

ERITREA

SPILL NOTIFICATION POINT

Department of Maritime Transport (DMT)
PO Box 6
Massawa
Eritrea

Tel: +291 1 552 931/992/657
+291 1 552 122 (24hrs)
Fax: +291 1 552 157
Radio Frequency: HF 10383 HF 6068
Call sign: Massawa Port

COMPETENT NATIONAL AUTHORITY

Department of Maritime Transport (DMT)
Ministry of Transport and Communications
PO Box 679
Asmara
Eritrea

Tel: +291 1 121 358/359/317
Fax: +291 1 121 316

RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS

Under the 1995 draft National Oil and Noxious Substances Spill Contingency Plan (NCP), the Department of Maritime Transport (DMT), formerly the Eritrean Ports Authority, part of the Ministry of Transport is the agency responsible for responding to marine oil pollution. It has the power to both fine and detain polluting vessels within the 12 nautical mile territorial limit.

The draft NCP has yet to be fully implemented and little development of the necessary organisational framework and infrastructure has been carried out. Response arrangements therefore currently exist only on paper. There is no statutory requirement for oil handling facilities or ports to maintain their own contingency plans. However, it is envisaged that oil companies will be required to do so together with resources for responding to spills from their facilities.

Within the draft NCP, the Director General of the DMT is designated as the On-Scene Co-ordinator (OSC) responsible for overseeing all operational aspects of spill response and for ensuring an effective response capability is maintained. The NCP also calls for the establishment of a Crisis Management Team (CMT) during a spill, to act as a source of advice and assistance to the OSC. The CMT is to be composed of Ministers or their appointees, oil industry representatives, members of the community and the military. International experts may also be called to sit on the CMT.

The Ministry of Transport, through the DMT has also established a Marine Pollution Advisory Board (MPAB), under its direct authority, headed by the OSC with representatives from various government departments, the emergency services, oil companies and the military. Its primary role is to: ensure implementation of the NCP; establish a national response centre; procure the necessary response resources and equipment; implement training and exercises; the identification of suitable disposal sites and to develop national and international spill response strategies.

Monitoring of fish stocks and the effects of the oil on other species of flora and fauna would be carried out by the Department of Marine Resources (DMR). While the Department and other organisations within Eritrea would provide a valuable source of knowledge regarding the local conditions and resources, it is envisaged that some advice and assistance would be sought from organisations located outside the country.

Sensitivity mapping has to date been undertaken for some sections of the Eritrean coast by the DMR, and the remaining areas of the country's coast are due to be completed at the end of 1997.

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RESPONSE POLICY

Under the draft National Contingency Plan, the use of dispersants is considered as the primary method of response within certain areas and depths. The OSC may instruct the use of dispersants close to shore or in shallow areas, only when their use is believed to mitigate the overall damage to the environment and only then, with the authorisation of the CMT. Several dispersants are approved for use in Eritrean waters. For spills closer to shore the primary method of response will involve the defensive booming of important resources and containment and recovery. Diesel spills and spillages of lighter petroleum products will be responded to using booms and sorbent materials.

In-situ burning may also be employed in the event of a major spill threatening coral reefs and sensitive mangrove areas. However such measures will only be employed when all other response methods are deemed to be ineffective and with the proviso that there is no risk to human health.

Disposal options for recovered oil are limited. Under the NCP it is envisaged that, where possible, recovered oil will be reprocessed. Significantly weathered or contaminated oil will be stored on-site in disposal pits and incinerated at a location decided upon in consultation with the CMT.

EQUIPMENT

Government & Private

Neither the oil industry nor the designated government authorities possess significant stocks of equipment. Ratification of the NCP may ensure the creation of a national response capability and with the ports and oil industry facilities required to maintain both stocks of response equipment and arrangements with which to mobilise that equipment. There are no private oil spill response contractors in Eritrea.

It is expected that the Eritrean Navy would provide a source of extra manpower and also make available any vessels that were in the area during a spill. Surveillance aircraft may also be available from the air-force.

PREVIOUS SPILL EXPERIENCE

Eritrea has not suffered any major oil spills. It does however suffer from occasional small operational spills in port or from tar-balls resulting from the washing of tanks by passing tankers.

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*	Bunker

* not yet in force

Eritrea is not a party to any of the above conventions.



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REGIONAL AND BILATERAL AGREEMENTS

Eritrea is not a party to any regional or bilateral agreements.

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