

ISCO & THE ISCO NEWSLETTER

The ISCO Newsletter is published weekly by the International Spill Control Organisation, a not-for-profit organisation supported by members in 45 countries. ISCO has Consultative Status at IMO, Observer Status at IOPC Funds and is dedicated to raising worldwide preparedness and co-operation in response to oil and chemical spills, promoting technical development and professional competency, and to providing a focus for making the knowledge and experience of spill control professionals available to IMO, UNEP, EC and other organisation.

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International news

IMO MEPC POLLUTION PREVENTION AND RESPONSE SUB-COMMITTEE MEETS



January 19 - IMO Secretary-General Sekimizu opened the Sub-Committee on Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR), 2nd session (19-23 January), which is being chaired by Mr Sveinung Oftedal (Norway).

Items on the agenda include technical work related to MARPOL Annex VI and the NOX Technical Code; development of the "Ballast Water Management – How to do it" manual; revision of the Inventory of Hazardous Materials, to support the Ship Recycling Convention; finalization of the draft Guidelines on international offers of assistance intended to provide guidance to States requesting and receiving emergency assistance during spill incidents; and developing a recommendation for a single definition of black carbon in relation to emissions from international shipping. ([click here for photo gallery](#)) IMO

IMO MEPC Sub-Committee on Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR)

See also ISCO News on page XXX for ISCO Secretary's Report on the contemporaneous Meeting of the Drafting Group on OPRC related manuals, guidelines and guidance; also Cormack's Column on page XXX for Dr Douglas Cormack's commentary on the Plenary Meeting of PPR2.

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International news (continued)

INTERTANKO TAKES PART IN PLACES OF REFUGE CONSULTATIONS WITH EC

Report received from ISCO Industry Partner, INTERTANKO

INTERTANKO attended the first public consultation with industry on Place of Refuge guidelines produced by the European Commission and raised concerns over their provision. The draft guidelines can be downloaded [here](#).

While INTERTANKO warmly welcomed the draft guidelines as a significant step towards achieving what is needed, several concerns remained. These revolved around the role of the master, clarity over the reasons why a refusal of a place of refuge would take place and the role of the Flag.

We also had reservations on the taking into account of public costs when working in an emergency situation. There was great concern that a place of refuge would be rejected purely because of the perception of the costs to the public authorities.

However, it should be reiterated that the provisions included in the draft guidelines, incorporating a feedback loop in the event of a refusal to grant a place of refuge and the need to comply with the IMO guidelines, were strongly welcomed by the whole of the industry present.

This was particularly good as the guidelines and the response from industry were in line with the INTERTANKO paper MSC94/20/1, co-sponsored by Liberia, the Marshall Islands, the International Maritime Pilots' Association (IMPA), the International Federation of Shipmasters' Associations (IFSMA), Intercargo and Intermanager.

The next step is for interested parties to submit their comments in writing to the EC by 31 January, the commission will then take these into account and publish a new set of guidelines in the Spring of 2015. For more information, contact: [Phil Belcher](#) or [Michele White](#)

Related link - [Report from the Commission to the Council and European Parliament regarding liability and compensation for financial damages sustained by places of refuge when accommodation a ship in need of assistance](#)

Incident reports from around the world (in chronological order)

USA: MYSTERY CRUD'S TOLL ON EAST BAY BIRDS GROWS

Picture below - Isabel Luevano, left, and Terry Butterworth of International Bird Rescue tend to a bird that is coated with an unknown substance, at International Bird Rescue's San Francisco bay Center in Fairfield. More than 70 birds coated in the same substance were found at different places along the East Bay shoreline, starting on Friday 16th January 2015 and transferred to International Bird Rescue for further care. Photo: Cheryl Reynolds / International Bird Rescue.



The number of shorebirds coated with a mysterious killer goop found along the East Bay shoreline this weekend has grown to 100 as frustrated rescuers try new ways to clean off the sticky, odorless substance.

"Something's on these birds, and there may be hundreds more out there," said Barbara Callahan, interim executive director for International Bird Rescue.

So far, 20 birds have died from the grayish material they picked up at Crab Cove in Alameda, the San Leandro Marina, and around the Hayward Shoreline near Winton Avenue. [SFGate](#) [Read more](#)

Incident reports from around the world (continued)

NIGERIA: APPREHENSION AS DELTA COMMUNITY AWAITS INVESTIGATION OF OIL SPILL

January 19 - There is growing apprehension in Otu-Jeremi community of Ughelli South Local Government Area of Delta State as the community awaits investigation into the cause of the broken pipeline that caused the oil spill presently ravaging the area.

Community News investigation, however, revealed that members of the Joint Investigation Visit drawn from the Nigerian Petroleum Development Company (NPDC), owners of the pipeline; government agencies and members of Otu Jeremi and Opare communities are yet to agree on modalities on how the investigation should be carried out.

The oil spill in Otughievwen, headquarters of Ughelli South Local Government Area, also polluted Gbogidi River in the community. *Nigerian Tribune* [Read more](#)

USA: OIL SPILLS INTO YELLOWSTONE RIVER, POSSIBLY POLLUTING DRINKING WATER



Picture: Cleanup workers cut holes into the ice on the Yellowstone River near Crane, Montana, Monday after a pipeline spill that released up to 50,000 gallons of crude. Photograph by Matthew Brown, Associated Press

January 20 - The scenic Yellowstone River has suffered its second sizable oil spill in four years, prompting truckloads of drinking water to be shipped into the eastern Montana city of Glendive. The latest spill is not expected to affect Yellowstone National Park, about 350 miles upstream.

Some oil from the weekend spill got into a water supply intake along the river that serves about 6,000 people in Glendive, according to preliminary tests at the city's water treatment plant.

The sample showed elevated levels of volatile organic compounds, predominantly benzene, that

would explain the odor in tap water, officials at the plant said. The potential health risks are uncertain until further testing is complete, they said. *National Geographic* [Read more](#)

January 20 - Montana Governor Declares State Of Emergency After River Oil Spill

As much as 50,000 gallons of crude oil has spilled into the Yellowstone River in eastern Montana. It was caused by a pipeline rupture near the high plains town of Glendive. The governor has declared a state of emergency in two counties because of the spill. Montana Public Radio's Eric Whitney reports. *NPR.org* [Read more](#)

January 24 - Yellowstone River oil spill clean-up hindered by ice at site of pipeline break

One week after a pipeline spilled nearly 40,000 gallons of crude oil into the Yellowstone River and contaminated a Montana city's water supply, clean-up crews have made little progress in their efforts to remove it from the partially-frozen river.

The site of the pipeline break, six miles upstream from the high-plains city of Glendive, Montana, is almost entirely capped in ice, complicating efforts to retrieve the oil and slowing the response process.

The cause of the spill remains under investigation. *The Guardian* [Read more](#)

USA: SALTWATER CONTAMINATES MISSOURI RIVER AFTER PIPELINE SPILL

January 23 - Saltwater contamination from a massive pipeline spill in northwestern North Dakota reached the Missouri River, the state's environmental chief said Friday, adding that officials did not expect harm to wildlife or drinking water supplies because the water was diluted. Blacktail Creek and the Little Muddy River were contaminated after nearly three million gallons of saltwater leaked this month from a pipeline operated by Summit Midstream Partners. *The New York Times* [Read more](#)

USA: AUTHORITIES BATTLE TOXIC CHEMICAL RUN-OFF IN NORWALK, OHIO

January 23 - Emergency responders thwarted a toxic chemical spill on the city's north side Friday afternoon. Norwalk Fire Capt. Brett Beers said chemicals from the Super Wash, 219 Milan Ave., had entered the drain, moved on to the retention pond, traveled to a nearby creek and were headed for the wastewater treatment plant before being stopped. *Norwalk Reflector* [Read more](#)

Incident reports from around the world (continued)

USA: ELEVEN RESCUED AS VESSEL CARRYING 75,000 GALLONS OF FUEL SINKS OFF HAWAII

January 24 - Eleven people were rescued on Thursday after their towing vessel -- carrying 75,000 gallons of diesel fuel -- sank off the coast of Oahu, according to Honolulu Coast Guard.

"Mayday, mayday, mayday." A radio recording released by the Coast Guard established the moment an officer sent a distress call to the base. "Approximately two and half miles west of Barbers Point Harbor," the officer said, "vessel appears to have started to sink."

The mayday call came after the pilot of the towing vessel Nalani called the Coast Guard at 3:13 p.m. HST to report their ship was flooding and could sink. [CNN News](#) [Read and watch video](#)

Other news reports from around the world (countries in alphabetical order)

ALBANIA: ACCESSION TO OPRC-HNS PROTOCOL



January 19 - The Ambassador of Albania, H.E. Mr Mal Berisha, has met with IMO Secretary-General Sekimizu (19 January) to deposit its instrument of accession to the Protocol on Preparedness, Response and Cooperation to Pollution Incidents by Hazardous and Noxious Substances, 2000 (OPRC/HNS 2000).

The Protocol aims to establish national systems for preparedness and response and to provide a global framework for international cooperation in combating major incidents or threats of marine pollution, specifically with incidents involving hazardous and noxious substances. [IMO Press Release](#)

BANGLADESH: PARLIAMENTARY WATCHDOG QUESTIONS RESUMING SUNDARBANS RIVER TRAFFIC AFTER OIL SPILL

January 19 - The parliamentary committee on environment has asked the shipping ministry to explain why vessel movement has been allowed to resume on the Shela River before UN experts filed their report on the oil spill in the Sundarbans.

"The Ministry of Shipping has been asked to state in writing why the plying of vessels has been permitted in the Shela River before the UN team submitted its report," Hasan Mahmud, Chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on the Ministry of Forest and Environment, said after a meeting in parliament building on Sunday. [BDNews24.com](#) [Read more](#)

January 21 - Sundarbans still reeling from effects of December oil spill

Last month, an estimated 350,000 liters of fuel oil spilled into the Sundarbans delta on the Bay of Bengal. An oil tanker that had collided with a cargo vessel on December 9th sank into the Shela River, spilling its oil into a protected sanctuary for the rare and endangered Irrawaddy dolphins (*Orcaella brevirostris*) and the Ganges river dolphins (*Platanista gangetica*).

The navigation route through Shela River had been unauthorized, yet about 200 boats and ships carrying cargo or oil would ply the route daily. Earlier this month, despite the catastrophe, the Bangladesh government reopened the main Shela River for cargo boats. This would go on temporarily, a government statement said, until an alternate waterway was dredged. [MongaBay.com](#) [Read more](#)

CANADA: ST. LAWRENCE RIVER: 334 SPILLS IN 10 YEARS



Photo: A boat near Trois-Rivières, Que., leaked at least 10,000 litres into the St. Lawrence River in December 2014. (Radio-Canada)

January 19 - The 28,000 litres of diesel that spewed into the St. Lawrence River last week — and led to a municipal drinking water advisory in Longueuil, Que. — is just the latest in a long list of oil spills into the river.

[Damaged infrastructure, poor design caused Longueuil diesel leak](#) [Longueuil water spill: How it happened](#)

There were 334 spills involving ships in the St. Lawrence River between February 2002 and November 2012, according to federal documents obtained by Radio-Canada.

The documents also show the limits of the system used by the federal and provincial governments to track the extent of spills and their potential environmental impacts. [CBC News](#) [Read more](#) [Thanks to Allan Grawey, Imbibitive Technologies]

CANADA: CANADIANS NOT CONFIDENT OTTAWA CAN HANDLE OIL SPILLS, GOVERNMENT POLL SHOWS

January 19 - Canadians lack confidence in the federal government to effectively deal with oil spills on land and at sea, according to internal polling conducted for Natural Resources Canada.

The \$174,000 poll, administered by Harris-Decima between April and July 2014, found that Canadians largely agree the extractive sector creates good jobs and benefits local economies. But it also found that Canadians are not confident in the federal government's ability to handle spills from pipelines, tankers, or rail accidents.

Only 27 per cent of respondents said they were confident in Ottawa's ability to respond to an oil spill at sea, while 46 per cent said they lacked confidence. For oil spills on land, 32 per cent trusted the federal government to adequately respond, while 41 per cent said they did not. *TheStar.com* [Read more](#)

MYANMAR: MINISTRY TO MONITOR OIL TRANSPORT WITH DRONES

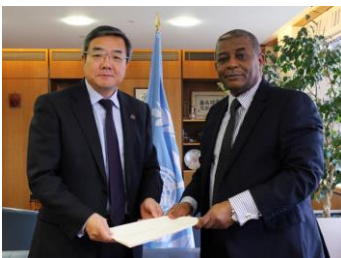
January 22 - The Energy Ministry said it will use drones to monitor the loading and unloading of oil at the Shwe Gas Project in Madaya Island, Rakhine State, in order to detect and address possible oil spills. Meanwhile, locals plan to protest if a spill occurs.

"We just asked Zayyar Aung, the energy minister, whether oil spill rules and regulations in line with international norms have been set up for the protection and conservation of the environment. He said the ministry will be using drone for monitoring and taking action against spills," said Rakhine Ethnic Affairs Minister Zaw Aye Maung on January 20 at Madaya Island.

He added that in Singapore, fines for oil spills cost companies millions of dollars.

"As Myanmar's rules and regulations are weak, it is likely that oil will be carelessly spilled by a company into the ocean, and the company will pay [a meager] US\$ 4,000 and 5,000 for the spill. This could lead to environmental damage around Kyaukphyu area," Zaw Aye Maung continued. *The Nation* [Read more](#)

SUDAN: ACCESSION TO ENVIRONMENTAL TREATIES



January 21 - H.E. Mr Mohammed A. Eltom, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Sudan, today (21 January) met IMO Secretary-General Sekimizu to present the Sudan's instruments of accession to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) and the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation (OPRC 90).

UK: SHOCKING STATE OF WORLD'S RISKIEST NUCLEAR WASTE SITE

Picture: Sellafield holds waste dating back to the dawn of the nuclear age (Image: Sellafield Ltd)

January 21 - Huge pools of mystery sludge, leaking silos and risk of explosions: Sellafield needs help, but the UK government has just sacked the firm running the clean-up

URGENT clean-up of two of the world's most dangerous radioactive waste stores will be delayed by at least five years, despite growing safety fears.

The waste is stored at the UK's Sellafield nuclear reprocessing site, which holds radioactive waste dating back to the dawn of the nuclear age. An accident at the derelict site could release radioactive materials into the air over the UK and beyond.

Last week, the UK government sacked the private consortium running the £80-billion-programme to clean up Sellafield, and gave the job back to its own agency, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA). The clean-up operation, scheduled to end by 2120, costs the government £1.9 billion a year. *New Scientist* [Read more](#)



Other news reports from around the world (continued)

USA: KEY ISSUES AND UPDATES ON THE KEystone XL OIL PIPELINE

January 22 - To build or not to build? That question is at the heart of the debate over the Keystone XL oil pipeline.

The answer, and the fate of the \$8 billion project, depends on what happens in Congress, the courts, the White House and with TransCanada, the company planning to construct it. The odds of building seem to change almost daily.

A lawsuit is tossed out, then some others are filed. The Republican-controlled Congress is poised to approve a bill authorizing construction, despite a White House promise of a veto. The State Department, after stalling its review because of a Nebraska court case, gives federal agencies a new deadline to weigh in.

The 1,179-mile pipeline, first proposed in 2008, would carry an estimated 800,000 barrels of tar sands oil from Canada into the United States, connecting with existing pipelines leading to Gulf Coast refineries. *Ohio.com* [Read more](#)

USA: REGULATORS ORDER PIPELINE UPGRADES AFTER MONTANA OIL SPILL

January 23 - Federal regulators on Friday ordered a pipeline company to make major upgrades to a line that spilled almost 40,000 gallons of oil into Montana's Yellowstone River and fouled a local water supply.

The order comes after Bridger Pipeline of Casper, Wyoming, announced plans to bury its line deeper beneath the Yellowstone to protect against future accidents.

The Department of Transportation order would make that improvement mandatory and require identical action where the line runs beneath the Poplar River in northeast Montana.

The cause of the Jan. 17 spill remains under investigation. It prompted a five-day shutdown of drinking water services for 6,000 people in the city of Glendive after oil got into a treatment plant.

Cleanup crews so far have made minimal progress recovering oil from the ice-covered river. The Yellowstone is a popular recreation destination and home to fish including the endangered pallid sturgeon. *ABC News* [Read more](#)
[Another related report in Yahoo News](#)

People in the news

IMO: MEPC PPR SUB-COMMITTEE ELECTIONS



January 19 - In accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Marine Environment Protection Committee, the PPR Sub-Committee unanimously re-elected Mr. Sveinung Oftedal (Norway) as Chairman and Dr. Flavio Fernandes (Brazil) as Vice-Chairman, both for 2016.

Mr Sveinung Oftedal is in the picture. *IMO*

UK: NEW CEO APPOINTED AT SCOTTISH ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AGENCY

Terry A'Hearn has been appointed as the next Chief Executive of SEPA. Mr A'Hearn is currently CEO of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency. SEPA Chairman, David Sigsworth said today - "We are very pleased that Terry A'Hearn has been successfully appointed as our new Chief Executive. Terry has a strong background in environmental protection and regulation. He has previously worked for the international environmental consultancy WSP Environment and Energy, and also for the Environment Protection Authority in the Australian State of Victoria. We expect Terry to take up his position in April, and we are all looking forward to working with him. "James Curran, our current Chief Executive, has agreed to remain in post until Terry can take up his position." *SEPA*



USA: LEADERSHIP CHANGES AT CHAMBER OF SHIPPING OF AMERICA



Joseph J. Cox, President/CEO of the Chamber of Shipping of America (CSA), will retire on May 31, 2015 and will be succeeded by Kathy J. Metcalf, currently Director of Marine Affairs for CSA. Mr. Cox will continue assisting the organization on various issues in an advisory capacity.

In making the announcement, Captain Bruce Fernie, Chairman of the CSA Board said "Joe has devoted the major part of his professional career as a valued representative of the American maritime community. *The Maritime Executive* [Read more](#)

USA: OSG APPOINTS NEW PRESIDENT AND CEO



New York-based tanker group Overseas Shipholding Group, Inc. announced Thursday the appointment of Captain Ian T. Blackley as its new President and Chief Executive Officer, effective immediately.

“Captain Blackley is a veteran of the shipping industry and has been instrumental in the success of OSG during his 24-year tenure at the Company,” said Doug Wheat, Chairman of the Board of OSG..

gCaptain [Read more](#)

ISCO news

MEPC PPR SUB-COMMITTEE AND DRAFTING GROUP ON OPRC RELATED MANUALS, GUIDELINES AND GUIDANCE MEETINGS

A SHORT REPORT COMPILED BY THE ISCO SECRETARY

These meetings took place from 19 to 21 January 2015. ISCO was represented by Dr Douglas Cormack and myself. This worked out well because for the most part the meetings took place simultaneously – Dr Cormack focused on the meeting of the PPR Sub-Committee while I attended the meetings of the Drafting Group on the OPRC Related Manuals, Guidelines and Guidance.

The Meeting of the PPR Sub-Committee (PPR2) was its second meeting and having been unable to attend PPR1 in February 2014, I was on a learning curve regarding the PPR meeting arrangements. The Plenary Meeting of PPR2 took place in the main hall and, reflecting the broad remit of the new committee, commanded a very large attendance in size similar to that of MEPC. In contrast, the meeting of the Drafting Group, held in one of the Committee Rooms, was quite small – 32 participants from 17 nation states and 7 other organizations. Many of those present had been regular participants of the (now disbanded) OPRC-HNS Technical Group.

PPR 2 opened with an address from the IMO Secretary-General. He commented on recent incidents “First of all, I would like to mention the accidents experienced recently - grounding; sinking; fire; and collision – which have brought some stark reminders that traditional safety concerns and the protection of the marine environment should remain at the top of our agenda” In regard to OPRC and OPRC-HNS related matters, he said “On the implementation of the OPRC Convention and the OPRC-HNS Protocol and relevant Conference resolutions, I note with satisfaction the excellent work done by the correspondence group. I urge the Sub-Committee to finalize the draft Guidelines on international offers of assistance, which are intended to provide guidance to States requesting and receiving emergency assistance during spill incidents. The Guidelines were initiated following the Deepwater Horizon spill incident, which highlighted the advantages of establishing universally agreed procedures for this aspect of a response. It is my hope that these Guidelines, once published, will facilitate the process for requesting and receiving emergency assistance during future incidents and further enhance not only regional, but global cooperation in times of need”. The full text of his opening address can be read at <http://www.imo.org/MediaCentre/SecretaryGeneral/Secretary-GeneralsSpeechesToMeetings/Pages/PPR-2-opening.aspx>

After about an hour, delegates involved in the Drafting Group on the OPRC Related Manuals, Guidelines and Guidance were invited to leave the Plenary Meeting to join their separate meeting.

The Drafting Group on OPRC related manuals, guidelines and guidance met under the co-chairmanship of Mr. S. Lundgren (United States) and Mr. F. Merlin (France) and the tasks to be addressed were –

- 1) Finalize the Guidelines on international offers of assistance, on the basis of the report of the correspondence group
- 2) Finalize part III of the IMO Dispersant Guidelines
- 3) Prepare terms of reference for a correspondence group to finalize part IV of the IMO Dispersant Guidelines
- 4) Consider the possibility to incorporate the work on the revision of section II of the Manual on oil pollution – Contingency planning and on the Guide on oil spill response on ice and snow conditions in the correspondence group to be established under agenda item 13 and advise the Sub-Committee accordingly

Over the following days the Drafting Group steadily worked through the tasks, effecting corrections and improvements after discussion and approval of the Group.

The outcomes were as follows –

- 1) Revisions to the text of the IOA Guidelines were completed for approval by the sub-committee.
- 2) Revisions to the text of part III of IMO Dispersant Guidelines were completed for approval by the sub-committee. In addition the group proposed that parts I, II and III should be published together as one document, and made available as soon as part III of the Guidelines is approved by the MEPC. Furthermore, the group also proposed that part IV of the IMO Dispersant Guidelines is published as a separate document once finalized and approved, with a target submission to MEPC 72.
- 3) The group prepared the terms of reference for a correspondence group relating to the development of part IV of the IMO Dispersant Guidelines. Note that part IV of the Guidelines will address subsea dispersant use.

ISCO news (continued)

- 4) The group considered the incorporation of the work on the revision of Section II of the Manual on oil pollution – Contingency Planning within the correspondence group to be re-established under agenda item 13. The group reiterated the importance of the revision of this document, in particular in assisting Governments to incorporate the risks associated with offshore installations, seaports and oil handling facilities within their national contingency planning process, as well as to assist regulators in assessing the adequacy of contingency plans developed to address these risks. A number of delegations and organizations (including ISCO) indicated their willingness to assist the revision of the manual, with RAC/REMPETIC-Caribe agreeing to coordinate this effort within the correspondence group to be led by the United States.
- 5) The group also considered the incorporation of the work on finalizing the Guide on oil spill response in ice and snow conditions within the correspondence group. However, it was concluded by the group that, as the guide is almost finalized, a final review could be carried out through an informal group of interested Member Governments and organizations, prior to submission to PPR 3. Therefore, it was agreed not to incorporate this work within the terms of reference of the correspondence group.
- 6) The group prepared the terms of reference for the Correspondence Group on OPRC-HNS related Manuals, Guidelines and Guidance, which are reproduced below:
 - (a) Develop a final draft of part IV of the IMO Dispersant Guidelines
 - (b) Prepare a final draft of section II of the Manual on Oil Pollution – Contingency Planning;
 - (c) Submit a written report to PPR 3, with a finalized draft of section II of the Manual on Oil Pollution – Contingency Planning, and report on the progress made on the development of part IV of the IMO Dispersant Guidelines; and
 - (d) Submit a written report to PPR 4, with a finalized version of part IV of the IMO Dispersant Guidelines.

A key recommendation to the sub-committee will be for the re-establishment of the correspondence group on OPRC-HNS related manuals guidelines and guidance.

During the discussions on the IOA Guidelines, The ISCO Secretary made an intervention in order to correct any misconceptions that might have arisen as a consequence of the recent issue of the document “EMERGENCY SOURCING OF EXPERTS, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES” See <http://www.spillcontrol.org/emergency-assistance>

Since its introduction some years ago by the Delegation of the United States ISCO has been a consistent supporter of the IOA initiative and has played an active part in the core group that prepared the draft document. After much deliberation, ISCO decided to delay the development of how the organization should actively be involved in a practical way until the IOA Guidelines were finally approved by MEPC.

However, the recent event in the Sundarbans of Bangladesh indicated a situation where a nation state with limited oil spill response resources very urgently needed help. Because of this, ISCO very quickly prepared and disseminated information on its fast track route under which worldwide private sector resources (response contractors, equipment and materials suppliers and manufacturers, consultants and experts with specialised knowledge and experience) could be quickly sourced.

It remains ISCO’s intention that its role in assisting governments, responsible parties and other entities in the emergency sourcing of oil / HNS spill response resources will be properly aligned with the recommendations of the IMO IOA Guidelines. Further work will be done to develop this and to strengthen the robustness of the facility being provided by ISCO.

As further background, it should be noted that the IOA Guidelines will not contain contact details for major world response equipment stockpiles owned by oil industry, governments and private entities. In early document drafts such contacts were included but were later taken out because it is not IMO policy (or indeed practical) to include within published documents lots of contact information that would require continuous updating.

Because of the large number of organizations, companies and individuals in a position to offer spill combat support, ISCO proposed that it should provide a single point contact for rapid relay of requests for assistance.

This will have to be done in a different way but it will remain ISCO’s policy to further develop such a facility that will be harmonised with the IOA Guidelines and consistent with ISCO’s mission to raise worldwide preparedness and co-operation in response to oil and chemical spills.

THE EDUCATIONAL ROLE OF THE ISCO NEWSLETTER

The ISCO Newsletter has in the past published excellent serialised articles on such matters as inland spill response, aerial observation of oil spills, in-situ burning, bitumens and dilbits, etc. by respected experts including Dr Merv Fingas and Mark Francis and others.

Your editor is currently looking for more interesting articles of this kind. If you are willing to contribute an article of this kind, please get in touch. john.mcmurtrie@spillcontrol.org

Disseminating news about new technical developments is of value to our community. Corporate Members and others are invited to contribute articles.

You editor is also interested to receive interesting case histories for publication. Dealing with spill events often requires an innovative approach and you are invited to share your experiences.



In this issue of the ISCO Newsletter we are printing No. 187 in a series of articles contributed by Dr Douglas Cormack.

Dr Douglas Cormack is an Honorary Fellow of ISCO. As the former Chief Scientist at the British Government's Marine Pollution Control Unit and head of the UK's first government agency, the Warren Spring Laboratory, Douglas is a well-known and highly respected figure in the spill response community. He is the Chairman and a founder member of the [International Spill Accreditation Association](#)

CHAPTER 187 : PROGRESS REPORT FROM PPR 2

Article 186 reported that the documents submitted to meetings 10-16 of the OPRC Technical Group on our new knowledge repository and its knowledge-only approach to contingency and incident-specific planning had been respectively summarised in documents MEPC 67/19/ INF13 and IOPCF/Oct 14/2/2; that while our MEPC 67 document had been postponed with others to MEPC 68, no dissent had arisen from any TG participant nor from the IOPCF Assembly; that this absence of dissent must be attributed to my newly defined knowledge/belief differentiation which shows retention of beliefs already refuted by knowledge to be the irrationality of madness and thus ultimately unsustainable; and that the current absence of dissent is the first step to acceptance of such knowledge and to rejection of such belief.

Further to acceptance of knowledge and rejection of belief, this article reports that a correspondence sub-group of the OPRC Technical Group was producing guidelines for the use of dispersants at sea as requested by MEPC 61, while ISCO was serially presenting documents to the Technical Group on my knowledge-only approach to all aspects of prevention and response including dispersant-use; that the correspondence group has now reported to the Pollution Prevention and Response Sub-Committee at its PPR2 meeting (19-23 January 2015) for onward transmission to MEPC 68; and that it is now possible to evaluate the extent to which these guidelines accept or reject the beliefs which are refuted in the knowledge-only approach now rescheduled for presentation to MEPC 68.

Again, this article reports that I took no part in the above correspondence group in order to avoid the possibility of being associated with the beliefs which have suppressed the knowledge which refuted them from as early as the mid 1970s; that since then I have been frustratingly aware of this belief-inspired suppression of the knowledge which I sought to publicise as the head of the oil/HNS division at Warren Spring Laboratory (WSL), as the founding scientist of the UK marine pollution control unit (MPCU), as chairman of oil response manual working groups of the MEPC and the Bonn Agreement, and ultimately as director of the DTI/WSL Agency on Environmental Science and Technology covering marine releases and discharges, national air quality monitoring, abatement of industrial/automotive emissions to the atmosphere, waste recycling and/or disposal, and remediation of contaminated land; and that having more recently sought to reverse this suppression of knowledge by my definitive knowledge/belief differentiation, I had no wish to associate myself with what was likely to be yet another round of belief-inspired knowledge-suppression.

Thus, having taken no part in the correspondence group, I am now free to evaluate the extent to which it has accepted the knowledge and rejected the beliefs as differentiated in the ISCO documents submitted in parallel to meetings 10-16 of the Technical Group itself. Thus, this article now reports that while the belief in species-extinction/ecological-disaster has previously suppressed all knowledge of the benefits of dispersant use, the correspondence group now grudgingly accepts that the known concentrations of oil in seawater are insufficient to cause such effects; that dispersants are much less toxic than oil at seawater concentrations; and that the oil slick thickness which is the only source of such seawater concentrations is of the order of 0.1mm; that dispersed oil dilutes and biodegrades in the water column; and that dispersants are known to prevent the physical coating of organisms and shorelines and to eliminate the need for recovered pollutants to be processed: all of which is an acceptance of part of the ISCO knowledge repository, though the correspondence group made no reference to it.

However, the correspondence group has yet to accept that the belief in extinction/disaster which still seeks to prohibit dispersant use in shallow waters and within prohibited distances from shore has been refuted by the absence of any such effects at all incidents thus far; and that the maximum concentration to be expected from instantaneous dispersion of a 0.1mm thick slick would be 100ppm even if all of it were permanently retained in the top metre of the water column. Again, while the group accepts that dispersants prevent the physical coating of birds, animals and shorelines, it still cites the belief that the concentrations resulting from their use are disadvantageous to the organisms of the water column despite their being biodegraded by them. Yet again, the group claims that the advantages and disadvantages of dispersant use are such as to require net environmental benefit analysis (NEBA) to be conducted by discussion despite the advantages being known and the disadvantages being merely belief, despite the latter having been refuted by known seawater concentrations, despite the total absence of quantifiable permanent effects at any and every oil release thus far, and despite the ineffectiveness of all belief-only response thus far having been incapable of preventing any such extinction/disaster had it been other than mere belief.

Thus, this article reports that this latest guidance on the use of dispersants has made recordable progress towards ultimate acceptance of the knowledge-only approach advocated by ISCO; and that full acceptance cannot now be long delayed given that its rejection is now seen to require definitive belief to be preferred to the definitive knowledge which refutes it.

However, lest there be any misunderstanding, it should be noted that releases from marine casualties cause sufficient interruption of commercial activities to justify response by all available cost-effective means even if this is the main if not the only reason for such response. Further to such response, it should be noted that the slick encounter rates of all such means are limited by the slick thickness which limits the seawater concentrations arising from natural and induced dispersion; that while response units are encountering only very localised areas of slicks, natural evaporation and/or dispersion is occurring over the entire area; that these natural amounts greatly exceed the amounts attributable to any realistic response; and that these known limitations of slick-response techniques make imperative the need to limit releases by emergency cargo/bunker transfer at sea or preferably in the nearest safe haven.

Cormack's Column (continued)

Again, lest there be any misunderstanding, it should be noted that whereas regulations for the operation of ships by ship owners are intended to be mandatory under any Convention currently in force, only guidance is offered through IMO to otherwise regulating States as to how to deal with accidental releases from such ships, individual member States being thus free to accept or reject such guidance; and that consequently individual member States must also be free to accept definitive knowledge and to reject definitive beliefs already refuted by such knowledge without the need for prior endorsement by any IMO committee or indeed by any authority other than that of reality itself.

1 The Rational Trinity: Imagination, Belief and Knowledge, D.Cormack, Bright Pen 2010 available at www.authorsonline.co.uk

2 Response to Oil and Chemical Marine Pollution, D. Cormack, Applied Science Publishers, 1983.

3 Response to Marine Oil Pollution - Review and Assessment, Douglas Cormack, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999.

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Events

FRANCE: ISDAMP - OIL SPILL STUDIES CONFERENCE: CALL FOR SPEAKERS

ISDAMP is pleased to announce that the 6th annual workshop on Oil Spill Studies will be held at EIGSI Engineering School in La Rochelle on March 11th and 12th, 2015.

To extend the results of the ISDAMP (Improving Shorelines Defenses Against Marine Pollution) project, we have organised two workshops about the implications of oil pollution for coastal communities, as part of larger series of events called Oil Spill Studies.

Following our experience gained during the 5th Oil Spill Studies workshop, we will discuss concrete ways to implement innovative strategies for local response to marine pollution with researchers, industries and institutions. In past Oil Spill Studies events, speakers and delegates from European countries and beyond concerned by oil discharge in the environment and civil protection attended.

This call for speakers of the 6th workshop focusses on the policy aspects of oil pollution. We hope that this workshop will encourage synergy between different experts and stakeholders, who are concerned about coastal oil pollution.

In order to participate, please send an extended (1 page) abstract to rose.campbell@eigsi.fr thomas.ternisien@eigsi.fr or frederic.muttin@eigsi.fr Please send abstracts by February 13th, 2015.

Themes of interest include but are not limited to: •Marine, river, estuary, marsh, inland, and coastal pollution

- Pollution monitoring, oil-spill risk in coastal waters, regulation, legislation, modelling
- Civil Protection, response planning, drills, exercises, preparedness
- Decision Support System for local, regional and national authorities
- International cooperation, Atlantic and transatlantic areas, research, policy and laws
- Risk analysis, marine safety, traffic monitoring, and remote sensing tools
- Information sharing systems, e-tools, mobile applications, mapping
- Oiled wildlife, shoreline clean up techniques, ecological impacts and rehabilitation
- Citizen role, volunteers, governance and sustainable management

This project is funded by the DG-ECHO and the Civil Protection Financial Instrument of the European Union. The ISDAMP website is at http://isdamp.eu/?page_id=23

Events (continued)

THE NETHERLANDS: BONN AGREEMENT REMOTE SENSING WORKSHOP

Middelburg (the Netherlands): 14-16 April 2015

Many of the EU coastal states operate special surveillance aircraft in order to detect and observe surface pollution at an early stage. Moreover, when in operation the crew will have a close eye to anything happening at sea. A large part of the operational task is based on MARPOL regulations. Some aircraft also conduct other tasks for national reasons.

The Bonn Agreement Working Group on Operational, Technical and Scientific Questions Concerning Counter Pollution Activities (OTSOPA) at their 2014 meeting, and before, discussed the decline in observed oil pollution, the necessity to agree on enforcement methods for MARPOL annexes and to learn more about available techniques for the identification of floating substances. As this is a Europe-wide series of issues and would also require the involvement of the prosecution experts, it was agreed to extend the invitation to the North Sea Network of Investigators and Prosecutors.

Rijkswaterstaat therefore takes great pleasure in inviting you to the Remote Sensing Workshop that will be organised in Middelburg from 9.00h on Tuesday 14 April 2015 until midday on Thursday 16 April 2015. The preliminary programme and a separate invitation are attached.

The meeting will be held at the following venue: Roosevelt Academy, Lange Noordstraat 1, 4330 AB Middelburg, Netherlands

Concerning travel, there is a direct train connection from Schiphol to Middelburg (it runs to Vlissingen) every 16 and 46 minutes. The return train is every 13 and 43 minutes from Middelburg to Schiphol. For accommodation, delegates are requested to make their own hotel reservations at the following hotel using CODE: MID-GF5406:

Van der Valk hotels, Paukenweg 3, 4337 WH Middelburg tel: +31 118 442525 email sales@middelburg.valk.nl

The booking code entitles delegates to a special single-room rate of 114.50 euros (including breakfast). To obtain this rate delegates must book by telephone or email. Rooms are being held until 1 March 2015 and after that date availability is not guaranteed. You are urgently requested to register for the meeting to allow the hosts to make arrangements in time. Please complete the registration form circulated with this letter and return by email only to secretariat@bonnagreement.org

Contracts and tenders

USA: BSEE TO INVEST \$6 MILLION IN 2015 FOR OIL SPILL RESEARCH PROJECTS

The Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) announced this week that it is soliciting proposals for oil spill response research projects and will be investing up to \$6 million to support these projects in 2015. In a Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) released on the federal government's business opportunities website, www.FedBizOpps.gov, the bureau called for white papers focusing specifically on one of seven topic areas for proposed research covering oil spill response operations on the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf.

The deadline for submitting white papers is February 9th, 2015. Topics should be limited to the following:

- Innovative Methods to Remove Surface Oil under Arctic Conditions;
- Decanting Recovered Oil at Sea;
- Quantifying In-situ Burn Efficiency;
- Innovative New Uses of Chemical Herders to Enhance Oil Spill Mitigation Efforts;
- Develop an Innovative Dispersant Spray Drift Model;
- Determine the Effect of Various Deep-Ocean Conditions on Dispersant Effectiveness; and
- Evaluate Dispersant Effectiveness of Subsea Applications in Ocean Brine Pools.

More information on the BAA can be found here or by searching for the BSEE solicitation E15PS00027 on www.fbo.gov.

BSEE is the principal federal agency funding offshore oil spill response research. The bureau supports a robust research program that includes operation of the National Oil Spill Response Research and Renewable Energy Test Facility, known as Ohmsett, where many of today's commercially available oil spill cleanup products have been tested. Government agencies including the U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Navy as well as private industry and oil spill response organizations from around the world train their emergency response personnel with real oil and their own equipment at BSEE's Ohmsett facility in Leonardo, N.J.

To learn more about BSEE's oil spill response research program and recent research, visit the programs website [here](#). Interested parties are encouraged to view the information presented on the website prior to submitting white papers.

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