



# ISCO NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter of the International Spill Response Community

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## US EPA SIGNS STATEMENT OF INTENT WITH EUROPEAN CHEMICALS AGENCY

EPA says it has formed a partnership with the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) that will promote enhanced technical cooperation on chemical management activities — as part of EPA's commitment to improve chemical safety. ECHA is the agency that implements the European Union's chemical management program known as REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorization, and Restriction of Chemicals).

The partnership was formalized through a statement of intent, which provides the first concrete result of this effort, according to EPA. The statement puts in place a process for working together on a range of issues of mutual interest including toxicity testing, the hazard and risk assessment of chemicals, risk management tools, scientific collaboration, and information exchange.

One of the major anticipated areas of collaboration will be on the exchange of data and information. For example, the statement of intent will promote the exchange of non-confidential information on hazards, uses, and substance identification between ECHA and EPA, including data collected under REACH. The two agencies will also share criteria for managing confidential business information with the goal to increase the availability of chemical information to the public. The statement also enables the agencies to share information on approaches to more efficiently address chemicals of concern that are prioritized for regulatory action. <http://www.epa.gov/oppt/> Text of the Statement of Intent is at: <http://www.epa.gov/oppt/echa.epa.soi.pdf> [Thanks to pcjr of Hazmat 101 Group for forwarding EHS Newsletter with this news]

## EMSA PROGRESS REPORT AT EU PARLIAMENT TRAN COMMITTEE



Executive Director Willem de Ruyter at the TRAN Committee meeting

In line with annual tradition, on December 2 Executive Director Willem de Ruyter presented the Agency's recent achievements to the European Parliament's Transport and Tourism Committee. Focusing on the proposed amendments to the Agency's founding Regulation, he reminded MEPs that the Agency currently carries out more than 20 tasks, and that more might be added in the future. In difficult financial times, he also expressed his hope that a fair balance would be struck between new tasks and EMSA's budgetary needs. Answering MEP's questions, he also made public the fact that three tenders will be launched in 2011 to contract oil spill response vessels in the Black Sea, West Mediterranean and Bay of Biscay. [ From the January, 2011 EMSA Newsletter. <http://www.emsa.europa.eu> ]

## USA: OIL SPILL COMMISSION ROUNDUP: 'A FAILURE OF MANAGEMENT'

The presidential oil spill commission has released [one chapter](#) of its final report focused on one aspect of the calamity:

Most of the mistakes and oversights at Macondo can be traced back to a single overarching failure—a failure of management. Better management by BP, Halliburton, and Transocean would almost certainly have prevented the blowout by improving the ability of individuals involved to identify the risks they faced, and to properly evaluate, communicate, and address them. A blowout in deepwater was not a statistical inevitability (p. 90).

As BP drilled the well, its focus was on maximizing profits, the report says, not necessarily on safety or preventing a gusher: BP engineers focused heavily on the biggest challenge: the risk of fracturing the formation and losing returns (p. 100).

But, the report says: The blowout was not the product of a series of aberrational decisions made by rogue industry or government officials that could not have been anticipated or expected to occur again (p. 122). Rather, the root causes are systemic and, absent significant reform in both industry practices and government policies, might well recur (p. 123). Read more: <http://news.sciencemag.org/scienceinsider/2011/01/oil-spill-commission-roundup.html>

## U.S. TO EASE REQUIREMENTS ON SOME DEEPWATER PROJECTS

January 4 - The Obama administration on Monday eased new environmental barriers to some oil and gas deepwater projects, but companies will still have to meet stringent regulations before drilling resumes.

Oil companies and Republican lawmakers have complained that regulations imposed after the BP oil spill have brought Gulf of Mexico drilling to a standstill.

The department's decision to waive some environmental requirements comes as Noble Corp announced that Marathon Oil Co canceled a four-year, \$752 million contract for a deepwater rig in the Gulf due to lack of drilling permits.

The policy will impact 13 companies with projects that were already underway when the department imposed its ban on deepwater drilling. Companies will be able to forego additional environmental reviews depending on new calculations of the worst-case flow rate estimates for their wells.

While removing one potential obstacle for these companies, it does not automatically mean drilling will begin immediately. Read more: <http://planetark.org/enviro-news/item/60745>

## UK: HUMAN FACTORS AT PLAY DURING A LARGE GASOLINE SPILLAGE

On Friday 26th November 2010 Judith Hackitt CBE, Chair of HSE, gave a speech to the Institute of Ergonomics and Human Factors on Leadership in the Major Hazard Industries. The speech touched upon a number of issues surrounding human factors in relation to major hazards and provided examples of good and bad practice. An example of the latter can be seen in the footage, which was used by HSE in a recent successful prosecution of a fuel terminal operator. The footage shows in stark form how humans react when called upon to manage a known serious risk i.e. a significant gasoline spillage.

A decision has been taken to make this footage available on our website to raise awareness of human factors issues and to assist dutyholders in training their employees on better management of known and less well known risks.

**Video Link:** <http://www.hse.gov.uk/humanfactors/resources/case-studies/gasoline-spillage.htm> [Thanks to JOIFF and Don Johnston of ISCO Associate Member, DG & Hazmat Group, for passing on this alert]

## NETHERLANDS: SHELL TO FACE NIGERIA GRILLING



November protests marked the 15th anniversary of Nigeria's then-military regime's execution of activists who challenged degradation of Ogoni land in the Niger Delta.

January 4 - Royal Dutch Shell PLC will this month be grilled by Dutch lawmakers for the first time over its operations in the Niger Delta, reflecting growing concern in the West about oil spills in West Africa.

Critics of Shell's record, both in parliament and among non-governmental organizations, are expected to use parliamentary hearings, scheduled for Jan. 26, to quiz the company over its activities in Nigeria. The country's oil sector has long been plagued by militant violence, corruption, organized crime and, by extension, environmental damage.

Oil spills, the majority of which Shell says is caused by militant attacks, have befouled swaths of the Niger Delta. Amnesty International says hundreds of oil-polluted sites have yet to be cleaned up around Nigeria, compromising locals' water, food and livelihood. Anglo-Dutch Shell, which hasn't been accused of wrongdoing, declined to comment. Read more: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704111504576059931271425282.html>

## UK: MPS PUBLISH REPORT ON LESSONS FROM BP'S GULF OF MEXICO OIL SPILL DISASTER

January 6: Politicians have 'serious doubts' over oil companies' plans to cope with spills in the Atlantic waters off Shetland - British taxpayers could end up footing the clean-up bill from any major oil spill in UK waters because current rules allow companies to dodge their environmental responsibilities, according to MPs investigating BP's Gulf of Mexico disaster.

And the government ought to require companies to prove that they can pay out billions of pounds in clean-up costs before they are granted exploration and production licences, recommends the committee's final report, which is published today.

It also points to "serious doubts" over whether companies' plans to respond to spills – by capping leaking wells and skimming oil from the sea surface – would work in the rough Atlantic waters off the west coast of Shetland. The report points to the "limitations" of the computer modelling used by oil companies to predict the long-term effects of spills at sea. The Guardian has obtained documents relating to the oil spill response plan of US company Chevron which, in October, was given consent to drill off Shetland. It showed that its modelling software could not simulate spills lasting more than 14 days without crashing. The Gulf of Mexico spill lasted almost three months. Read more: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/jan/06/oil-oil>

## FRENCH GUIANA: POLMAR-SEA GUIANA EXERCISE

The POLMAR-Sea Guiana exercise organised by the Navy with support from Ceppol and AEM was held on 14 December in Cayenne. The aim was to activate the POLMAR plan, to test collaboration between administrations and with the local maritime sector and to deploy response equipment and techniques (containment and dispersion means). The scenario was based on illegal discharge near the access channel to the port of Dégrad-des-Cannes. A crisis unit was activated at the maritime authorities, gathering representatives of different states services and regional authorities, the Navy, the fire brigade, experts from *Cedre*, Ceppol and Ifremer as well as observers from the oil company Tullow Oil (begin exploration drilling in February 2011 off Guiana). The Météo France MOTHY model was run and *Cedre* provided additional information on the weathering of the pollutant as well as on the use of dispersants in tropical ecosystems. Report in latest CEDRE Newsletter - [http://www.cedre.fr/en/publication/newsletter/2010/186\\_E.pdf](http://www.cedre.fr/en/publication/newsletter/2010/186_E.pdf)

## DRILLING IN AN ARCTIC FRONTIER

Alaska's outer continental shelf is a starkly beautiful ecosystem populated by polar bears, bowhead whales, and arctic seabirds. It's also a bonanza for oil companies. Up to 23% of the oil and 21% of the natural gas remaining in the U.S. might be found there, according to government estimates. So despite the region's fragile ecology and threats posed by extreme weather and icebergs, oil companies are vying for access.

Leading the pack is [Royal Dutch Shell](#), which could begin drilling as many as three exploratory wells in the eastern outer continental shelf—specifically, the Beaufort Sea—later this year, according to Richard Ranger, a spokesperson for the American Petroleum Institute, which lobbies on behalf of the oil and natural gas industry. Federal officials and the courts thwarted Shell's plan to drill in the Beaufort last year in the wake of BP's Deepwater Horizon disaster. Now the pendulum is swinging back in the company's favour. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar has authorized regulators to re-evaluate Shell's application to drill at an offshore location near Camden Bay, 16 miles from the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge.

Shell's plans have raised concerns among scientists and environmental groups. They wonder whether companies can extract the resources safely. They worry that, compared to conditions in other oil-rich seas such as the Gulf of Mexico, the Arctic's low water temperatures and drifting ice pose immense problems for spill cleanup. Read more: <http://pubs.acs.org/cen/news/89/i02/8902news2.html>

## THREE MILLION CHEMICALS ARE CANDIDATES FOR FIRST EU INVENTORY OF HAZARDS

More than three million notices classifying chemical substances in line with new EU rules have been received, the European Chemicals Agency said today. Classification will allow the agency to decide whether a chemical is dangerous to health or the environment, and will determine what information is on the labels of chemicals that workers and consumers use.

The data will enable the agency to establish the first European inventory of hazardous substances and harmonized classifications, due for publication later this year. Read more: <http://www.ens-newswire.com/ens/jan2011/2011-01-05-01.html>

## TECHNOLOGY

### NATURAL ATTENUATION OF GROUNDWATER

"Natural attenuation" refers to the ability of a ground water system to rid itself of contamination resulting from a spill or improper disposal of wastes. It is emerging as a viable -- and in some cases, the preferred -- remedy for contaminated ground water.

The basic concept of natural attenuation is not new. We depend on it, for example, in municipal wastewater permits that allow treatment plants to discharge a certain amount of wastes without unduly depleting oxygen in surface water. Another example is the use of drainfields in septic systems.

Bacteria that naturally inhabit many ground water environments are able to break down chemicals once thought to be virtually non-biodegradable. For example, components of gasoline such as benzene, toluene, xylene, and ethylbenzene are now known to biodegrade in ground water to carbon dioxide and water. Other contaminants, including chlorinated solvents (e.g., dry-cleaning solvents) can also biodegrade under particular conditions. In some cases, natural biodegradation may break down contaminants in ground water faster than they can be removed by engineered systems.

Natural attenuation is sometimes a preferred remedy because it does not transfer pollutants from one location to another. Rather they are broken down in place, converted usually to non-toxic end products. However, natural attenuation is not always a completely effective remedy by itself. In cases where the contamination is spreading more quickly than it can break down, where drinking-water wells are threatened by contamination, or when toxic breakdown products occur, engineered systems are needed so that exposure to contaminants is eliminated. Read more: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/water/water-types-and-programs/groundwater/groundwater-data-and-programs/natural-attenuation-of-groundwater.html?menuid=&redirect=1>



*In this issue of the ISCO Newsletter we are printing the eighth part of a paper contributed by Dr Douglas Cormack.*

*Dr Douglas Cormack is an Honorary Member 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.*

## HARMONISATION OF TECHNOLOGY AND MARINE ENVIRONMENT (PART EIGHT)

The main environmental hazard from the shipboard carriage of packaged goods is to the crew. Thus, certain packages are carried on deck to maximise atmospheric dilution of releases, while below-deck exposure can be reduced by active ventilation with due regard to the danger of diluting high concentrations of explosive gas/vapour into the explosive range. In addition, vapour concentrations can be calculated from the amount of liquid released, its saturated vapour pressure and enclosure volume, while commercial analysers/explosion meters are readily available (c.f. articles 5 and 6). Again, while toxic and explosive limits are accessibly tabulated for all HNS, the use of these tables requires consideration of both quantity and concentration as discussed for the latter in article 6. As to the former, we should note that while intrinsic toxicity as measured might render an HNS unsafe at high exposure concentrations, lower exposures would be comparatively safe. Further to concentration, a square metre of a slick 0.1mm thick can produce air and sea concentrations of no more than 100 parts per million in 1 cubic metre before further dilution ensues, and it is these concentrations which determine actual atmospheric/marine toxicities from the intrinsic toxicities tabulated for HNS, just as they determine the actual marine toxicity of oils and dispersants (c.f. articles 2 and 3).

Again, with reference to articles 2, 3 and 5 - 7, it may be concluded that HNS which evaporate, disperse or dissolve after spreading on the sea surface, are as unrecoverable as are oil components which evaporate and disperse; that the rates of dispersion and resulting concentrations of non-soluble HNS are mostly comparable to those of diesel oil; that the concentrations of volatile and dispersible/soluble components of oils and of individual HNS in air and water are therefore initially low and rapidly decreasing; that while evaporating/dispersing oil components are relatively non-toxic at exposure concentrations, the intrinsic toxicities of HNS must be related to these atmospheric/marine exposure concentrations to determine their actual toxicities; that HNS which dissolve more rapidly than they spread will result in higher and more localised concentrations than those which spread more rapidly than they dissolve; and that while the former may have more significant toxic effects, the subsequent dilution of both is inevitable. Again, sunken HNS will behave similarly, though recovery of the slower to disperse/dissolve will be easier the thicker the localised layers. Yet again, gas releases will produce higher concentrations than do vapours from liquid surfaces and depending on their toxicity/explosion hazards, will require delineation of unsafe areas pending atmospheric dilution to safe levels.

As to bulk substances stranding in the solid state, these may be collected for recycling or disposal depending on their physicochemical and toxic properties. As to stranded containers and packaged goods, those damaged can be disposed of as waste-chemicals while the undamaged can be routed to their intended recipients. In any case, as with oil, transfer of cargo from the casualty is the best way to avoid further release, while reality-evaluation<sup>1</sup> of beliefs in species extermination/ecological disaster against known toxicity/concentration relationships is the best way to ensure public acceptance of the impossibility of recovering that which has evaporated, dispersed or dissolved (c.f. article 1).

As to next steps, all of the physicochemical properties relevant to HNS spillage response/non-response will be reviewed and updated as was earlier completed for oil spill response/non-response<sup>2,3</sup>. Thus, this HNS review will cover density, viscosity, half-life, melting-point, boiling-point, volatility, saturated vapour pressure, explosion-limits, solubility, toxicity; means and modes of transportation, locations of release, permeability and undulation of substrates; and response techniques already used by chemical manufacturers, inland response-contractors and emergency services, these including transfer of tank contents and containers from casualties, over-drumming of damaged packaging, and use of explosion/ toxicity meters, protective-clothing and breathing apparatus. Thus, individual HNS will be classified as amenable/non-amenable to oil-response techniques, as requiring specific HNS-response techniques or as being impossible of response other than to rely on dilution.

As of now my colleague from the 1970s, Dr. Weird Koops, is computerising the physicochemical/ toxicological data required for creation of the knowledge-based contingency/evaluation/action plans commended by this Column (c.f. article 6).

1 *The Rational Trinity: Imagination, Belief and Knowledge*, D.Cormack, Bright Pen 2010 available at [www.authorsonline.co.uk](http://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.

**USA: ADMIRAL THAD ALLEN RECEIVES 2010 GREAT AMERICAN PATRIOT AWARD**

On December 30, Admiral Thad Allen, United States Coast Guard (retired) received the 2010 Great American Patriot Award during halftime of the Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl Game.

Admiral Thad Allen, the 23rd commandant of the United States Coast Guard has devoted a long and successful career to the US Coast Guard and the United States. During his service he led efforts to protect the US coasts after the 9/11 attacks, oversaw rescue operations on the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina and led the response and clean-up operations as the incident commander, during the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. Read more: <http://www.maritime-executive.com/article/admiral-thad-allen-receives-2010-great-american-patriot-award/#>

**CANADA: HON. PETER KENT APPOINTED AS MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT**

Prior to his election to the House of Commons, Mr. Kent was a broadcast journalist having spent more than 40 years working as a writer, reporter, producer, anchor and senior executive in Canada, the United States and around the world. Internationally, he covered stories that shaped the 20th century, including momentous events such as the Yom Kippur War, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War.

Mr. Kent was named Minister of the Environment in January 2011. Read more: <http://www.ec.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=B6832638-1>

**EVENTS**

For more comprehensive information on upcoming events & training courses click [HERE](#) and select "Events"

**DATE CHANGE: "WRECKS OF THE WORLD II: HIDDEN RISKS OF THE DEEP" CONFERENCE TO BE HELD JUNE 6-7, 2011, PROGRAM EXPANDED**

*This Conference will address 8,500+ world-wide shipwrecks that may contain up to 20 million tons of oil, other hazardous materials.*

The American Salvage Association (ASA) and the North American Marine Environmental Protection Association (NAMEPA) will co-sponsor a conference, "**Wrecks of the World: Hidden Risks of the Deep (WOW) II**" on Monday, June 6 and Tuesday, June 7, 2011 at the Maritime Institute of Technology and Graduate Studies (MITAGS) in the Washington, DC area (Linthicum Heights, MD) USA. The conference will explore the myriad issues (pollution threat, impact modeling, risk assessment, oil removal and remediation, implications to the environment, legal, insurance and funding issues, next steps) related to the more than 8,500 sunken vessels in the world, many of them World War II-era. The program has been expanded to include discussion of the pollution threat posed not just by ship wrecks but also by the tens of thousands of abandoned oil wells that litter coast and offshore waters around the world.

The conference program is being finalized, and further details are available on the ASA and NAMEPA websites at <http://www.americansalvage.org> and <http://www.namepa.net>

**PUBLICATIONS****US EPA: TECH DIRECT, JANUARY 2011**

TechDirect's purpose is to identify new technical, policy and guidance resources related to the assessment and remediation of contaminated soil, sediments and ground water. You can download and read the latest issue at: <http://www.clu-in.org:80/techdirect/td012011.htm>

**US EPA: TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION NEWS SURVEY**

The November 16-30, 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/>

**COMPANY NEWS****GREECE: ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION ENGINEERING GAIN NI ACCREDITATION**

January 7 – Environmental Protection Engineering (EPE) of Piraeus, Greece, has been awarded international accreditation by the Nautical Institute as a provider of spill response training courses. EPE is the only accredited company in Greece and one of the few worldwide to have this accreditation. <http://www.epe.gr/>

## ISCO WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

ISCO is pleased to introduce and welcome the following new members who have recently joined the organization.

### NEW CORPORATE MEMBERS

- **Imbibitive Technologies America Inc.** – Manufacturers of the well known “Imbiber Beads” that are used to reduce health, fire and explosion hazards by encapsulating spills of volatile organic liquids.
- **Welseas Africa Co. Ltd.** – Marine Services and Trading Company, based in Tema, Ghana, West Africa.
- **Clean Caribbean and Americas (CCA)** – The Regional Oil Spill Response Organization whose members include most of the major international and regional oil companies and oil related facilities in the Caribbean and Latin America. Established in 1977 and located in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, USA, CCA holds a large inventory of equipment and supplies, and is capable of responding to a major oil spill anywhere in the region.

### NEW INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

- **Funda Gurcuoglu** – based in Istanbul, Turkey, Funda is on the staff of ISCO Corporate Member, Meke Marine Environmental Protection Services.
- **Kevin Wang** – based in Anaheim, California, USA, Kevin is with US Oil Clean-up, part of Power Plus Cleaning Solutions, providing equipment and services for oil spill response, and post-incident cleanup and remediation of Hazmat, Biohazard, Terrorist Attack, Fire, Water, Flood, Mould, and Asbestos.
- **Wu Yue** – based in Beijing, China. By way of introduction, Wu has provided the following information – Wu is Chief Representative Officer of ISCO Corporate Member, Lamor Group Ltd., Beijing Representative Office. “I joined the Lamor Group (Finland) in 2006. Since then I thoroughly dedicated myself to the spill response technology and OSR equipments promotion. I have participated in many oil spill emergency drills and oil spill response, especially in this July, On behalf of Lamor I took charge of organizing job on the scene to contain the oil outflows due to an oil pipeline blast in Dalian, a port city in North China. Also, I'm a member of China Institute of Navigation Committee of the Ship Pollution Prevention. I have given training lessons in Maritime Safety Administration (MSA) several times and a number of my papers were published in periodicals, for example, "Practical Equipment and Technology in Oil Spill Emergency Response" and " Suggestions for Construction of Oil Spill Emergency Centers in Coastal Areas"



## JOINING ISCO

If you're not yet a Member, make it your New Year Resolution to join now and become part of an organization that aims to raise worldwide preparedness and co-operation in response to oil and chemical spills, to promote technical development and professional competency, and to provide a focus for making the knowledge and experience of spill control professionals available to IMO, UNEP, EC and other organisations. ISCO has members in 35 countries and is the only international organization dedicated to representing the worldwide community of individuals, companies and other entities who have a professional interest in spill control.

To apply on line, click on - [http://www.spillcontrol.org/Joomla/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=21&Itemid=35](http://www.spillcontrol.org/Joomla/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=21&Itemid=35)

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