



# ISCO NEWSLETTER

*The Newsletter of the International Spill Response Community*

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## **IMO: MARPOL AMENDMENTS TO PREVENT POLLUTION DURING SHIP-TO-SHIP OIL TRANSFER OPERATIONS ADOPTED**

Amendments to the MARPOL Convention to prevent pollution during ship-to-ship oil transfer operations were adopted by the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) when it met for its 59th session from 13 to 17 July 2009, at the IMO Headquarters in London.

The MEPC adopted amendments to MARPOL Annex I for the prevention of marine pollution during some ship-to-ship (STS) oil transfer operations. The amendments are expected to enter into force on 1 January 2011.

The new chapter 8 on Prevention of pollution during transfer of oil cargo between oil tankers at sea will apply to oil tankers of 150 gross tonnage and above and will require any oil tanker involved in oil cargo STS operations to have, on board, a plan prescribing how to conduct STS operations (the STS Plan), which would be approved by its Administration.

Oil residue (sludge) MARPOL amendments - Amendments to MARPOL Annex I regulations 1, 12, 13, 17 and 38, relating to the on board management of oil residue (sludge), were also adopted. The amendments clarify long standing requirements and remove existing ambiguities in order to facilitate compliance by ships' crews. Definitions for oil residue (sludge), oil residue (sludge) tanks, oily bilge water and oily bilge water holding tanks are introduced for the first time. More info: <http://www.imo.org/>

## **IMO: OPRC-HNS IMPLEMENTATION - MODEL COURSES APPROVED**

The MEPC considered the report of the ninth meeting of the OPRC HNS Technical Group, which was held in the week prior to the Committee's session.

The Committee approved two introductory IMO model courses on preparedness for and response to HNS pollution incidents in the marine environment, one aimed at the operational level and the second aimed at management level; the revised OPRC Train-the-Trainer course; and a Guidance document on the identification and observation of spilled oil.

The MEPC noted the ongoing work in developing a Manual on chemical pollution to address legal and administrative aspects of HNS incidents; a Manual on oil pollution, Section I - Prevention; a Manual on incident command system during oil spill response; and Guidelines for oil spill response in fast currents. More info: <http://www.imo.org/>

## **IMO: INDEPENDENT TRAINING AND ACCREDITATION OF PRIVATE OIL AND HNS SPILL RESPONSE CONTRACTORS**

ISCO representative at MEPC, Dr Douglas Cormack presented his paper "Independent Training and Accreditation of Private Oil and HNS Spill Response Contractors" to the IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee at its 59<sup>th</sup> Session. The Committee approved this paper for passage to the Technical Group for its next Session. He will now follow through with a graded assessment of Oil and HNS problems and their respective responses, as an Information Paper direct to the OPRC-HNS Technical Group, so that both papers can be discussed on this next occasion.

## GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY - PUBLICATION: "CLEANING UP"

Ridding the world of dangerous chemicals - Many chemicals are dangerous to human and ecosystem health. Among the worst is a range of synthetic organic compounds that persist in the environment for long periods of time. GEF's involvement in tackling the threats posed by these Persistent Organic Pollutants dates back to 1995. In the ensuing years, the GEF has committed US\$ 360 million to projects in the POPs focal area and leveraged some US\$ 440 million in co-financing to bring the total value of the GEF POPs portfolio to US\$ 800 million. The GEF is investing these funds in a range of programs and activities outlined in this publication to rid the world of dangerous chemicals now and forever. More info: [http://www.gefweb.org/interior\\_right.aspx?id=21584](http://www.gefweb.org/interior_right.aspx?id=21584)



## OHMSETT: REMOTE SENSING TECHNOLOGY TESTED FOR OIL DETECTION



An underwater environment was created to simulate realistic subsurface conditions. This sea-bed contained various sands, rock, stone, dirt and plants.

In January, the United States Coast Guard Research and Development Center returned to Ohmsett for phase two of the Subsurface Oil Detection Technology testing. Whether the oil is neutrally buoyant in the water column, or on the bottom, its presence is difficult to detect. The underwater environment poses major problems including poor visibility, difficulty in tracking oil spill

movement, colder temperatures, problems with containment methods and technologies, and problems with the equipment's interaction with water.

Based on data from a previous stage of this project, it was determined that response efforts for heavy oils have traditionally not been successful, with low recovery rates and extended response times, and existing Coast Guard systems are inadequate for heavy oil detection and recovery. This phase of testing conducted at Ohmsett was to evaluate the capabilities of a sonar device (RESON) and a polarized laser fluorometer (EIC). These included USCG owned imaging sonar from Coda Octopus, a bottom classification-type system from Biosonics, and a pump from Magator to evaluate recovery of very thin patches. In addition, several vendors traveled to Ohmsett using their own funding to take advantage of the arrangement.

In preparation for the tests, Ohmsett personnel constructed an underwater environment by assembling 10 trays to create a 40 foot by 40 foot sea-bed to simulate realistic subsurface conditions. The trays contained various sands, rock, stone, dirt, plants, and seaweed to represent materials likely to be found in river and ocean floors. Different oils were placed in known quantities and thicknesses within the test area. Divers then assisted in placing the sea-bed at the bottom of the Ohmsett test tank.

The instruments being tested were mounted on the main bridge. During each test, the bridge moved over the top of the test field to determine the instrument's ability to distinguish between the oils and the subsurface floor. "It appears that these detection systems can provide quality information under these circumstances," said Kurt Hansen, project engineer. Divers were deployed with a pipe connected to the pump to try and collect the oil. "They were successful with the lighter oil but not with the very viscous ones," said Hansen. <http://www.ohmsett.com/OHMSETT/Ohmsett%20Gazette%20Spring-Summer%202009.pdf>

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO METHANOL SPILLS

Last week we featured information about emergency response to ethanol spills – this week we have some information on methanol.

The Methanol Institute, based at Arlington, Virginia, USA, has published a Methanol Safe Handling Manual. The manual, which is available for free download at <http://www.methanol.org/pdfFrame.cfm?pdf=MethanolSafeHandlingManualOct2008.pdf> includes useful information for responders, including a chapter on Emergency Response with information on containment, recovery and spill site remediation.

A Crisis Communications Handbook accompanies the Methanol Safe Handling Manual, and this has been developed to assist companies in planning for potential incidents involving methanol. <http://www.methanol.org/pdfFrame.cfm?pdf=CrisisCommGuidebookOct2008.pdf>

Methanol Fact Sheets can also be downloaded - <http://www.methanol.org/pdfFrame.cfm?pdf=FactSheets-102208final.pdf>

[Thanks to Don Johnston of DG & Hazmat Group for making this useful information available]

## USA, ALASKA: MYSTERY BLOB LEAVES SCIENTISTS PUZZLED

A huge mat of oily goo caught everyone by surprise when it showed up off the shore of Wainwright, Alaska nearly two weeks ago. Since then, the mysteries have only deepened.

Preliminary testing showed that [the goo](#) was made of [algae](#), even though it looked like an [oil spill](#).

Yet, scientists still don't know what type of algae it is or where it came from. They don't know if it's dangerous to fish or other underwater life, nor do they know what chances are of something like this happening again anytime soon. More at: [http://www.msnbc.msn.com:80/id/32086346/ns/technology\\_and\\_science-science/](http://www.msnbc.msn.com:80/id/32086346/ns/technology_and_science-science/)



## RUSSIA: FUEL OIL SPILT IN RIVER VOLGA

A barge ran aground spilling 190 tonnes of fuel oil into the Volga River in Russia on 13 July. The accident, in Samara region in central Volga, has not affected traffic and clean-up is under way. The 3,000 ton barge belongs to Sartanker, a branch of Volgatanker Shipping Company.

During the navigation period, Russia exports over one million tones per month to north-western Europe through the ports of St. Petersburg, Vysotsk and from floating storage facilities.

Floating storage facilities, which are usually fixed in May, are used as collecting points for oil delivered by river tankers from Volga through the Volgabalt canal and the Neva river for further reloading to export tankers. [Thanks to ISCO Newsletter reader, Kevin Aldus, for forwarding this report] [http://www.tankstoragemag.com/industry\\_news.php?item\\_id=1030](http://www.tankstoragemag.com/industry_news.php?item_id=1030)

## USA: GUIDE TO DEVELOPING A HAZARDOUS MATERIALS TRAINING PROGRAM

This new guide has been prepared based on a partnership agreement between the U.S. Department of Transportation, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) and the Dangerous Goods Advisory Council (DGAC) with input from the Dangerous Goods Symposium for Instructors and the hazmat community.

Mike Morrisette, President of DGAC writes "I'm very pleased to let you know that DOT has posted their new publication "What You Should Know: A Guide to Developing a Hazardous Materials Training Program" on the PHMSA website. The booklet is the product of a DOT/DGAC Partnership Agreement that was begun in early 2008 to develop a guide to explain the training requirements in the Hazardous Materials Regulations, identify those employees who must be trained, and provide a tool to help hazmat employers determine what type of training and training environment may be best for their employees." The new guide can be downloaded at <http://www.dgac.org/trainingpartnership/DOT-DGACTrainingGuide.pdf>

[Thanks to Don Johnston of DG & Hazmat Group for making this information available]

## UK SPILL: FORTHCOMING EVENTS

UK Spill, the trade association for the British spill response industry has announced the following events –

- INLANDSPILL 09 at the Fire service College on 3 September. This year we have guest speakers from Veolia, Elliott Environmental Surveyors and the Environment Agency talking on Environmental Damage regulations, and the status of Waste legislation, in addition we will have a session devoted to training standards for responders, and plans to accredit trainers. The cost per person is £45, book your place now
- UKSPILL09 – the delayed Marine Seminar will take place over 28-29 October at Southampton, featuring speakers from the British Antarctic Survey, and a day afloat and ashore to see equipment and demonstrations in the Solent.

For more information: <http://www.ukspill.org/index.php>

## TECHNOLOGY: NEW SOLAR-POWERED OIL SKIMMER



A new solar-powered oil skimmer has been developed by Abanaki Oil Skimmers of Ohio, USA. Applying the Model 8's already proven success at removing oil from water and water-based solutions, this unit provides a continuous belt and wiper to remove up to 40 gallons of oil per hour from the fluid surface - and lets you "run with the sun." A 12-V motor powers the compact, self-contained unit. That motor runs off a deep-cycle battery, which in turn is recharged by an adjustable solar panel. It takes only a couple of hours to recharge the battery.

More information: <http://www.abanaki.com/press23.html>

## TECHNOLOGY: TOTAL VOLATILE ORGANIC COMPOUND MEASUREMENT

Especially in more recent years, concerns have been raised about the exposure of oil spill clean-up personnel to volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that may occur in, for example, "light ends" or volatile components of some crude oils. The current edition of *Pollution Online* features the application of portable detection/monitoring equipment that could be relevant for responders dealing with HNS spills where VOCs are an issue.

"Prolonged human exposure to volatile organic compounds (VOCs) have been known to cause respiratory problems, cancer, and neurological damage. Environmental damage can include air, water, and soil pollution. Detection using photoionization detectors (PIDs) is the easiest and most efficient way to detect VOC levels. A stand-alone PID provides real time measurement of VOCs in a portable format that anyone can use."

You can read more at: <http://images.vertmarkets.com/crlive/files/downloads/3d5daea1-b426-4866-bfdf-e525ed270ed3/A022.1-App-TVOC.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.