responders to gather data and hear perspectives of responders at all levels the response in order to determine where attention or corrective actions are required. YOU AND ALL OF THOSE INTERVIEWED ARE ASKED TO BE CANDID IN YOUR RESPONSES AND ARE ASSURED THAT THE SOURCES OF SPECIFIC INFORMATION WILL REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL AND WILL NOT BE DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTABLE IN THE TEAM'S FINAL REPORT. THAT SAID, YOUR NAME WILL BE MENTIONED IN THE LIST OF INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEWED IN THE FINAL REPORT. Information obtained during this interview will be compared to the Team's research and other interviews to produce a factual account of events and details surrounding the incident.
- **<u>Interview Time Limit</u>:**

  Each interview is expected to last no more than an hour in duration.
  (It is important that the team leader inform all interviewees in advance of this time limitation, adjusting as necessary to meet schedule.) <u>It is recommended that a timekeeper be appointed, who will give a polite "five-minute warning." Make interviewee aware up front that this will happen.</u>

- **<u>Initial Interview Questions</u>**:

  The following general questions should be asked of everyone to get a baseline of information. Where this information is known in advance, use this as an opportunity to verify that the information is correct:

  - ***What was your job/role and how did it evolve (if at all) during the DEEPWATER HORIZON Incident?***

- **Focus Area Interview Questions**:

The interview should be limited to 10-15 questions only (per interview) to keep the interview brief and focused. Identify which Team member will ask each question prior to the initiation of the interview. While it is expected that the pre-determined questions will guide the entire interview, as things evolve, you may find you are developing your own expanded list of questions. This is okay as long as you document why you are deviating from the agreed-upon interview questions.

- **Final Interview Questions**:

Three final questions asked of everyone are:

1. ***What were the top 2 "best practice(s)" during this incident, from your perspective?***
2. ***What do you assess to be the top 2 "areas needing improvement" (or downright "failures") from your perspective, and do you have any related recommendations regarding these areas?***
3. ***Who else should we interview?***

- **Prompter Questions:**

Interviews may bog down for a variety of reasons. For example, the interviewee may be non-responsive to posed questions or the interview could potentially end too early. Use these "prompter" questions to keep the conversation moving:

  - *How was your experience with regard to your assignment?*
  - *Did you have all the tools you needed to do your job, including sufficient training?*
  - *Did you understand the organizational structure and how you fit into it?*
  - *Were your responsibilities clearly delineated?*
  - *What were your biggest challenges?*
  - *What gave you the greatest satisfaction?*
  - *If you could change anything, what would it be?*