

LATVIA

SPILL NOTIFICATION POINT

Latvian Coast Guard Service Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) RIGA Meldru iela 5a Riga LV-1015	Tel: +371 6732 3103 (emergency) +371 2947 6101 Fax: +371 6732 0100 +371 2927 0690 Inmarsat-C 580 427502310 E-Mail: sar@mrcc.lv Web: www.mrcc.lv
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COMPETENT NATIONAL AUTHORITY

State Environmental Service Ministry of Environment Valsts Vides dienests Rupniecibas iela 23 Riga LV 1045	Tel: +371 67084200 Fax: +371 67084212 E-Mail: vvd@vvd.gov.lv
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RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS

The Latvian Coast Guard Service, under the authority of the Ministry of Defence, has national responsibility for dealing with spills of oil in Latvian marine waters. The State Environmental Service under the Ministry of Environment is the coordinating authority for implementation of the National Oil and HNS Contingency Plan.

The Latvian Coast Guard Service has response stations in the three largest Latvian ports – Riga, Liepaja and Ventspils. MRCC Riga, under the Latvian Coast Guard Service, maintains a 24 hour command centre. Operational command for smaller oil spills is initially taken by the MRCC Riga Duty Officer and afterwards by the Response Commander. For larger spills the MRCC Committee is convened and the head of the MRCC Committee would take over operational command.

The State Fire Fighting and Rescue Service, under the Ministry of Interior in co-operation with local municipalities, is responsible for shoreline and beach clean-up. Port authorities are responsible for response operations in port areas. Land and sea activities are jointly carried out by the Latvian Coast Guard Service and the State Fire Fighting and Rescue Service.

The National Contingency Plan has been in force since 2004. Within the framework of the contingency plan, GIS sensitive area maps and accident risk assessment calculations are used. Oil spill drift and weather forecast modelling are also in place.

RESPONSE POLICY

Mechanical recovery is the primary response technique. The use of dispersants may be considered as a last resort when mechanical recovery is impossible and sensitive resources are at risk. Dispersant use is decided on a case-by-case basis by the State Environmental Service.

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EQUIPMENT

Government & Private

The MRCC co-ordinates all actions in connection with oil pollution response at sea. Four vessels and one sea barge are available for offshore oil containment and pollution recovery. Each vessel can be equipped with oil pollution response equipment, including different types of skimmers (floating and mounted) and sea-class containment booms. They also have access to six specialised trucks and ten containers that can be used to transport equipment from their stockpiles. A Maritime Incident Response group has been established to handle the transportation of equipment during offshore operations. Latvia possesses one dispersant spray unit for a vessel of opportunity and 2,000 liters of dispersant concentrate. No aircraft dispersant application capability is available. For aerial surveillance, small aircraft would be used. FIMAR and SeaTrackWeb software are used in oil response and SAR operations. The web-based SeaTrackWeb programme is a HELCOM system used by Rescue Services in the Baltic region to calculate oil and object predicted movement on the water. Developed in Latvia, FIMAR software has similar functionality plus more extensive weather forecasting options. It is foreseen that agreements will be made with port authorities to involve private vessels in response operations.

The MRCC has a full list of the vessels and equipment available, accompanied by the quantities on their website (<https://www.mrcc.lv/en/node/48>).

PREVIOUS SPILL EXPERIENCE

There have been no major oil spills in Latvian waters. Regular exercises are carried out to maintain response readiness and knowledge.

HAZARDOUS & NOXIOUS SUBSTANCES

The Latvian Coast Guard and the State Environmental Service would be responsible for HNS incidents. Latvia is in the process of ratifying the OPRC-HNS Protocol and has started preparations to build up the necessary capabilities, but no special chemical expertise exists at this time and Latvia would depend on the same resources as for oil spill response. Latvia has made a risk assessment which includes marine transport of HNS. In 2004 a specific national contingency plan for HNS incidents was prepared and it is expected that this will be amalgamated with the existing plan for oil. Latvia has experienced one HNS spill, GOLDEN SKY (2007, muriate of potash) (Information from EMSA, 2008).

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



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REGIONAL AND BILATERAL AGREEMENTS

Helsinki Convention (with countries bordering the Baltic Sea).

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