

ICELAND

SPILL NOTIFICATION POINT

Operations Centre The Icelandic Coastguard P.O. 7120 127 Reykjavik	Tel: +354-545 2100 (24 hr) Fax: +354-545 2001 Web: www.lhg.is E-Mail: sar@lhg.is
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COMPETENT NATIONAL AUTHORITY

Environmental Agency of Iceland (EAI) (Oil & HNS) Suourlandsbraut 24 108 Reykjavik	Tel: +354-591 2000 Mobile: +354 822 4003 Fax: +354-591 2010 E-Mail: ust@ust.is Web: www.ust.is
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RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS

The Environmental Agency of Iceland (EAI), under the auspices of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, is the lead government agency overseeing maritime environmental issues in Icelandic waters and has primary coordinating responsibility for oil spill response for coastal zones and the open waters of Iceland. The spill notification point in Iceland is the Icelandic Coast Guard. Its role includes pollution monitoring and maritime safety, in addition to search and rescue (SAR) and law enforcement issues. As the first point of contact for a spill, it would initiate the response in cooperation with the EAI. The Icelandic Maritime Safety Administration is responsible for monitoring shipping traffic as well as inspections of oil pollution equipment onboard ships in Icelandic waters. The national response organisation involves the offices of the EAI, Coast Guard and Maritime Administration in accordance with the National Contingency Plan. All of Iceland and its waters to the edge of the EEZ are organised centrally. Only harbour areas are under the control of harbour masters and the municipalities will be the main responders there.

Upon notification of a major spill from the Coast Guard, the EAI officer will decide upon the response according to size and seriousness. A member of the agency would normally assume the role of On-Scene Commander. The On-Scene Commander uses the ICS system to manage the incident. The EAI is assisted by an advisory committee with expertise and knowledge of the affected environment, particularly wildlife and sensitive areas. The local communities are responsible for shoreline clean-up. In practice, this may be delegated to the local fire brigades.

A national training course in pollution response is held and organised annually for the benefit of personnel from government agencies, local authorities, oil companies and operators of industrial facilities.

Though oil spills are uncommon in Iceland, an increasing number of cruise liners passing through Greenland waters west and north of the country, which have to navigate dangerous, glacial waters, pose a growing risk.

RESPONSE POLICY

The primary objective is to contain and recover the oil as close to the source as possible. Chemical dispersion is considered to be supplementary to physical removal and is used with caution when physical removal is not viable. A major consideration in the contemplated use of dispersants would be a concern to avoid tainting commercial fish stocks, particularly salmon farms scattered around the coast. However, the low population density, harsh climate and poor access to many coastal areas mitigate against all but the most basic clean-up responses and it is recognised that weather and sea

ICELAND

conditions are not conducive to success, with the possible exception of dispersant spraying. Dispersant products must be approved by the EAI.

The oil companies operating in Iceland are expected to accept any waste liquid oil/water mixtures recovered during clean-up actions. Processed waste oil is routinely sold as a fuel to cement factories. Oil sludge may be incinerated, whilst solid wastes can be disposed of on inland waste ground, providing approval has been given.

EQUIPMENT

Government

The EAI uses contractors specialised and trained in response operations and has stockpiles of equipment and materials on hand. The ICG also has equipment onboard Coast Guard vessels capable of operating in high seas. The ICG has capabilities to transport response equipment around the island and out to vessels at sea, and has aircraft and helicopters equipped for aerial surveillance. Equipment, consisting mainly of boom and skimmers, is stockpiled at five sites around the coast, that at Reykjavik being the largest. The smaller stockpiles are maintained and operated by regional cooperatives formed by the municipalities and harbour/port authorities. In addition, several port tugs have the facility for dispersant spraying.

Private

Industry is encouraged to have its own clean-up plans and undertake clean-up in-house, but all plans must be accepted by the EAI prior to the start of operations. The EAI can reject the industry plans and activate its own contractors if necessary.

US Navy facilities at Helguvik and Hvalfjörður have limited containment and recovery equipment.

PREVIOUS SPILL EXPERIENCE

There have been no major spills in recent times. However, small spills are not uncommon and several have occurred in remote areas in winter and in bad weather. Dispersants have been applied to harbour spills.

HAZARDOUS & NOXIOUS SUBSTANCES (HNS)

The EAI is the competent authority for dealing with marine pollution involving HNS. Due to a very limited chemicals industry, no special expertise has been considered necessary in the EAI. However, the local fire brigade is trained to respond to chemical spills on land and it is under discussion to extend the training of some units to marine HNS spills. Iceland does not specifically cover response to HNS in its NCP. Iceland's capability for responding to HNS spills is very limited and mainly relies on the local fire brigade, and, for larger incidents, international agreements and cooperation. Iceland has not had any previous experience of HNS spills at sea. (Information from EMSA, 2008)

ICELAND

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

Copenhagen Agreement (with Denmark, Finland, Norway & Sweden).

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