



ISCO NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter of the International Spill Response Community

Issue 194 24th August, 2009

Email info@spillcontrol.org Web <http://www.spillcontrol.org>



AUSTRALIA: LEAK FROM WEST ATLAS OIL RIG OFFSHORE DARWIN



The Australian Maritime Safety Authority yesterday launched a major clean-up operation as oil and gas continued to seep from a 1200-metre-deep well drilled by the West Atlas - an oil rig located 690 kilometres west of Darwin, 250 kilometres off the far north Kimberley coast and 150 kilometres south-east of Ashmore Reef.

The spill, which is eight nautical miles long and 30 metres wide, began early on Friday, forcing the evacuation of 69 workers to Darwin.

The company responsible for the rig, PTTEP Australasia, said the leak had not yet been brought under control. Read more: <http://www.theage.com.au/national/oil-spill-threatens-ocean-as-driller-faces-multimillion-bill-20090822-euh7.html>

Sixty-nine workers were evacuated from the West Atlas Drilling Unit on Friday morning when the rig started leaking gas and yesterday the oil slick had reached 14 kilometres long and 30 metres wide.

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) says 10,000 litres of chemicals sprayed on the oil slick from a Hercules aircraft are starting to successfully disperse the oil. More: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/08/23/2663970.htm?section=australia>

Authorities on Saturday declared a 37-kilometre exclusion zone around the rig, which is owned by Norwegian company Seadrill and operated by Thai-based PTTEP Australasia.

Jose Martins from PTTEP Australasia says a group of experts is trying to work out how to fix the leak. "Until we can get a proper report ... only then we can tell you what the next stage is and how long this will take to repair," he said.

Mr Martins says the leaking gas poses a major fire risk, making it difficult for anyone to access the site. "We have engaged international experts and they will be given whatever resources they need to bring the situation under control," he said. More: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/08/23/2663828.htm>

Oil and gas will continue to spill into the ocean from a drilling rig off Australia's northwest coast for seven weeks, leaving a multi-million dollar clean-up bill for the company responsible for the leak. PTTEP Australasia announced it would engage another mobile offshore rig to drill a hole into the leaking oil well, pump mud into the hole and alleviate pressure to stop its flow. Read more: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,25970389-12377,00.html>

ITOPF: 2009 ANNUAL REVIEW JUST PUBLISHED

In the picture: Bjorn Moller, Chairman of ITOPF

ITOPF has just published its latest Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 20 February 2009.

In his statement, Chairman Bjorn Moller writes “The global economic downturn has had a profound impact on maritime trade volumes, but what effect this contraction is having on the risk of ship-source pollution is less clear. On the tanker side there has been a marked reduction in the frequency of major spills (over 100 tonnes), a trend which has been evident for well over a decade. The 20th anniversary of the EXXON VALDEZ incident serves as a reminder of the watershed that this incident created in the public perception of tanker spills and which is probably the single most significant factor underlying the steadily improving safety record of the tanker industry.”



“At the same time we have seen a corresponding increase in our rate of attendance at non-tanker incidents over the last decade. This is probably more a reflection of the increasing cost of providing compensation for pollution damage than an increase in the rate of shipping incidents. Spill risks linked to traffic density such as collisions and groundings might be expected to reduce as maritime trade temporarily contracts in the near term, but this could be counterbalanced by the effects of tighter financial constraints on operational expenditure within the shipping sector.” You can access the ITOPF Annual Review at - <http://www.itopf.com/information-services/publications/documents/annualreview2009.pdf>

EUROPE: EMSA TO COOPERATE WITH AFRICAN STATES



In a communication to the European Parliament and the Council published on 24 June, the Commission plans to strengthen cooperation between Europe and Africa in the transport sector, including maritime safety. The European Union could provide technical assistance, particularly through EMSA, to help African coastal countries improve their maritime traffic monitoring systems in order to ensure the regional exchange of data. <http://www.emsa.europa.eu/>

ISCO: MARINE HNS INCIDENT RESPONSE EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES

At the IMO OPRC-HNS TG8 meeting held in London over 29th September to 3rd October, 2008, ISCO joined with other delegations in agreeing to support the Secretariat in collating information on response to HNS incidents in order to address data gaps that exist and to submit information to the future meetings of the Technical Group.

At TG9 in July 2009, ISCO was asked to continue this work as an ongoing project.

Information collected so far includes case histories of responses to incidents involving toxic sludge, MTBE, Naphtha, Sulphuric Acid and Freon (a CFC compound).

It is the international spill response community that has hands-on experience in dealing with HNS incidents – solving the problems and developing techniques that work - experience that will eventually be used in developing response guidance manuals.

ISCO wants to hear from its members and others that can make a contribution to our collective effort. We want to hear not only from contractors but also from manufacturers and researchers who are developing new equipment and technology for HNS incident response.

Governments and other concerned parties need to know who has the experience and know-how. You will be raising your profile and doing yourself a favour by helping in this work. Please contact the Secretary of ISCO.

AUSTRALIA: SPILLCON 2010 EXHIBITION PROSPECTUS NOW AVAILABLE

As part of the three year cycle of international spill response conferences and exhibitions held in the Americas, Europe and the Far East, next year's event, *Spillcon 2010* will be held in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia on 12-16 April 2010.

Spillcon 2010 will include an exhibition, providing organisations with an excellent opportunity to showcase equipment and services to Conference delegates who:

- Purchase equipment for government, industry and spill response cooperatives
- Use equipment for training and spill response
- Undertake risk analysis
- Produce spill response plans

You can download the Exhibition Prospectus at <http://www.spillcon.com/exhibition.html>

FRANCE: FRENCH TRANSPORT WORKERS THREATEN TO POLLUTE RIVER SEINE

Angry lorry drivers at Serta, a struggling transportation company, are threatening to pour more than 8,000 litres of toxic fuel additive into the Seine if their demands for redundancy pay-offs are not met. Acknowledging the "dramatic" effect this could have on the river's fish population, they insist they will not be dissuaded unless their bosses give in.

Read more - <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/aug/20/france-transport-river-seine-pollution>

CONGO: ENVIRONMENTAL DEMANDS GROW FOR U.N. PEACEKEEPING TROOPS

August 11 - Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton's visit today to Goma, a city in the heart of the war ravaging the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is meant to draw attention to renewed U.S. support for U.N. peacekeeping and to press thinly stretched troops deployed there to do more to protect innocent civilians.

But how much more can overburdened peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and elsewhere be expected to do? Increasingly -- and controversially -- they find themselves busy doing environmental cleanups, climate change mitigation projects and providing relief from natural disasters on top of their security duties.

Read more: <http://www.nytimes.com/gwire/2009/08/11/11greenwire-environmental-demands-grow-for-un-peacekeeping-40327.html>

USA, FLORIDA: BUDGET CUTS CONTRIBUTE TO UNCLEANNED PETROLEUM SPILLS

Due to budget cuts and strict state regulations, thousands of underground petroleum leaks across Florida remain uncleaned, according to state environmental officials.

The sites appear on a Florida Department of Environment Protection list of "known petroleum discharges not yet cleaned up," according to a News Herald analysis of discharge data. Bay County currently has 367 petroleum discharges, dating back to 1988, on the state list. Statewide, there have been more than 17,000 discharges dating back to the mid-1980s that remain on the list, records indicate. Nearly 90 percent of discharges are eligible for state-funded cleanup, but various factors have hindered these efforts in many cases. Read more at : <http://www.newsherald.com/news/petroleum-76520-budget-spills.html>

USA: NOAA AND PARTNERS TO SURVEY SHIPS SUNK OFF NORTH CAROLINA IN WORLD WAR II

NOAA will lead a three-week research expedition in August to study World War II shipwrecks sunk in 1942 off the coast of North Carolina during the Battle of the Atlantic. The shipwrecks are located in an area known as the "Graveyard of the Atlantic," which

includes sunken vessels from U.S. and British naval fleets, merchant ships, and German U-boats. "The information collected during this expedition will help us better understand and document this often lost chapter of America's maritime history and its significance to the nation," said David W. Alberg, expedition leader and superintendent of the USS Monitor National Marine Sanctuary. "It continues the work conducted by NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries last summer to research and document historically significant shipwrecks tragically lost during World War II." Read more at: <http://www.maritime-executive.com/article/noaa-and-partners-survey-ships-sunk-north-carolina-world-war-ii/>

THE LASTEST ON HYDROFLUOROCARBONS

In the 1970s, scientists hypothesized that chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), chemicals commonly used in refrigerants and aerosol cans, might deplete the ozone layer in Earth's stratosphere. Ozone filters out ultraviolet rays from the incoming sunlight, protecting life from the harmful rays. After much resistance from industry interests, the US, Canada, and Norway banned CFC-containing aerosol cans in 1979. But when scientists discovered an ozone hole over Antarctica in the mid-1980s, countries around the world began phasing out the ozone-destroying chemicals. A new class of ozone-friendly molecules called hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) replaced them.

Now, global warming is a concern. And a new study in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences finds that HFCs, some of which are thousands of times more powerful than carbon dioxide as a heat-trapping gas, could become a significant factor in future warming. Read more at: <http://features.csmonitor.com/environment/2009/08/10/the-lastest-on-hydrofluorocarbons/>

TWO RAPID RESPONSE SKIMMERS DELIVERED TO US NAVY



Kvichak Marine, Industries, Inc. recently constructed and delivered two Rapid Response Skimmers to the U.S. Navy, which were purchased on Kvichak's GSA schedule. Including this delivery, the Navy owns and operates over 70 Kvichak-built skimmers worldwide.

The all-aluminum vessel is 30'-3" in length with an 8'0" beam and can be transported on a trailer. Powered by twin Yamaha 4-stroke, 60hp outboard engines, the skimmer is designed to have a response speed of ~17 knots.

During spill response and recovery operations, the skimmer utilizes the MARCO Filterbelt recovery system. Depending on the type of oil and pads used, the Filterbelt system can recover oils in the range of 50 – 400 barrels per hour. The Rapid Response Skimmer has a total recovered oil capacity of 1000 gallons. All hydraulics, including the MARCO Filterbelt system, are powered by a diesel hydraulic power unit. <http://www.kvichak.com>

USA: CHLORINE RAILCAR INCIDENT RESPONSE TRAINING

The Chlorine Institute in cooperation with the Union Pacific Railroad and TransCAER[®] is sponsoring a TransCAER[®] Event at the Union Pacific Memphis yard on October 28, 2009. This event will be a full day training session for first responders and others seeking information on response to chemical emergencies with specific emphasis on chlorine.

Topics Include: Chlorine, Hydrochloric Acid, Sodium Hypochlorite, Sodium Hydroxide, Railroad Safety/Emergency Response and more!

More info: <http://cl2.cms-plus.com/files/PDFs/2009%20Transcaer%20Info.pdf>

Legal disclaimer: Whilst ISCO takes every care to ensure that information published in this Newsletter is accurate, unintentional mistakes can occur. If an error is brought to our attention, a correction will be printed in the next issue of this Newsletter.