INTERNATIONAL SPILL CONTROL ORGANIZATION

ISCO NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter of the International Spill Response Community

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APPEAL FOR INFORMATION ON EXPERIENCE GAINED AND TECHNIQUES USED IN RESPONSE TO MARINE HNS INCIDENTS AND FOR SUB-SEA OIL RECOVERY.

At the International Maritime Organization (IMO) OPRC-HNS TG8 meeting held in London in October, last year, the International Spill Control Organization (ISCO) joined with other delegations in agreeing to support the IMO Secretariat in pursuing possibilities of obtaining data on HNS incidents, including near misses, in order to address data gaps that exist and to submit that information to future meetings of the Technical Group.

At the same meeting, ISCO joined with delegations from the United Kingdom, United States, Canada, France, Spain, the Republic of Korea, and ITOPF in support of a project, led by Italy, to collate experience and lessons learned in regard to sunken oil assessment and recovery.

The availability of data on experience and lessons learned in response to marine HNS incidents and sub-sea oil recovery could be improved and the ISCO delegation took the view that within the response community there should be a significant source of additional information.

The information gathered will be shared with other OPRC-HNS Technical Group delegates and used in the preparation of new IMO Technical Guidelines on marine HNS response, and on sunken oil assessment and removal techniques.

ISCO has been receiving information from its members but wishes to cast its net more widely through an approach to members of other groups, including the readers of the ISCO Newsletter.

What we are looking for is short case histories, with emphasis on information on the techniques used, problems encountered and lessons learned – the kinds of experience and knowledge that you won't find in the textbooks. We are also interested in special equipment that has been developed to deal with marine HNS incidents, and for the assessment and recovery of sunken oils.

If you can assist, please send information as a word document or PDF file to ISCO Secretary, John McMurtrie at john.mcmurtrie@spillcontrol.org

Please don't worry about having to write a beautiful literary production – we'll be happy to edit the grammar and spelling. If for reasons of commercial confidentiality you need to exclude details of clients, that will be OK – but we would like to know who you are – all contributions will be acknowledged and this is a way for you to raise your profile – it's good to know about who has the experience and knowledge in dealing with these matters.

AFRICA: NEW ONLINE SENSITIVITY MAPPING WEBPAGE FROM GI WACAF

A new webpage on the GI WACAF website is providing oil spill Environmental Sensitivity Index (ESI) mapping on line. Existing maps developed by governments through their National Oil Spill Contingency Plans were collected and transferred on GIS format. Maps for Ghana, Nigeria Cameroon, Republic of Congo and Angola have already been transferred on GIS and are available online. For further information: http://www.giwacaf.org/sensitivity.asp

The period of January to May 2009, was productive for the GI WACAF Project in terms of workshop delivery. Six national workshops were hosted by the governments with the support of industry focal points. Particular focus was on operational aspects, with a joint exercise organised in Cameroon between industry and government, a Level 1 Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Cooperation (OPRC) training course organised in Nigeria and various table top exercises. The increasing commitment of government focal points was also highlighted by good results achieved in Togo, DRC and The Gambia. Another highlight was a workshop organised in Equatorial Guinea which led to an outline National Oil Spill Contingency Plan with the support of Mobil Equatorial Guinea. More GI WACAF news at: http://giwacaf.org/store/Documents/GI_WACAF_-_Newsletter_May_2009.pdf

USA: CSB LAUNCHES REDESIGNED AGENCY WEBSITE AND RELEASES NEW VIDEO

The U.S. Chemical Safety Board (CSB) has unveiled a redesigned website, www.csb.gov that includes imbedded flash videos, a photo gallery, and a new accident news feed.

The new website provides easier access to investigation information, including the ability to download high-resolution photos from CSB investigations, and an improved search capability. The CSB's widely viewed safety videos and safety messages are embedded throughout the site.

Chairman Bresland said, "The CSB strives to be a leader in the online communication of safety information and recommendations. The web site redesign reflects our ongoing commitment to effective outreach to businesses, workers, and communities who share our goal of preventing chemical accidents and saving lives."

The new www.csb.gov homepage includes an improved news feed of recent chemical accidents throughout the country as well as direct access to the CSB's most frequently viewed safety videos. [Thanks to ISCO Associate Member, DG & Hazmat Group, for passing on this news report]

NIGERIA: NOSDRA MOVES TO HALT OIL SPILL

National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA) has intensified efforts to make Mobil Producing Nigeria Limited and AMNI/AFREN Energy, to cooperate in the clean-up of sites in communities in eastern Obolo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, affected by oil spill of April 28.

A statement by Henshaw Ogubike said the Agency discovered that the companies had denied spilling oil only for it to be confirmed later.It called on the companies to cooperate in cleaning up the spill.

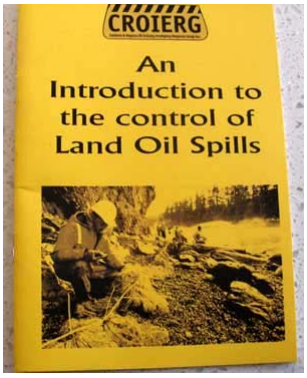
NOSDRA also said the result of a visit to Bodo in Rivers State in August and December 2008, confirmed that oil spill from a Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) facility was as a result of equipment failure.Consequently, both organisations had discussed modalities for damage assessment. Read more at: http://allafrica.com/stories/200905290274.html

COMBINING TECHNOLOGIES FOR THE REMEDIATION OF HYDROCARBONS

Combining remedies is often a solution overlooked by many technology vendors. A challenge in remediation of hydrocarbon releases to soil and groundwater is capturing both the source and the surrounding areas. By combining the removal of nonaqueous-phase liquids (NAPLs) with electrical resistance heating (ERH) and biodegradation, a cost-effective and timely solution is created. ERH is an aggressive method of NAPL removal that has been implemented successfully on over 75 remediation sites worldwide. With this ever-increasing experience base combined with ongoing research and development, it is possible to utilize the biogeochemical changes that occur in soil and groundwater during ERH to enhance the remediation process. Populations of heterotrophic and petrophillic bacteria have been measured to be essentially the same or higher after ERH treatment. For biodegradation of hydrocarbon to occur, the presence of terminal electron acceptors—

dissolved oxygen, nitrate, pyrolusite, ferric iron minerals, sulfate—is required. Investigating the redox conditions prior to ERH and the potential effect that heating will have on these conditions is critical for combining biodegradation with ERH treatment. This presentation evaluates the various physical, chemical, and biological reactions that took place during the implementation of ERH to address trichloroethene contamination at Fort Lewis, Washington. More info at: http://clu-in.org/products/tins/

AUSTRALIA: INTRODUCTION TO THE CONTROL OF LAND OIL SPILLS BOOKLET



Canberra and Regions Oil Industry Emergency Response Group (CROIERG) has recently published a booklet "An Introduction to the Control of Land Oil Spills"

The booklet has been produced for members of CROIERG, but may be available to others at a small charge to cover costs of printing and postage.

Enquiries should be sent to ISCO Member, Brian O'Connor, Secretary of CROIERG at eejoconn@bigpond.com.au

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON THE RESPONSE TO MARINE POLLUTION IN THE NOWPAP REGION

The International Workshop on the Response to Marine Pollution in the NOWPAP Region will be held in Incheon, Songdo Convensia, on 5 June 2009, based on the decision of the 11th NOWPAP MERRAC Focal Points Meeting (June 2008).

The workshop will provide an opportunity of information exchange between neighboring countries regarding the experiences and lessons from Hebei Spirit incident occurred on 7 December 2007, and other major accidents occurred in the NOWPAP region. It will be discussed how to enhance our respective national response strategies and/or systems, and to develop regional co-operation system more effectively against major spill accidents in the region. More info: http://merrac.nowpap.org/merrac/controller

STOCKHOLM CONVENTION TRAINING TOOL ON THE TECHNICAL GUIDELINES FOR THE ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND MANAGEMENT (ESM) OF POPS WASTES

This electronic Training Tool provides information on the technical guidelines on POPs wastes in a simple and interactive manner. The target audience are persons involved in the management of POPs wastes that already have a basic knowledge on the subject. These include handlers of hazardous chemical waste, treatment and destruction industries, owners of POPs wastes, relevant Government regulators and trainers on hazardous waste management. The training tool is available in English, French and Spanish. Read more at: http://chm.pops.int/Programmes/WasteStockpiles/Training/TrainingToolEnglish/tabid/387/language/en-US/Default.aspx

SPAIN: RESEARCH SHOWS EFFICIENCY OF HUELVA-GROWN SHRUB IN RECOVERY OF POLLUTED SOIL

Researchers of the University of Seville and IRNASE (Institute of Natural Resources and Agrobiology), of the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) have verified in controlled trials the efficiency of Erica andevalensis, or heather from Andévalo -- an endemic shrub from the province of Huelva and the Portuguese area of the Alentejo -- in the recovery of soils contaminated with heavy metals. Read more at - http://www.environmental-expert.com/resulteachpressrelease.aspx?cid=32611&codi=50714

OMAN PESCO AND RAK PETROLEUM OMAN SIGN A 2-YEAR AGREEMENT

RAK Petroleum Oman Limited a subsidiary of UAE Based - RAK Petroleum PCL and Oman Petro Environmental Services Company (OMAN PESCO) L.L.C signed a two-year agreement under which OMAN PESCO LLC shall provide Oil Spill Protection and Response Services to cover RAK Petroleum's offshore operations in Oman. The contract also covers rendering training services for RAK's personnel up-to international training standards for environmental protection and oil spill response.

RAK Petroleum is currently the sole offshore operator in the Sultanate of Oman. The company recently commenced production from the West Bukha field in Oman's Block 8 located offshore in the Strait of Hormuz. More info: http://www.omanpesco.com/media/news/rak.php

OMAN PESCO is an International Joint Venture company between Briggs Marine and Environmental Services (UK) the world leaders in the field of environmental services, PESCO S.A.E the Middle East leaders in oil spill response in addition to a prestigious group of Omani investors.

REGISTRATION FOR THE 10TH INTERNATIONAL EFFECTS OF OIL ON WILDLIFE CONFERENCE IS NOW OPEN.

ISCO Associate Member, the Sea Alarm Foundation has announced tha registration for this conference is now open.

To proceed with registration, please visit the registration page of the EOW website where you will be directed to the on-line booking service. A detailed description of all pre-conference short courses and post-conference labs and excursions is now also available on the website.

A small number of scholarships are available to co-fund candidates that would like to attend the EOW, but have limited financial means. The Scholarship Committee is now accepting applications from potential candidates. Please click here for full details.

CORRESPONDENCE

ISCO Member, Jörg Doolin, has written, following up on last week's correspondence –

"Firstly let me thank you and your team for the excellent Newsletters, that enable those of us who are in other parts of the world to be informed on what is going on.

Reference the Interspill Conference presentation from Mr. Robin Perry. I was unable to attend but read the News Letter and Robin's reply to J. `Sjon´ Huisman.

The presentation did mention that mechanical equipment is likely to be more effective in Tier 1 spills, where generally the equipment can be deployed more quickly and closer to the source. It has also been very effective in the protection of inshore areas. But from personal experience and that of experienced colleagues, lack of maintenance and poor training of operators are still all too common, adding to a false sense of security.

Spills are not managed to ensure an evenly high standard of preparedness, either in (some) rich or developing countries.

Plans are either not in place or inadequate.

Equipment lies un-maintained

Personnel remain untrained.

I wish to add a few experiences!

On occasions I have had to visit response bases only to find that equipment is in a poor state, having been neglected because there had been no recent spills. Also that those that were required to operate when the need arises did not have the necessary experience.

An incident offshore in the Gulf of Mexico was a classic example - One base had 6 systems to recover oil, unfortunately the systems were for inshore waters. Each system had 20m of hoses (hydraulic & discharge) but to deploy one system from a vessel it was necessary to use 70m of hose. This had to be taken from other systems, thus reducing the response capability from 6 to 2 systems.

Visiting other bases in the area I noted that equipment had not been maintained and no operators were available, creating a problem for any response.

During the last nine years I have had experience of training and participating in various spills in countries some people may refer to as "third world". It has to be said that at first the enthusiasm was high and the number of incidents was reduced considerably but, unfortunately, once the frequency of incidents decreased, so did the attention to training and maintenance at the response bases.

Sometimes there was a lot of nice new shiny equipment, unfortunately lacking essential ancillaries, such as sufficient hose; it could be a good idea for sales companies to advise customers properly on the ancillary equipment necessary to realize the full potential of the equipment, especially in an offshore context.

I once went for an interview with an Oil Spill Response Company, having heard the options and being honest, I mentioned that I did have another interview; the response was that the company was on a shoe-string budget. I thought it would be better to go to the next interview."

Comment from the Editor –

"Ongoing attention to maintenance of high standards of training, equipment maintenance and mobilization preparedness is essential for effective response but Jörg's experience is unfortunately all too common.

If there is an extended period during which there are no significant spills, it is not uncommon for budgets to be cut or not raised in line with cost inflation. The result is that available funding can become inadequate for maintaining a proper level of preparedness. The inevitable result is that training, exercising, equipment maintenance and manpower are cut back; the level of response preparedness falls off and, because they lack the necessary support, the remaining response personnel become frustrated and lose motivation.

When the next pollution event happens, as it inevitably will, the outcome will be bad for everyone concerned and, because of poor preparedness, there will be a high price to pay in terms of damage to the environment and the economy, higher clean-up costs, compensation payable, damage to reputation, and public hostility.

A good answer to this problem is provided by the International Spill Accreditation Association (ISAA) which regularly assesses both public and private response organizations. In order to maintain accredited status, high standards have to be maintained. National and regional ISAA Accreditation Schemes bring together government agencies, response operators and other stakeholders in a collective aim to maintain high standards of preparedness.

An important outcome is that the alarm bells will ring if standards are allowed to fall and everyone is alerted to the need for corrective action."