

BERMUDA

SPILL NOTIFICATION POINT

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COMPETENT NATIONAL AUTHORITY

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RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS

The National Oil Spill Contingency Plan for Bermuda has been approved and signed off by the ministers responsible for transport and the environment. The National Plan and response equipment has been assessed as part of a RETOS™ gap analysis and also by RAC-REMPEITC Caribe. The national plan is available at: <https://www.gov.bm/sites/default/files/BERMUDA-National-Oil-Spill-Contingency-Plan.pdf>.

Updates to the national stock of oil spill equipment in addition to funding for oil spill response training (ie IMO Level 1, 2, 3, ICS100/200/300, SCAT) have been provided from the Conflict Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) via the UK Maritime Coastguard Agency (MCA). The Incident Command, operated under the US Incident Command System (ICS), would be headed by the Incident Commander (IC) who would be a qualified person authorised by the Director of the Department of Environment & Natural Resources, with similar from the Director of Marine & Ports Services as the alternate IC. The IC would also report up to the Emergency Measures Organisation (EMO) who have responsibility for preparing for and responding to major incidents including hurricanes.

The IC would assign the various roles for the command staff in the Command Post and ensure that the operations, planning and logistical/finance sections are suitably established to a scale that is appropriate to address the spill, or the potential worst-case scale of the spill. In addition, several other government agencies would be involved in providing specialist advice and assistance including: the Coast Guard; Department of Environmental & Natural Resources; Marine & Ports Services; Department of Parks; Ministry of Public Works; Bermuda Fire & Rescue Service; Bermuda Police Service; Disaster Risk Reduction Team and the Royal Bermuda Regiment. Local ports are also required to have oil pollution emergency plans that interface up into the National Plan and, as such, can provide additional personnel with experience of responding to oil spills.

The Bermuda Maritime Operations Centre / Bermuda Radio serves as the primary Incident Command Post in addition to a range of other suitably equipped sub-centres around Bermuda. For Tier I and II local spills, the Command Post and staging areas are decided by the IC and can, based on the time of year, be more field-based with the use of suitable equipment to provide covered shelter.

The National Plan and associated equipment are considered appropriate to manage spills of up to 25 tonnes of persistent oil (ie Tier III) for the first 24-48 hours after the spill. The National Plan also allows for international assistance (See Bilateral Agreements below) to be provided in the case of larger incidents for which local resources are inadequate (ie Tier III after the first 24-48 hours). Notification

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procedures for assistance from private entities such as Oil Spill Response Ltd (OSRL) are also provided in Appendix 7 of the National Plan. Environmental sensitivity maps identifying priority areas for protection, clean-up and conservation have also been developed and are provided in Appendix 10 of the National Plan.

As a dependency of the United Kingdom, in the event of a major incident, further assistance would be sought from the UK MCA while regional agreements also exist with US Government counter-pollution agencies.

RESPONSE POLICY

Bermuda has a flexible policy regarding oil spill response techniques. Whilst containment and recovery of oil is usually the preferred approach, it is recognised that the exposed offshore waters and the complex coral reef structure make it difficult and hazardous to mount a major response. Dispersants are therefore considered an acceptable alternative, providing sufficient horizontal and vertical separation from coral reefs can be provided, and a policy detailing pre-approved areas for their use has been adopted.

Disposal of recovered oil is likely to be a major problem in the event of a large spill, due to the absence of space for direct disposal and the additional capacity that could be required from the municipal waste incinerator.

EQUIPMENT

Government

The Department of Environment & Natural Resources and the Department of Marine and Ports Services maintain at least 1000ft of harbour boom, anchor sets and various adsorbent products in each of the three main ports of Bermuda. This is located in buildings and shipping containers. Equipment including skimmers (off-shore and near-shore drum-type, weir-type and rope-mop types), pumps, fast tanks, dispersant application systems, etc.) are serviced and maintained from a single building. Dispersant pump systems with wands are already configured on two tugs operated by the Department of Marine & Ports Services in addition to a third smaller dispersant system that can be retrofitted to smaller vessels as required. See the National Plan, Appendix 9 for all equipment inventories and locations.

For shoreline clean-up, the main source of manpower would be the Royal Bermuda Regiment (RBR) Coast Guard unit, Department of Environment & Natural Resources, Department of Parks and Ministry of Public Works with guidance provided from the planning section of the Incident Command from personnel who are qualified and experienced in shoreline cleanup and assessment techniques (SCAT).

Private

Sol Petroleum Ltd and Rubis Energy (Bermuda) Ltd maintain oil spill response equipment including a dedicated oil spill response craft. These two oil companies are also members of OSRL who can provide support in terms of equipment and personnel within a 24-hour notification period. There are commercial contractors in Bermuda who operate work boats and maintain a small amount of equipment.

PREVIOUS SPILL EXPERIENCE

The TIFOSO (1983) grounded with a loss of some 30 tons of bunker fuel. This oil was taken out to sea by the prevailing wind and currents. The AGUILA AZTECA (1984) carrying 196,000 tonnes of crude oil grounded on a reef north of Bermuda for a few days over calm weather. A small amount of oil was spilt which required little clean-up. These tanker groundings led to the development of IMO Resolution A.573(14) to create an Area To Be Avoided (ATBA) to the west, north and east of the Bermuda Islands where off-shore reefs extend up to 10 miles out from the mainland. In addition, the construction of Aids to Navigation to better mark the reef edge through visual and electronic means and the installation of a VTS system to monitor and enforce the ATBA occurred, along with the purchase of two tugs with sufficient power to be able to tow disabled ships clear of the island's reefs.

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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*	Bunkers 2001
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		✓	

* Not yet in force

REGIONAL AND BILATERAL AGREEMENTS

An MOU agreement exists Between the Bermuda Government and the USA Government from 1976, with a recently completed Incident Response Guide. The MOU can provide assistance rendered on a reimbursement basis by the US Coast Guard and other US agencies accessed via the National Response Center (NRC).

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