

IMO: NEXT MEETING OF THE OPRC-HNS TECHNICAL GROUP

The tenth session of the IMO OPRC-HNS Technical Group will take place at IMO HQ in London over the week 15 – 19 March, 2009.

CHINA: FUND TO BE ESTABLISHED FOR CLEANING UP OIL SPILLS



In the picture: Oil from a cargo ship that hit the rocks in Zhuhai port, Guangdong province on 16th September. The oil spill is covering more than 24,000 sq m. The accident was caused by Typhoon Koppu.

Major oil companies will soon be required to contribute to a special fund to clean up damage from oil spills. Last year, 109 oil spills occurred in China's seawaters, leaking 354 tons of oil into the waters. The spills wreak havoc on sea life, fishing and tourism, and can cost millions of yuan to clean up and to compensate victims for the damage.

Draft details of how the new regulation will be put into effect next year suggests oil companies pay about 0.3 yuan (4 cents) for each ton of imported oil. If last year's figure of 190 million tons of oil imported into China remains constant, the fund could collect about 57 million yuan a year. Read more: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/bizchina/2009-09/16/content_8696608.htm

ITALY: SHIPWRECK MAY HOLD RADIOACTIVE WASTE SUNK BY MAFIA OFF ITALIAN COAST

Italian ministers and officials were today (16th September) holding urgent consultations following the discovery of an unmarked wreck that prosecutors believe was used by the mafia to sink radioactive [waste](#).

As a ship carrying equipment for detecting marine pollution headed for the site of the sunken vessel, an investigator said up to 41 others may have been used to dump toxic and nuclear material on the seabed.

A former top mobster said he had personally shipped other waste to Somalia and that the traffic could have led to the death of a well-known Italian reporter.

On Saturday a robot operating 480 metres below sea level sent back murky images of a wreck detected several months earlier by environmental officials. Among other things, they showed two crushed drums protruding from the bows, which appeared to have been blown out in an explosion. The image and the position of the ship – 11 miles off the coast at Cetraro in south-western [Italy](#) – coincided exactly with an account given to prosecutors three years ago by Francesco Fonti, a former boss of the 'Ndrangheta, the mafia of Calabria. Fonti said he and others had used explosives acquired in Holland to sink three vessels in the Mediterranean. The one off Cetraro was carrying [nuclear waste](#) from Norway, he said. His clan had received the equivalent of almost £100,000 for disposing of it.

Read more : <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/sep/16/shipwreck-waste-mafia-italy>

USA: DIRTY BOMB ATTACK WOULD BRING CLEAN-UP CHAOS

A dirty bomb attack on the US would find the country ill-prepared to clean up the resulting radioactive mess, a government watchdog has warned – and hasty attempts at cleaning up could make things worse.

Building a true nuclear bomb requires expert knowledge and possession of plutonium or enriched uranium, which governments keep under tight security. But more widely available radioactive materials, intended for applications such as medical imaging, could be used to construct a "dirty bomb" detonated a conventional explosives such as dynamite. Such an explosion could spread radioactive materials over a wide area. This need not be enough to cause radiation sickness. It could do immense economic damage simply by creating fear and disruption, and would also require an expensive clean-up.

Read the complete text of this article in the *New Scientist* - <http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn17838-us-dirty-bomb-attack-would-bring-cleanup-chaos.html>

INDIA: OIL SPILL THREATENS RARE TURTLES

An oil spillage from a ship which has sunk off the coast of the Indian state of Orissa could harm rare Olive Ridley sea turtles, environmentalists warn. Read the complete report at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/8272752.stm [Thanks to Dr Gerald Graham for providing the link to this report]

USA: "GREEN CLEAN" - RESEARCHERS DETERMINING NATURAL WAYS TO CLEAN CONTAMINATED SOIL

Researchers at North Carolina State University are working to demonstrate that trees can be used to degrade or capture fuels that leak into soil and ground water. Through a process called phytoremediation – literally a "green" technology – plants and trees remove pollutants from the environment or render them harmless.

Through a partnership with state and federal government agencies, the military and industry, Dr. Elizabeth Nichols, environmental technology professor in NC State's Department of Forestry and Environmental Resources, and her team are using phytoremediation to clean up a contaminated site in Elizabeth City, N.C.

Phytoremediation uses plants to absorb heavy metals from the soil into their roots. The process is an attractive alternative to the standard clean-up methods currently used, which are very expensive and energy intensive. At appropriate sites, phytoremediation can be a cost-effective and sustainable technology, Nichols says.

Read more at <http://www.environmental-expert.com/resultteachpressrelease.aspx?cid=32611&codi=70530>

AUSTRALIA: THE PRICE OF A LITTLE SPILL

The latest issue of the Trade and Transport Bulletin issued by the the firm of DLA Philips Fox in Sydney observes how the price of spillage is increasing in Australia: A recent judgment of the Land and Environment Court of New South Wales, *Filipowski v Hemina Holdings SA; Filipowski v Rajagopalan (No 2)* [2009] NSWLEC 104, concerning the 'MSC Carla' (the 'MSC Carla' case) saw the owner fined A\$150,000 for a relatively small spill by volume of oil (140 litres). This penalty is similar in severity to some of the penalties received by owners under the old penalty regime for far more significant oil spills. This case reinforces the need for owners and masters of ships to ensure proper maintenance, repair and rapid response to minimise the environmental impact of oil spills.

With acknowledgement to *The Marine Advocate Online*. <http://www.dlaphillipsfox.com/article/631/Trade-&-Transport-Bulletin---Recent-marine-pollution-prosecution-reflects-higher-maximum-penalties>

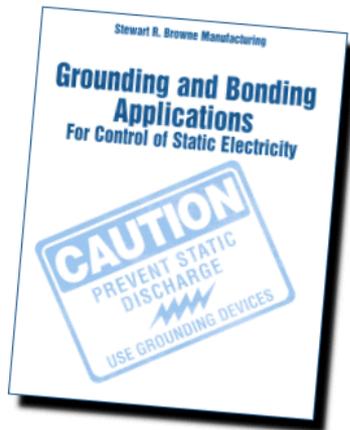
AUSTRALIA: WEST ATLAS WELL TO BE PLUGGED BY MID-OCTOBER

The oil and gas leak off the North-West coast is expected to be plugged by mid-October, according to its operators. The Montara well head platform has been pumping up to 400 barrels of oil and gas a day into the Timor Sea since it start leaking in mid-August.

PTTEP Australasia said today (25th September) that drilling had commenced to reach a depth of 2.3km in the latest stage of the operation to drill a relief well to stop the flow of oil, gas and water. The drilling operation is expected to be completed by Sunday, with the final phase of drilling to 2.6km scheduled for early next week. After drilling is complete, sophisticated electro magnetic ranging tools will be used to intersect the existing well, which will be plugged with heavy mud to stop the flow of oil and gas.

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority was continuing to surface spray and try to contain the existing spill, which is 250km off the North-West coast, about 75km east of Ashmore Reef.

PRECAUTIONS AGAINST STATIC ELECTRICITY – USEFUL GUIDANCE BOOKLET



Static electricity is a major cause of fires and explosions in many industries. The hazard of electrostatic spark ignition of flammable vapour can be minimized by taking actions to limit the accumulation of electrostatic charges to safe values. Of primary importance is the proper bonding and grounding of equipment and containers.

This booklet gives advice that will be useful for minimising risks in response situations where flammable vapours may be present. A downloadable version of the booklet is available at <http://www.srbrowne.com/booklet/page01.html>

[Thanks to Paul Dexter of ISCO Associate Member, DG & Hazmat Group for passing on this information]

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR RESPONDING TO HNS SPILLS (2)

Second article in this series – Rome wasn't built in a day and it's important for any SRO (Spill Response Organisation in either the private or public sector) to think very carefully before taking a decision to develop a capacity to respond to chemical spills. This article assumes that SROs contemplating setting off on this road will already have experience in dealing with oil spills and are seeking to extend an existing capability.

It is possible – but not easy - to make a start without spending a huge amount of money. Oil spill responders will already have some appropriate equipment, such as containment booms, skimmers, pumps, and sorbent materials, for recovery of “floaters” (chemicals that float on water). However, this is the easy part and, at the very outset, it's important to realise that responding to chemical spills opens up a greatly increased area of exposure to toxicity, flammability, explosion and other hazards that demand more complex risk assessment procedures, enhanced levels of PPE (Personal Protection Equipment), specialised training, and investment in additional equipment.

Most oil spill responders routinely deal with spills of fuel oils, such as kerosene, diesel, intermediate and heavier grades of fuel oils. Crude oils spilt in the marine environment tend to lose light ends (volatile components) quite quickly. Small spills of motor spirit (gasoline) present fire/explosion risks but will evaporate quickly and containment/recovery is only undertaken under special circumstances. Many oil spills attended by SROs present significant hazards - fire and explosion, carcinogen exposure, toxicity (hydrogen sulphide, VOCs (volatile organic compounds), and spills in confined spaces pose additional risks. On its web site and in this newsletter, ISCO publishes information to assist SROs in minimising these risks. A recent example was the Canadian paper on *Safe Approach to Oil Spills* (see issue 197). The point is that the distinction between oil and HNS spills is not clearly defined but, for the purpose of this article, it will be assumed that responsible oil spill responders have at least an awareness of the risks inherent in dealing with the various kinds of hydrocarbon spills and take appropriate precautions or seek help when necessary. (to be continued)

USA: CLEAN ATLANTIC CONFERENCE – CALL FOR PAPERS



The 2010 CLEAN ATLANTIC Conference is issuing an industry-wide call for participation. A government / industry-based committee has been formed to assist with programming this event. Prospective authors are invited to submit a 200-300 word abstract(s) for

consideration by the program committee by **Monday, October 5, 2009**. Main themes are (1) Prevention, (2) Preparedness and (3) Response. For a list of suggested topics and other information, please contact [Kayla Appelt](mailto:Kayla.Appelt) or call 713-343-1869. For more information about the conference, click on the logo above.

DUBAI: OFFSHORE ARABIA 2009 CONFERENCE – CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Offshore Arabia 2010, will be focusing on current challenges that we face on a worldwide scale. We shall focus on challenges such as the impact of the economic crisis on the environment, the oil, gas and shipping industries and other businesses in general. In the times of a global recession, does environment still have priority? Subject themes for papers include oil spill response and protection. The deadline for submitting abstracts is **15th November, 2009**. More at: <http://www.offshorearabia.ae/>

GREECE: S.O.M.E CALL FOR PAPERS



ISCO Member of Council for Greece, Professor Harilaos N. Psaraffis, has sent a reminder that the Third International Symposium on "SHIP OPERATIONS, MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMICS" (S.O.M.E. 2010). This will be held at the Eugenides Foundation in Athens, Greece, on October 7-8, 2010. Deadline for abstract submission: extended to **October 31, 2009**. Abstract acceptance notification: November 30, 2009.

Draft papers due: January 31, 2010. The list of recommended topics includes oil pollution control. Abstracts (450 to 600 words) should be sent to the Chairman of the Papers Committee, Dr. Dimitrios V. Lyridis, at dsvlr@central.ntua.gr. Papers should be of non-commercial nature.

USA: NGWA HOSTS NOVEMBER CONFERENCE ON PETROLEUM HYDROCARBONS AND ORGANIC CHEMICALS IN GROUNDWATER

The National Ground Water Association (NGWA) is hosting its "Petroleum Hydrocarbons and Organic Chemicals in Ground Water: Prevention, Detection, and Remediation Conference" November 2-3 in Costa Mesa, California.

NGWA has held this conference for more than 20 years, training groundwater professionals on how to protect groundwater from contamination, as well as how to clean up contaminated groundwater from spills and leaks. Through the years, in addition to petroleum hydrocarbons, the conference has expanded to cover many types of organic compounds. <http://www.environmental-expert.com/resultteachpressrelease.aspx?cid=5311&codi=70920>

PHILIPPINES: IPIECA MARINE POLLUTION IN EAST ASIA WORKSHOP

Manila, Philippines, on 24th November, 2009. More info - <http://www.ipieca.org>

KAZAKHSTAN: OSCE MEETING: OIL SPILL PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE AND COOPERATION IN THE CASPIAN REGION

Atyrau, Kazakhstan, on October 14-17, 2009. More info - <http://www.osce.org>

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.