



# ISCO NEWSLETTER

*The Newsletter of the International Spill Response Community*

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## NEW CHAIRMAN FOR INTERTANKO



Nicholas Fistes has decided to step down as INTERTANKO's Chairman due to his additional business commitments. At its meeting in London, the Association's Council elected Capt Graham Westgarth to succeed Fistes as Chairman, with immediate effect.

Westgarth has been a member of our Council for nine years, a member of the Executive Committee since 2006 and was elected Vice Chairman in May 2009. He has over 38 years of industry experience including 17 years at sea. As President of Teekay Marine Services, he is responsible for a fleet of over 165 vessels and over 5,500 staff at sea and ashore.

"I consider it an honour to represent a body whose members are committed to the safe and efficient delivery of the world's energy. I am passionate about our industry, and proud to act as one of its representatives as we seek to highlight the value we bring to society at large," comments Westgarth. "Our remarkable achievements often go largely unnoticed. We must continue to focus on the importance of the job that we do, and how very well we do it".

Read more at: <http://www.maritime-executive.com/article/2009-11-11-new-chairman-intertanko/>

## NEW EU REGISTER TO KEEP TABS ON DANGEROUS POLLUTANTS

The contamination of air, water and land by [industrial](#) pollutants in the EU will face closer scrutiny from this week, following the launch of a [new register](#) from the [European Commission](#) and the [European Environment Agency](#). The register will collate annual data for 91 substances and covers more than 24,000 facilities operating across 65 different industrial sectors. Under the rules of the register, any pollutants transferred offsite have to be reported on and tracked.



"The opening of this register will give citizens direct access to information on [emissions](#) from facilities across Europe and will help them to engage actively in decisions affecting the environment," said environment commissioner Stavros Dimas. "It demonstrates a genuine commitment by the public authorities and industry to share information with citizens and increase openness." More at: <http://www.businessgreen.com/business-green/news/2253093/pollutants-tracked-eu-register>

## **CHINA: NANOTUBE SPONGE PROMISES IMPROVED POLLUTION MOP-UP**

Chinese scientists have developed a sponge made from carbon nanotubes that can absorb 180 times its own weight in organic pollutants. The material, which could be used to clean up oil spills, is expected to perform nine times better than current materials, and can be reused simply after being squeezed.

The sponge, developed by professors Anyuan Cao of Peking University and Dehai Wu of Tsinghua University, is made from carbon nanotubes - microscopic-scale tubes that have been found to have numerous applications in electronic, medical and engineering technologies. The tubes are particularly suited to mopping up oil spills because of their large surface area, and because they naturally repel water, which means that they soak up oil or other pollutants, while leaving water behind.

The scientists, whose research was published in the *Advanced Materials* journal, say that the sponge will absorb 143 times its own weight in diesel oil, and 175 times its own weight in ethylene glycol. They added that a single pellet of the material can quickly absorb a spreading diesel oil film with an area up to 800 times its own size, even if placed at the edge of the spill.

The researchers also envisage the sponges being deployed as filters, membranes, or absorbents to remove bacteria or contaminants from liquids or gases during industrial or manufacturing processes. Other potential applications include noise-absorption layers in houses, and impact energy absorbers.

Read more at: <http://www.businessgreen.com/business-green/news/2252929/nanotube-sponge-promises>  
[Editor's comments - If all the claims are real, this development could have a major impact on oil pollution control techniques. Currently there are concerns about the safety of some aspects of nanotechnology and work is being done to investigate any potential ill effects of its application]

## **USA: EPA ANNOUNCES FINAL AMENDMENTS TO OIL SPILL PREVENTION, CONTROL, AND COUNTERMEASURE RULES**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is announcing a final regulation that amends certain requirements for facilities subject to the Oil Spill Prevention, Control and Countermeasure (SPCC) rule. The amendments clarify regulatory requirements, tailor requirements to particular industry sectors, and streamline certain requirements for a facility owner or operator subject to the rule. With these changes, the agency expects to encourage greater compliance with the SPCC regulations, thus resulting in increased protection of human health and the environment. This rulemaking marks the completion of the SPCC action, which was proposed on October 15, 2007, finalized on December 5, 2008, and for which the agency requested public comments again on February 3, 2009.

The amendments do not remove any regulatory requirement for owners or operators of facilities in operation before August 16, 2002, to develop, implement and maintain an SPCC plan in accordance with the SPCC regulations then in effect. Such facilities continue to be required to maintain their plans during the interim until the applicable date for revising and implementing their plans under the new amendments. More information about the SPCC rule: <http://www.epa.gov/emergencies/content/spcc/index.htm>

## **CHINA: ACID SHIP 'SINKS IN CHINA'S YANGTZE'**

A ship carrying 100 tonnes of hydrochloric acid sank in China's Yangtze river after colliding with another vessel, state media reported, citing local officials.

The collision happened during strong winds in central Hubei province, Xinhua news agency said, adding that efforts were under way to retrieve the highly corrosive cargo. The report did not say if the acid was contained on the sunken ship or had leached into the water. However, it cited officials from the Hubei Provincial Environmental Protection Department as saying tests on the water revealed a pH of between 7.5 and 8.0, which it said was within the normal range.

A reading of pH 7.5 is neutral, with figures higher than that indicating alkalinity while those lower indicate acidity. Crew members were rescued from the vessel and local authorities estimated the operation to recover the chemicals would be completed Monday morning, according to Xinhua.



Industrial accidents are not uncommon in China, where an emphasis on economic growth has led to widespread disregard for standards.

Picture: The Iranian-registered vessel identified as the Zoorik on the brink of capsizing at the mouth of the Yangtze river.

Read more at: <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5i3LmRCjNw0s5eH5tjIKRrbbq0dNw>  
[Thanks to Don Johnston of ISCO Associate Member DG & Hazmat Group for passing on this report]

## USA: INTER-AGENCY EXERCISE PREPARES ALL FOR NATIONAL EMERGENCY



During the Vibrant Response training exercise, a distraught "citizen" weeps aloud after losing her daughter in a nuclear attack. More than 4,000 military and civilian participants converged on Camp Atterbury Joint Maneuver Training Center, Muscatatuck Urban Training Center and its surrounding communities to participate in Vibrant Response, an exercise that simulates an incident of national significance in order to validate the readiness of the National Consequence Management Response Force. (U.S. Army photo by T.D. Jackson)

With an exercise the magnitude of Vibrant Response comes the need for inter-agency communication, team/unit cohesion and quick reaction time. Vibrant Response, an

exercise that simulates a terrorist nuclear attack in the United States, implements those three tenets in order to accomplish the mission at hand - working together to help save lives.

More than 4,000 military and civilian participants converged on Camp Atterbury Joint Maneuver Training Center, Muscatatuck Urban Training Center and its surrounding communities Nov. 5 - 12 to participate in a training exercise that would put their capabilities to the test. Air Force Gen. Victor E. "Gene" Renuart Jr., the commander of North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Northern Command, explained how when attacks of this nature surpass the capability of first responders, there are people in place who are trained specifically for such an occasion.

"When an event like this occurs," he said, "absolutely the first people on the scene are going to be the local first responders..." "But as you could imagine, an event like a nuclear detonation will rapidly grow beyond the capacity of certainly the local first responders and maybe state and potentially national responders," he said. "And so what we've tried to approximate in this scenario is that those first responders have arrived, they have conducted those initial searches, and we've asked for the civil support teams from within the state to come and assess for chemical, biological and nuclear conditions and help us understand what would be required to respond to this." More at:

[http://www.blackanthem.com/News/U\\_S\\_Military\\_19/Inter-agency-exercise-prepares-all-for-national-emergency21380.shtml](http://www.blackanthem.com/News/U_S_Military_19/Inter-agency-exercise-prepares-all-for-national-emergency21380.shtml)

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.