

MALTA

SPILL NOTIFICATION POINT

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COMPETENT NATIONAL AUTHORITY

Pollution and Incident Response (for Oil & HNS)
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Transport Malta
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RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS

The National Marine Pollution Contingency Plan (NMPCP) was approved by Cabinet in 2010. Transport Malta (TM) is the national competent authority for marine pollution preparedness and response and is responsible for the maintenance and implementation of the NMPCP through its Pollution and Incidence Response Unit (PIRU). TM's mandate extends to oil spills below those declared as national disasters. Other key players are: -

The Civil Protection Department (CPD) who would work with the police and armed forces to ensure public protection during any pollution incident. In the event of a declared national disaster, CPD would take over the role of competent national authority.

The Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA) has a key role in environmental protection with emphasis on the use of dispersants and waste disposal routes. It would designate and allocate areas for temporary storage of recovered oils or HNS materials.

The Armed Forces of Malta (AFM) act as the focal point for all pollution reports and information dissemination to the appropriate agencies. They also have a role in aerial and marine surveillance and slick tracking and can provide manpower if necessary.

Minor (or Tier 1 spills) would be expected to be dealt with locally by the relevant port authority or oil/chemical handling facility. For Tier 2 spills (defined in the NMPCP as typically ranging from 10 to 100 cubic metres), clean-up would be handled by national resources, either government or private sector. For a Tier 3 response, Maltese resources would need to be supplemented with international assistance, primarily from the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) and nearby countries.

It was reported in 2015 that Malta is planning on revising its current NMPCP and addressing oil and HNS response training issues by joining forces with the Norwegian Coastal Administration (Kystverket) to implement a project called "Oil/HNS Spill Response Capacity Building for the Protection of Malta's Seas" <http://www.transport.gov.mt/news/training-needs-to-address-oil-spill-response-capability>.

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RESPONSE POLICY

Malta does not have a comprehensive policy on the use of dispersants. Official authorisation from relevant authorities, specifically environment, would be required prior to their use.

EQUIPMENT

Government & Private

The CPD and TM both have responsibility for oil spill response vessels and equipment. The Ministry of Tourism also has charge of some resources. TM's equipment consists mainly of skimmers, booms, pumps and other ancillary equipment for offshore use, and is routinely monitored, maintained and exercised. It is understood that the equipment held by other national entities has deteriorated due to inadequate storage conditions (*Information from Performance Audit, 2014, www.nao.gov.mt*).

TM has agreements in place with local suppliers to provide emergency services including transport, handling and operating equipment in the event of an incident.

EMSA has an anti-pollution combating vessel stationed in Maltese waters.

PREVIOUS SPILL EXPERIENCE

There have not been any significant oil spills in Maltese waters. There have been a number of small scale spills linked to port activities.

HAZARDOUS & NOXIOUS SUBSTANCES (HNS)

TM is the competent authority responsible for marine pollution by HNS in Malta. Other entities that may be involved include the CPD, Armed Forces of Malta and MEPA. Response to marine HNS incidents is covered in its NMPCP, but Malta's capability for responding to HNS spills is very limited. CPD has some equipment specifically designed for combating HNS and protective clothing to carry out the task.

Malta has been involved in a number of marine incidents with HNS, including OCEAN SPIRIT which spilt 2,850 tonnes of lead concentrate off Gozo Island in 1988; CAMADAN which spilt 2,900 tonnes of phosphate granules in 2002; and IRAN ILAM which spilt 700 tonnes of explosive substances and radioactive objects in 2006. (*Information from EMSA, 2012*)

CONVENTIONS

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

* not yet in force

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REGIONAL AND BILATERAL AGREEMENTS

The Barcelona Convention, with states bordering the Mediterranean, places *inter alia* an obligation on the contracting parties to individually or jointly take all appropriate measures to prevent, abate and combat pollution of the Mediterranean Sea area and to protect and enhance the marine environment in that area.

Malta is currently in the process of drafting a bilateral agreement with the Sicilian Coast Guard (*Information from Performance Audit, 2014*)

For further information see REMPEC (Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea) Country Profile (http://www.rempec.org/country.asp?cid=13&IDS=2_1&daNme=General%20Information&openNum=1)

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