

VENEZUELA

SPILL NOTIFICATION POINT

Petroleos de Venezuela SA (PDVSA)
Av. Eugenio Mendoza, Centro Letonia, Torre ING Bank,
Piso 7, Urb. La Castellana, Distrito Capital 1064-A.

Tel: +58 212 274 7493
Cell : +58 412 3371744

Instituto Nacional de los Espacios Acuaticos (INEA)
Av. Orinoco, Entre Callas Perijá y Mucuchies
Edif. Sede Principal INEA Las Mercedes-Caracas Zona
Postal 1050, Caracas

Tel: +58 212 909 1430/1431
+58 212 909 1527/1529
Email : gtrafico@inea.gob.ve,
inea1@inea.gob.ve
Fax : +58 212 574 3021/9043
+58 212 909 1433

COMPETENT NATIONAL AUTHORITY

As above

RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS

The Venezuelan aquatic authority, INEA, with the support of the national oil company - Petroleos de Venezuela SA (PDVSA) – are the bodies responsible for contingency planning and response arrangements. The NCP is geared towards combating spills of between 100 and 60,000 barrels of oil. Under the NCP, the country is split into 5 Maritime Regional Zones and 2 River Based Zones. Each includes a warehouse with equipment and supplies for combating spills located at PDVSA facilities. At regional level, the NCP is coordinated by a Committee and a National Central Coordination group headed by the National Port Authority with the support of PDVSA and other ministries involved with the Plan. Small spills (less than 100 barrels) are dealt with by local contingency plans within each responsible installation or port facility. In the event of a spill, INEA is responsible for coordinating the movement of equipment and personnel through Customs.

RESPONSE POLICY

Venezuela's preferred response is firstly to arrest or control the spill at its source. Failing this, a containment and recovery operation using booms and skimmers would be mounted. According to information from RAC-REMPEITC (2015) it is not permitted to use dispersants in the country. In-situ burning would be permitted when conditions allow.

EQUIPMENT

Government & Private

Equipment spread through the regions includes over 62,000 feet of boom, skimmers with a total capacity of more than 10,000 barrels/hours, absorbent materials, dispersant equipment (2 aerial dispersant spraying sets for the Hercules G222 aircraft with 1,000 gallon capacity each, 4 dispersant spraying sets for helicopters with a 150 gallon dispersant capacity and 13 spraying sets for boats). PDVSA is a member of OSRL and would have access to the stockpile at their response base for the Americas (formerly CCA).

All the coastal areas have sensitivity maps and an oil dispersion simulation program (SIMAP) with scenarios and data collected in the last 10 years.

There is no specialised spill response equipment outside that of PDVSA.

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PREVIOUS SPILL EXPERIENCE

Venezuela, as a major oil producer with considerable tanker traffic, has suffered a number spills. As a consequence, the country has developed a well organised response procedure with modern equipment.

The NISSOS AMORGOS (1997) spilt an estimated 3,600 tonnes of crude after grounding in the Maracaibo Channel. 45km of beach was oiled with some oil sinking in the surf zone. Some local fishing was affected.

LPG tanker MAERSK HOLYHEAD (2005) was in collision with a bulk carrier close to the entrance to Lake Maracaibo, spilling an estimated 100 – 300 tonnes of IFO 338. Both at-sea and shoreline clean-up was undertaken. At the peak of operations, approximately 1,000 personnel and 100 fishing boats were involved in the clean-up and waste disposal.

Bulk carrier GDANSK (2011) ran aground outside Ferrominera Port, Puerto Ordaz, on the Orinoco River in Venezuela and an unknown quantity of fuel oil was lost from the vessel. As per the National Contingency Plan, a Committee (which comprised representatives of the Water Bodies Authority, PDVSA, the Ministry of Environment, the Harbour Master, the Fire Brigade and the National Guard) was established to oversee the response to the incident. The Committee requested that the ship-owner put measures in place to ensure adequate oil pollution prevention and response, and National Response Corporation (NRC) was contracted by the ship-owners to act as spill managers. The incident led to sporadic oiling along a 40km stretch down-river of the grounding site. Manual clean-up was undertaken on the shoreline, with the most difficult aspect of the response being the logistics, as most of the oiled sites were not accessible by road and could only be reached using small boats. At the height of the response over 100 local labourers and villagers were employed by the ship-owner to carry out the shoreline clean-up work, which was completed three months after the incident.

CONVENTIONS

Prevention & Safety					Spill Response		Compensation						
MARPOL 73/78		Annexes III IV V VI			OPRC '90	OPRC -HNS	CLC '69 '76 '92			Fund '92	Supp Fund	HNS*	Bunker
✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓			

* not yet in force



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REGIONAL AND BILATERAL AGREEMENTS

Cartagena Convention - the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in the Wider Caribbean Region (a comprehensive, umbrella agreement for the protection and development of the marine environment with states of the Wider Caribbean Region).

Operative Network for Regional Cooperation among Maritime Authorities of South America, Mexico, Panama & Cuba (ROCRAM).

Bilateral agreement with Trinidad & Tobago.

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