

### USA: GULF OF MEXICO OIL SPILL UPDATE



Crewmembers aboard the motor vessel *Joe Griffin* look on as the mobile offshore drilling unit *Q4000* lowers a pollution containment chamber May 6, 2010. The chamber was designed to cap the oil discharge that was a result of the *Deepwater Horizon* incident. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Patrick Kelley.

Hopes on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> May that a containment system (in the picture) could substantially reduce the oil outflow suffered a setback due to the formation of hydrate crystals when the steel and concrete structure was

lowered into position over one of the oil leaks. Hydrates are crystals, rather like ice, formed by water and gas under conditions of low temperature and high pressure. The crystals, rather like slush, accumulating near the top of the structure, would have obstructed the flow of oil. They also made the chamber too buoyant, preventing it from settling firmly on the seabed. The structure, which had been successfully positioned over the leak, remains on the seabed but has been moved a safe distance away pending intensive efforts to devise a methodology to prevent hydrate formation.

Earlier in the week a subsea robotic vehicles succeeded in cutting a riser pipe and installing a shut-off valve. This valve was then closed on 5<sup>th</sup> May, thus eliminating one of the three sources of oil leakage. This leak was the smallest of the three.

Application of oil spill dispersant from aircraft has continued with over 300,000 gallons applied as at 9<sup>th</sup> May. The use of a subsea vehicle to treat oil underwater near to the point of leakage has also been carried out with apparent success. However, there is widespread concern about the potential environmental downside of subsea dispersant application and, for this reason, further trials have been halted pending further review. NOAA has sponsored a mission to collect sea floor and water column samples for evaluation.

Further at-sea burns of oil corralled in fireproof booms have also been carried out and skimming operations are continuing. As at 9<sup>th</sup> May, over 12,000 cubic metres of oil/water mix have been collected.

On 6<sup>th</sup> May it was reported that emulsified oil had washed up on the western side of North Island, the northernmost sliver of the [Chandeleur and Breton Island chain](#). NOAA scientist Jacqui Michel said that oil was spotted on 5<sup>th</sup> May at [several other locations along the curved sand archipelago](#) by two teams of scientists who flew over the area.

NOAA's Damage Assessment Remediation and Restoration Program is co-ordinating an assessment of damage to natural resources with federal partners, BP (as the responsible party), and trustees in Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi and Florida. Multiple agencies from each state are engaged. This assessment will gauge impacts to fish, shellfish, marine mammals, turtles, birds and other sensitive resources as well as their habitats, including wetlands, beaches, mudflats, bottom sediments, corals and the water column. The trustees will also assess any lost human uses of these resources, for example, fishing, hunting, and beach recreational closures. The trustees are also assessing the efficacy of evaluating impacts from the response, including burning, and dispersant use at the surface and at depth.

Over 1 million feet of boom have been deployed for coastal protection and preparations for shoreline clean-up operations continue apace with 12 staging areas established for deployment of clean-up resources. Altogether, almost 10,000 people are involved in operations with another 2,500 volunteers undergoing training.

Drilling of a relief well, which began on 2<sup>nd</sup> May, is expected to provide the final solution to stopping the spill and this is said to be progressing faster than expected. However it will be some weeks before the well can be plugged.

International support for response operations has been excellent and many countries have provided specialists and other resources, including containment boom, dispersant supplies and other materials.

ISCO is continuing to receive a good response to its request for resource availabilities and technical inputs. Responses processed to date include availabilities of experts, innovative ideas and suggestions, advice on immediate availabilities of clean-up equipment and materials including specialised items for oiled wildlife rescue. All inputs received by the ISCO Secretariat are being immediately relayed to ISCO's Member of Council for the USA, Dr Manik Sardesai, who is liaising directly with members of the Unified Command team and the other agencies involved in the management of the response.

## **HAZARDOUS NOXIOUS SUBSTANCE PROTOCOL ADOPTED BY IMO**

A Protocol to the International Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with the Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances by Sea, 1996 (HNS Convention), aimed at bringing that Convention into effect, has been adopted by consensus by a Diplomatic Conference convened by IMO at its Headquarters in London.

The Protocol of 2010 to the HNS Convention addresses practical problems that have prevented many States from ratifying the original Convention, which, despite being adopted in 1996, has, to date, only 14 ratifications and is some way from meeting the conditions for its entry into force.

Speaking at the close of the successful Conference, IMO Secretary-General Efthimios E. Mitropoulos expressed his satisfaction with the outcome and urged Governments to now turn their attention to the task of bringing the Protocol into force at the earliest possible date and, thereafter, to promoting the uniform and effective implementation of the HNS international regime.

Under the 2010 Protocol, if damage is caused by bulk HNS, compensation would first be sought from the shipowner, up to a maximum limit of 100 million Special Drawing Rights (SDR) (around US\$150 million).

Where damage is caused by packaged HNS, or by both bulk HNS and packaged HNS, the maximum liability for the shipowner is 115 million SDR (US\$172.5 million)

Once this limit is reached, compensation would be paid from the second tier, the HNS Fund, up to a maximum of 250 million SDR (US\$375 million) (including compensation paid under the first tier). The Fund will have an Assembly, consisting of all States Parties to the Convention and Protocol, and a dedicated secretariat. The Assembly will normally meet once a year. Read more: <http://www.imo.org/>

## **ISCO: ELECTION OF TWO NEW MEMBERS TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

At ISCO's 2010 Annual General Meeting, held in London last week, Mr Li Guobin (Member of ISCO Council representing China) and Mr Simon Rickaby (Representative of Corporate Member Braemar Howells Ltd.) were elected to the Executive Committee of ISCO.

Upon his election to the Committee, Mr Li Guobin spoke in support of ISCO's work and its relevance in China at a time when new legislation is giving added impetus to the raising of professional standards in spill response. He looks forward to making a significant contribution to the work of the organisation and to building ISCO membership in China. Due to injuries sustained while overseas, Mr Simon Rickaby was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting. All present expressed their sympathy and wished him a speedy recovery.

On completion of the business part of the meeting, the ongoing response to the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was discussed at length. Mr David Usher, in his capacity as President of ISCO, has been greatly in demand by CNN, NBC and other media networks as an expert commentator. There has

also been an excellent international response from members and others offering technical and other support to members of the Unified Command team.

For the very first time at an ISCO meeting, use was made of an audio link to enable members in other countries to join in the meeting via the internet. Minutes of the meeting will be circulated to members in the near future.

## **USA: LAUTENBERG, MENENDEZ BILL WOULD INCREASE PENALTIES TO CLEAN UP OIL SPILLS**

Firms found responsible for oil spills would have to pay substantially more in economic damages under legislation filed Monday by Democratic senators from New Jersey and Florida.

The bill, filed by Frank R. Lautenberg and Robert Menendez of New Jersey and Bill Nelson of Florida in response to the massive oil spill contaminating the Gulf of Mexico, would raise the liability cap for economic damages from \$75 million to \$10 billion.

Under current law, responsible parties must pay all cleanup costs but aren't required to pay more than \$75 million to help economies in affected areas return to normal, the senators said in a statement. Read more at: <http://www.app.com/article/20100503/NEWS06/100503111/Lautenberg-Menendez-bill-would-increase-penalties-to-clean-up-oil-spills>

## **USA: EPA INSTITUTE RE-OPENS ITS DOORS TO A NEW WAY OF REGULATORY TRAINING**

EPA Institute, LLC, an online regulatory training firm, announced today that it has re-opened and revamped its online environmental training portal for all online visitors. This new portal provides a new way for environmental professionals to receive affordable, timely, accurate and comprehensive environmental training anywhere in the world at anytime with a secure internet connection.

"While there are numerous ways an individual can elect to pursue his or her continuing education in the environmental field, our courses give our students the opportunity and process of learning new skills and acquiring knowledge that is far superior to what others are offering over the world-wide web", says the Director of Marketing and Business Development for EPA Institute.

Originally founded in 2007, EPA Institute was formed to provide reliable and comprehensive online environmental awareness and regulatory training to the private and government sectors. Our goal is to provide students, employees, industry professionals and government contractors with the skills and exploratory experience that enable them to be successful in their day-to-day operations as environmental, health and safety professionals.

EPA Institute believes that environmental education and awareness is the door to better managing available resources and compliance at every facility. Our focus is to empower the individuals with knowledge they need to better manage their responsibilities, avoid complications with confusing regulatory misinterpretations, and overall, achieve compliance in their workplace. Our courses are comprehensive, engaging and in a easy to understand format that both beginner and advance practicing professionals can relate to.

For additional information contact EPA Institute at 1 (713) 482-7224 or email [info@epainstitute.com](mailto:info@epainstitute.com). Visit EPA Institute on the web at [www.epainstitute.com](http://www.epainstitute.com).

## **NIGERIA: SHELL REPORTS RECORD OIL SPILLAGES IN NIGERIA**

Niger Delta residents pass a burning Shell oil pipeline as they evacuate their homes by boat in December 2005. Photograph: George Osodi/AP

[Royal Dutch Shell](#) plc spilled nearly 14,000 tons of crude oil into the creeks of the Niger Delta last year, the company has announced, blaming thieves and militants for the environmental damage.

The amount of oil spilled by Shell's Nigerian subsidiary [was more than double the amount poured into the delta in 2008](#), and quadruple what was spilled in 2007 – highlighting the worsening situation the oil company faces in [Nigeria](#).



Shell faces regular attacks by militants who have targeted pipelines, kidnapped petroleum company workers and fought government troops since 2006. Its chief executive officer has even hinted that the company can no longer depend on Nigeria as a profit-maker, despite its 50-year history in the country. Read more at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/may/05/shell-oil-spill-niger-delta>

## TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION NEWS SURVEY

The March 1-31, 2010 *Technology Innovation News Survey* has been posted to the CLU-IN web site. The *Survey* contains market/commercialization information; reports on demonstrations, feasibility studies and research; and other news relevant to the hazardous waste community interested in technology development. The latest survey is available at: <http://www.clu-in.org/products/tins/>

## UK: SETN ANNUAL ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE



ISCO Associate Member, the Scottish Environmental Technology Network, has announced that registration is now open for its annual Environmental Technology Conference being held in Glasgow on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2010.

SETN Administrator, Lilly Hunter writes "This year the conference is being organized in collaboration with the Caledonian Environment Centre (CEC) who have secured a super space for us on their lovely campus, only one block away from Queen St station in central Glasgow. We are open for registrations as of now. If you would like to book some exhibit space, do hurry as space is limited and will go fast. We are still finalising our list of speakers, but for a sneak preview, there will be some very good people coming to tell you about R&D tax credits, about embedded resources, and about the amazing push the Shell Springboard event gave to one of our member companies. (And much more, of course) There will be 1-to-1s with experts and new this year are workshops. Please register NOW by email to [lilly.hunter@ed.ac.uk](mailto:lilly.hunter@ed.ac.uk) or as soon as possible. More info at: <http://setn.see.ed.ac.uk/>

## USA: OIL SPILL RESPONSE VIDEO TRAINING

Major oil spills such as that occurring in the Gulf of Mexico have the potential to damage our way of life. Immediate response by trained personnel is necessary to minimize the damage to the environment. **Oil Spill Response** is a 5-part training series that provides important health and safety information for clean-up workers. Created with the assistance of the US Coast Guard, this series examines all recognized clean-up technologies and emphasizes waste management techniques. It is used worldwide by the US Coast Guard and some 500 other organizations. It is ideal as a crash course to meet OSHA and USCG regulations.

More info at: <http://www.efilmgroup.com:80/Compliance/Oil-Spill-Response-Series-Video.html>

## USA: IOSC CALL FOR PAPERS EXTENDED TO MAY 31, 2011

The 21<sup>st</sup> Triennial International Oil Spill Conference will be held May 23-26, 2011 at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland, Oregon, U.S.A. Over 2,000 people from 50 countries are expected to attend the technical sessions and view more than 250 exhibits. The Conference theme for 2011 is: "Industry and Government Working Together"

The IOSC is a proven venue contributing to the critical concept of industry and government entities working together within the oil spill response community, the broader field of incident management, and society as a whole. It provides a forum for professionals from the international community, the private sector, government, and non-governmental organizations to highlight and discuss innovations and best practices across the spectrum of Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Restoration. For information on how to submit a paper or a poster for this prestigious event, please [click here](#).

## VIKOMA INTERNATIONAL LTD. - FACTORY AND OFFICE RELOCATION

ISCO Corporate Member, Vikoma International Ltd. has now moved into its new office and manufacturing facilities at Kingston Road, East Cowes, Isle of Wight PO31 6JS United Kingdom. More info at: <http://www.vikoma.com>

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.