

FINLAND

SPILL NOTIFICATION POINT

Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre
West Finland Coast Guard District
PO Box 16
FIN-20101 Turku

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COMPETENT NATIONAL AUTHORITY

Ministry of the Interior
P.O. Box 26
FI-00023 Government

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RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS

The Ministry of the Interior has overall responsibility for the management and control of oil and chemical spill response. The Finnish Border Guard, operating under the Ministry, is the competent government authority for marine pollution response in the open sea. Rescue Service Departments, managed by municipalities, are responsible for spill response in coastal waters and on the shore.

The Response Commander (RC) is nominated by the Finnish Border Guard for incidents in open sea and by the Rescue Service District for incidents in coastal waters or originating from shore. The Finnish Border Guard will nominate the Supreme On-Scene Commander (SOSC) to lead the response activities carried out by ships. The Finnish Border Guard is responsible for the purchase and development of governmental response readiness and is empowered to request and give international assistance when the need arises.

When an oil spill is observed at sea, the report would be given to the nearest Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC/MRSC), which would then inform the Rescue Service Districts when needed. Where appropriate, the RC would call for executive assistance from other authorities; despatch recovery vessels and equipment; initiate and co-ordinate recovery efforts; and acquire other necessary materials or staff.

Regional contingency plans have been drawn up for the two regional sea areas by the Finnish Border Guard. Each Rescue Service District has made contingency plan for their coastal areas. Joint plans of the Finnish Border Guard and Rescue Service Districts have been agreed for the two regional sea areas.

Harbour authorities, oil terminals and other oil handling facilities are required to maintain a limited response capability to deal with small spills.

Finland implements the "polluter-pays" principle. In cases when the polluter cannot be identified, Finland has its own national oil pollution compensation fund that can cover the costs for oil pollution response. The national fund can also finance equipment purchases that are made to enhance the nation's preparedness for spills. The capital for the fund is raised by a fixed levy on each ton of oil imported to or transported through Finland. The fund is administered by the Ministry of the Environment, but has its own independent management board responsible for making decisions on compensation. Rescue Service Districts are entitled to receive compensation from the fund for purchases of equipment mentioned in an approved contingency plan.

RESPONSE POLICY

Due to the sensitive ecology of the Baltic Sea, it has been internationally agreed in the Helsinki Convention that the pollution response policy of Baltic Sea countries is based on the mechanical

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recovery of oil. The Helsinki Convention allows the use of chemicals only with very strict limitations. Dispersants are not used in Finland.

Finland has been investing in research into combating spills in ice and cold conditions. It currently has the capacity to combat small spillages in icy waters, but in the case of a major spill would normally wait until the ice melts and then recover the oil with traditional techniques.

EQUIPMENT

Government

The Finnish Border Guard maintains 10 main depots which are located at Kalajoki, Vaasa, Pori, Turku, Nauvo, Hanko, Kirkkonummi, Helsinki, Porvoo and Kotka. These have a variety of equipment such as booms, power packs and skimmers. The Finnish government has six oil recovery vessels, all furnished with fixed brush equipment and sweeping arms. In addition, the Finnish Border Guard has contracts for private oil recovery vessels which are at governmental readiness. The Rescue Service Districts have about 150 small (from 10 to 20 metres) oil recovery boats of which 15 are equipped with advanced skimming systems. The Rescue Service Districts also maintain depots of equipment mainly for use in sheltered waters and coastal areas as well as on shore response equipment. Governmental equipment is also stored in some of the Rescue Service Districts' depots.

Private

Oil terminals have stocks of equipment suitable for handling the most likely sizes of spills which could arise from their operations.

PREVIOUS SPILL EXPERIENCE

The largest oil spill in Finnish waters resulted from the grounding of M/T ANTONIO GRAMSCI in 1987. This spilled about 7000 tonnes of crude oil. Since 1990, there have been six cases involving spills of over 30 tonnes of oil.

HAZARDOUS & NOXIOUS SUBSTANCES (HNS)

The operational responsibility for dealing with marine pollution involving HNS has the same structure as for oil pollution response. Finland's capability for responding to HNS incidents is rather limited and two of the oil recovery vessels are built according to the CHEMREC class.

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	Supp Fund	HNS*	Bunker
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

* not yet in force

REGIONAL AND BILATERAL AGREEMENTS

Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (with Denmark, Estonia, the European Union, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russian Federation and Sweden)

Agreement between Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden about Cooperation concerning Pollution Control of the Sea after Contamination by Oil or other Harmful Substances.



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The Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Spill Preparedness and Response in the Arctic (with Canada, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Russian Federation, Sweden and the United States of America)

Bilateral agreements with the Russian Federation and with Estonia.

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