INTERNATIONAL SPILL CONTROL ORGANIZATION

ISCO NEWSLETTER

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ISCO HAS PRODUCED REPORT TEMPLATES FOR MARINE HNS INCIDENT RESPONSE AND SUBSEA OIL RECOVERY

As previously reported in this Newsletter, ISCO is continuing to collate information on Marine HNS incident response and Subsea Oil Recovery as part of its contribution to the work of the IMO OPRC-HNS Technical Group. Rather than simply collecting statistical data, ISCO is focusing on the techniques used, problems encountered and lessons learned – information that will be of practical value in developing quality technical manuals.

Now ISCO has developed new report templates that will help to collate the information in a standard format. Incident responders who can contribute to the knowledge base are invited to contact john.mcmurtrie@spillcontrol.org ISCO also wants to hear from manufacturers, research establishments and consultants who are developing new technologies and equipment with application in HNS incident response or subsea oil recovery.

USA: CLEAN WATER LAWS ARE NEGLECTED, AT A COST IN HUMAN SUFFERING

In a hard-hitting article *The New York Times* has highlighted serious shortcomings in the enforcement of the Clean Water act.

"In the last five years alone, chemical factories, manufacturing plants and other workplaces have violated water pollution laws more than half a million times.

Regulators themselves acknowledge lapses. The new E.P.A. administrator, Lisa P. Jackson, said in an interview that despite many successes since the Clean Water Act was passed in 1972, today the nation's water does not meet public health goals, and enforcement of water pollution laws is unacceptably low. She added that strengthening water protections is among her top priorities. State regulators say they are doing their best with insufficient resources.

The Times obtained hundreds of thousands of water pollution records through Freedom of Information Act requests to every state and the E.P.A., and compiled a national database of water pollution violations that is more comprehensive than those maintained by states or the E.P.A. (For an interactive version, which can show violations in any community, visit www.nytimes.com/toxicwaters.)"

If you're concerned about these issues, you can read the article in *The New York Times* at http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/13/us/13water.html?_r=1

CHINA: HIGH POLLUTION LEVELS AND MASS PROTESTS

- Ten thousand demonstrators took hostages and fought police at a $5 billion petrochemical project in Fujian on the east coast. The battles forced the local government to promise strict anti-pollution measures at the plant.

- Authorities closed a chemical plant in central China after two locals died of cadmium poisoning. Chinese newspapers exposed a long-running scandal of political collusion that had allowed the plant to flout environmental standards.

- Mass protests broke out over “cancer villages” near polluted waterways in eastern China. A series of campaigns followed to win compensation for villagers who became ill living next to filthy canals and rivers full of factory discharge and effluent.

The above is only a short extract from an article by Michael Sheridan in *The Sunday Times Online.* Recently there has been a spate of press reports on incidents of lead poisoning and other consequences of spills and illegal discharges in China. In his article, Michael Sheridan has drawn together many of these reports and comments on the political and human background. http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article6832217.ece

USA: 'SERIOUS' HAZMAT SPILLS NOT REPORTED

Nearly half of all "serious" hazardous materials spills on roads, rails, airstrips and waterways go unreported to the government, leaving investigators without data used to identify unsafe carriers and containers, federal records show.

Although the Department of Transportation (DOT) says accurate incident data is critical to ensuring that hazmat carriers operate safely, it rarely uses its authority to penalize haulers that don't file the required reports after spills.

From 2006 through 2008, hazmat carriers failed to report 1,199 "serious" incidents, such as larger spills that cause substantial evacuations, major road closures, serious injuries or releases of especially dangerous materials. The number of serious incidents that were reported: 1,403.

Read more at http://www.usatoday.com/printedition/news/20090909/1ahazmat09_st.art.htm [Thanks to Don Johnston of DG & Hazmat Group for passing on this link]

ITOPF ANNOUNCES STAFF CHANGES

Richard Johnson, Technical Director

Dr Michael O'Brien, Technical Team Manager

As foreseen, on 1 September 2009, Richard Johnson took over the position of Technical Director from Hugh Parker, who has now moved to a part-time role as Principal Technical Adviser. Richard is a marine biologist with a Masters degree in Radiation and Environmental Protection. He has been with ITOPF for almost 15 years and was formerly a Technical Team Manager. Richard has attended over 40 spills, including the SEA EMPRESS and PRESTIGE. More recently, he has been heavily involved in supporting the IOPC Funds and Skuld P&I Club in the assessment of claims for clean-up and pollution damage following the HEBEI SPIRIT oil spill in Korea.

Also on 1 September Dr Michael O’Brien was promoted to Technical Team Manager. Michael joined ITOPF in 2001. He has previously worked in the United States for the NOAA Damage Assessment Center and also in Austria as Assistant Professor for Environmental Economics.

http://www.itopf.com/news-and-events/#staff

NEW OIL SPILL RESPONSE SYSTEMS TESTED DURING 2009 FRIGG FIELD “OIL ON WATER” EXERCISE

The AADI Doppler Log System to measure speed through water of towed oil booms was in use during the yearly “Oil on Water” exercise that was held around the Frigg Oil Field in the North Sea from 8 to 12 June this year. The system was clearly useful because, as explained by the command and towing vessel Captain; “I now have full control over the oil boom recovery system speed through the water. We can see the true system speed displayed on the control panel allowing us to operate at the maximum oil recovery speed and not exceed the 0.7 to 0.9 knot system limit.” The true speed through water from the Doppler Log and speed over ground from the GPS was a difference of up to 0.6 knots.

Oil spill response AIS Oil Drifter buoys were also used during the exercise. The buoys was deployed to provide detailed information about the drift of the sea surface and where the oil spill would drift when oil was released into the sea. When the oil slick was recovered and pumped back on board the ships, a small oil slick was left on the sea. The AIS Oil Drifter buoy marked and followed the small oil slick for two days. When a reconnaissance air plane surveyed the exercise area it got the AIS up on the screen and was able to focus the search. A small oil slick of crude oil was discovered around the buoy proving that the buoy actually follows the oil in reality and over days.

The manufacturer of these products, Aanderaa Data Instruments (AADI), has also announced a new marketing agreement with AllMaritim, a leader in Norway in the oil spill response sector as well as one of the leading international suppliers. AllMaritim will include AADI's AIS Drifter/response buoys and Doppler Log in its line of oil boom products. http://www.rsaqua.co.uk/pdf/Sensors&Systems_Issue24_Sep09_NR-163.pdf [Thanks to ISCO member, Versha Carter of Intelligent Exhibitions and Oceanbuzz Newsletter for passing on the link to this news item]

INDIA: SUNKEN SHIPS RAISE OIL SPILL CONCERNS IN BAY OF BENGAL

With the capsize of MV Black Rose off the Paradip port on Wednesday evening (September 9), yet another tankful of furnace oil has settled in the bottom of the Bay of Bengal. Ships both large and small capsize quite often along the eastern coast, some of them quite close to the coastline. Experts say that no efforts are made to salvage the wrecks, remove any hazardous cargo or pump out fuel from the tanks. "All that people want to know is whether the ship concerned is an oil tanker. If it is not, everybody seems satisfied. Nobody bothers whether the cargo was hazardous in nature and how much furnace oil the ship was carrying in its fuel tanks. Even if the cargo is not hazardous, the oil is bound to spill out of the tanks at some time or the other," said a researcher from Jadavpur University. According to sources, the Black Rose was carrying 926 tonnes (926,000 litres) of furnace oil. Officials of Paradip Port Trust said they have not noticed any oil spill near the spot as yet. However, there has been no talk of any salvage operation. According to shipping experts, salvage operations cost a lot and owners are not bothered as all vessels are insured. Port officials say that more than 90 ships have sunk in the Bay of Bengal in the last 25 years. This would imply that the seabed is dotted with tanks filled with deadly furnace oil. Shipowners say that the fuel tanks are sealed and there is little possibility of any spillage. Environmentalists say that the seals cannot last lifelong, particularly in seawater and under pressure (at great depths). Read more at http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/news/city/kolkata-/Sunken-ships-raise-oil-spill-concerns-in-Bay-of-Bengal/articleshow/5004373.cms [Thanks to Don Johnston of DG & Hazmat Group for passing on this link]

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR RESPONDING TO HNS SPILLS

Recent correspondence in the Hazmat 101 Group Forum includes a request for information on the design of a hazmat incident response trailer. This is of interest to ISCO because one of the organization's aims is to assist the process of capacity-building in response to oil and chemical spills.

In many countries, response to chemical spill incidents is handled by fire brigades, civil defence authorities or private sector contractors that are well equipped and trained for this work. Elsewhere this situation may not prevail and there is a need to build response capacity. Investment in specialized equipment and training is required but, all too often, financial constraints can mean that this presents a real challenge.

In countries where the primary response to chemical / HNS incidents is carried out by public sector emergency services, there is often a need for the emergency services to able to "hand over" the clean-up to someone else as soon as the situation has been stabilized. It is not usually the role of public emergency services to become involved in protracted clean-up operations. This presents an opportunity for oil spill clean-up contractors to extend the scope of the services they provide. To be continued in next week's ISCO Newsletter.

UK: DOMESTIC CLEANING PRODUCT USED IN NUCLEAR CLEAN-UP

The £1.99 household product Cillit Bang is being used to help clean plutonium stains at the defunct Dounreay nuclear power plant in Caithness. Dounreay Site Restoration Limited (DSRL) said it would help reduce the £2.6bn cost of dismantling the site. The cleaner's use has also drawn interest from operators of other nuclear sites in the UK.

A different domestic product has already been applied in the cleaning of contaminated glass tubes. Randall Bargelt, of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, which owns Dounreay, said such innovative thinking would save taxpayers, who are funding the cost of the dismantling project.

Staff at Sellafield in Cumbria were among those monitoring the use of Cillit Bang in Dounreay's experimental chemical plant. One of the clean-up team suggested trying the product after the fluid normally used was deemed to be slowing down the operation. The cleaner was found to markedly reduce levels of radioactive contamination.

The above is an extract from *Hazmat News*, an online newsletter published by HazmatLINK. You can find more at http://www.hazmatlink.com/

VIKOMA CELEBRATES HUGE EQUIPMENT ORDERS FROM JAPAN

Vikoma, a subsidiary of Energy Environmental Group, has received purchase orders for two major orders from Japan. Two major Japanese organisations have placed orders for oil spill response equipment through Vikoma's agent Gadelius Trading KK in Tokyo, to provide additional emergency response around Japanese coastline.

The order includes 16 containerised boom systems which provide fast deployment, reliable, long life emergency response solution for oil spills in both inshore and offshore situations. The 10ft containers are specially fitted out to provide a self contained response unit, which can be operated direct form the container. Each container unit has 250m of Vikoma's world renowned HI Sprint 1500 boom with a hydraulically powered reel. Vikoma is also supplying 4 containerised TC3 systems, a helicopter spraying system for applying dispersant over large areas. The unique system can be controlled remotely from the helicopter ensuring that dispersant is applied exactly where it is needed.

A separate order for Vikoma Hi Sprint HD, is being shipped to a Japanese oil company, along with 6 Vikoma MiniVac systems, and 2 additional transfer pumps. The Vikoma MiniVacs are packed in specially fitted out containers to ensure they are ready for immediate use in an emergency situation. The MiniVac Systems, complete with hopper and transfer pump, provide continuous, highly efficient beach cleaning due to the unique design. http://www.vikoma.com

CORRECTION : ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS IN SUEZ CANAL

In last week's ISCO Newsletter we printed an extract from a press article "Suez Canal sees growing environmental problems" which contained a reference to a 60,000 tonne spill of diesel fuel from a Panamanian tanker. Unfortunately the reporter who wrote the article got his facts wrong and the mistake was not picked up by your editor. In reality, the tanker *Elli* was in ballast and only carrying 60 tonnes of bunkers when she broke her back and sank near Suez. We are grateful to Erik Ranheim of INTERTANKO for writing in to bring the erroneous report to our attention.