

EGYPT

SPILL NOTIFICATION POINT

Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (for oil & HNS)

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Note: Notification should also be made to the nearest port operator, or in the Suez Canal to the Suez Canal Authority

COMPETENT NATIONAL AUTHORITY

The competent national authority for oil spill emergencies in Egypt is the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA - contact details above).

RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS

The Law for the Environment 1994 places sole responsibility for overseeing all strategic and operational aspects of spill response within the country with the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA). A National Oil Spill Contingency Plan was prepared in 1986 and is currently under review in order to conform to the requirements of the OPRC '90, with the aid of outside consultants. This outlines procedures for response to spills primarily from tankers in transit and relies on a co-ordinated response by both the public and private sectors.

For small tier 1 spills (<100m³) the local port authorities and oil companies are responsible for at sea response while the coastal governorates would provide an on-shore response. EEAA would be informed in all cases, and may agree for response co-ordination to be handed over to the Egyptian General Petroleum Corporation (EGPC). Only in exceptional circumstances would EEAA assume control of operations themselves. In principle, EEAA will take responsibility for co-ordinating a response to Tier 2 spills (>100m³) via operational sub-centres at Sidi Kerir for the Mediterranean and Ras Gherih for the Gulf of Suez. However, EEAA may delegate this role to EGPC through their Regional Response Plan. Tier 3 incidents are controlled by EEAA, usually from the National Response Centre in Alexandria. An Emergency Oil Spill Response Committee (EOSRC) composed of relevant government and industry personnel and outside experts, headed by the Chairman of the Ports and Lighthouses Administration, would be established to provide advice and assistance. Costs incurred by EGPC and individual facilities are reimbursed out of an Environmental Protection Fund, administered by the EEAA. Procedures to access the fund are currently being established as part of an on-going review.

Responsibility for shoreline clean-up rests with EEAA assisted by the coastal governorates. The EEAA has overall operational control, while the governorate involved is responsible for providing additional manpower, vehicles and beach cleaning equipment. The governorate, in consultation with the EEAA, is also responsible for determining the final disposal method of any recovered oil.

Complementing the National Plan is the Egyptian Petroleum Industry Oil Spill Contingency Plan, which provides for a response to spills from exploration and production facilities and from transshipment activities

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at terminals. Responsibility for spills from these sources rests with the Minister of Petroleum who, in practice, delegates this duty to EGPC. Individual oil companies are required by law to respond to spills generated at their own facilities and as such are required to have port/terminal specific contingency plans and equipment in place to be able to respond effectively to spills of up to 300 tonnes. Additional contingency plans have been drawn up by the Suez Canal Authority to respond to spills within the Canal itself and its approaches at Port Said and Suez. The four main ports in the country have also developed contingency plans along with the seven coastal governorates. All of the above plans are currently under review by EEAA in conjunction with the private companies, EGPC, port and regional authorities and the Ministry of Transport's (MMT) Ports and Lighthouses Administration (PLA), in order to update them and ensure their compatibility with national contingency arrangements.

EEAA in conjunction with the National Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries (NIOF) and the National Parks Department is in the process of producing a detailed sensitivity study of Egypt's coastline on a GIS system administered by the EEAA.

RESPONSE POLICY

Mechanical recovery of oil at sea is the preferred method of response. Where adverse weather conditions or strong currents preclude this, dispersant application is permitted. Prior approval must first be received from the EEAA. Guidelines for the application of dispersants are currently being prepared and will be strictly governed by the EEAA. It is envisaged that these will include a list of approved dispersants for use in Egyptian waters and a minimum depth of water in which they can be applied.

Disposal options for recovered liquid waste oil focus on sending for reprocessing through refineries or ballasting stations, and also by incineration. The disposal of solid waste material is likely to involve its use in road building, if appropriate, or land-farming. However, to date, no pre-existing managed land-farm sites have been identified. This is an issue currently under discussion as part of the review of the National Contingency Plan.

EQUIPMENT

Government

A sub-regional spill response centre and equipment stockpile - including an oil recovery boat, work boats and barges - has been established at Sharm el-Sheik. A further response centre is under development at Nuwieba. The Egyptian government does not maintain any other significant stocks of specialised response equipment and a certain reliance is placed upon the industry and port authorities.

Private

Individual oil industry companies each maintain their own equipment resources for dealing with spills resulting from their own operations. In contrast to the preference of the National Plan for mechanical recovery methods, the industry leans towards dispersant spraying.

Petro Environmental Services (PESCo), an international joint venture company established in January 2003, manages and operates four national Oil Spill Response Centres owned by the Egyptian General Petroleum Corporation (EGPC). It also manages and operates the Marine Pollution Response Centre located at the entrance of the Gulf of Aqaba on behalf of the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA).

The Suez Canal Authority also possesses an equipment stockpile, including containment and recovery equipment, dispersant, lightering barges and tugs available for use outside the Canal.

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The Port Authorities at the four main ports (Damietta, Suez, Port Said and Alexandria) all possess stocks of specialised equipment in order to provide an immediate response to spills from vessels in the harbours.

A private contractor, Maridive Oil Services, operates offshore clean-up equipment for use from platform supply vessels primarily in the Red Sea area and a small stock of containment and recovery equipment is maintained by an unknown source at El Hamra.

PREVIOUS SPILL EXPERIENCE

Egypt has suffered a number of medium-sized spills including the AL DURIYAH, (1983), the VIRGO (1987), and the ESSO PICARDIE (1989). Dispersant spraying was partially effective and shoreline clean-up was largely undertaken using earth-moving equipment. The recovered material was used in road and building foundations. The MILLION HOPE (1996) lost an unknown quantity of bunker fuel after grounding on a reef at the entrance to the Tiran Strait. The oil lightly contaminated 7.5km of sandy coastline. The KRITI SEA (1996) spilt approximately 50 tons of crude oil after experiencing steering difficulties in the Suez Canal. Although dispersant was applied and containment and recovery equipment was deployed, the oil contaminated shores of the Great Bitter Lake. In these latter cases, manual shoreline clean-up was undertaken.

In 2004 the GOOD HOPE lost approximately 1000 tons of light crude while loading at the Sidi Kerir Terminal near Alexandria. Some dispersant spraying took place, but the largest part of the spilled Arabian Light Crude is thought to have dispersed and evaporated naturally. No significant shoreline clean-up was required. The AL SAMIDOON (2004) incident arose from a grounding in the central reaches of the Suez Canal. Approximately 9000 tons of Kuwait Medium Crude was spilled. The response was handled entirely by the Suez Canal Authority (SCA), initially by the application of dispersants. As the oil moved north along the Canal efforts were made to recover the oil using booms and skimmers. The slicks migrated to the north where they appeared in the Mediterranean as sheens and tarballs. In the case of the GENMAR KESTREL (2005), a collision in the Mediterranean 30 nm north of Port Said, some 1,500 tonnes of Arabian Light (Ras Tannura) crude oil was lost. In 2006 two spills occurred in the Great Bitter Lake, GRIGOROUSSA 1 spilt approximately 1200 tonnes of HFO and ANNA PC spilt 875 tonnes of crude.

HAZARDOUS AND NOXIOUS SUBSTANCES (HNS)

EEAA would manage the response in the event of an HNS incident and is currently working on contingency arrangements for HNS which will be an extension of the NCP. Technical experts on HNS would be found from the chemical industry, national institutes and universities. PPE would be available from the chemical industry; tugs and salvage boats from the Egyptian Navy and fire fighting would be the responsibility of Civil Defense (Ministry of the Interior). Egypt experienced a case involving sulphuric acid in 2008 (no further information available). (*Information from REMPEC Workshop, 2011.*)

CONVENTIONS

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

* not yet in force



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REGIONAL AND BILATERAL AGREEMENTS

- Jeddah Convention (with states of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden)
- Upper Gulf of Aqaba sub-regional contingency plan with Israel and Jordan.
- Barcelona Convention (with states bordering the Mediterranean)
- Trilateral agreement and sub regional contingency plan with Israel and Cyprus.

For further information see REMPEC (Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea) Country Profile (http://www.rempec.org/country.asp?cid=6&IDS=2_1&daNme=General%20Information&openNum=1)

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