



ISCO NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter of the International Spill Response Community
Issue 312, 3 December 2011

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News

IMO ASSEMBLY ADOPTS WIDE RANGE OF RESOLUTIONS

Assembly, 27th session: 21-30 November 2011

A wide range of resolutions, reflecting the broad canvas of the Organization's work, was adopted by the 27th Assembly of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), when it met in London at the Organization's Headquarters from 21 to 30 November 2011. They included a resolution urging Governments to continue their efforts to combat piracy and armed robbery against ships off the coast of Somalia and a resolution firmly establishing 25 June each year as the "Day of the Seafarer".

The Assembly also adopted the high-level action and strategic plans for the Organization; the Organization's budget for 2012 to 2013; and several updated codes and guidance documents.

[Read the complete text of this briefing](#)

ITOPF PRESS RELEASE – DISCOBIOL PROJECT

28 November 2011

ITOPF is a partner in a joint research project on dispersants, entitled 'DISCOBIOL', under the leadership of the French association CEDRE (Centre of Documentation, Research and Experimentation on Accidental Water Pollution). The aim of the project is to provide decision-makers with information on the net environmental benefit of using dispersants in near-shore areas and involves assessing the toxicity and impacts of dispersed oils on different habitats and resources found in coastal and estuarine environments of temperate climates.

The use of dispersants can be a very effective response to an oil spill. When dispersants are used offshore the depth and flow of water allow for rapid dilution so that concentrations of dispersed oil quickly reduce to levels that do not generally give rise to significant harm to the environment. However, in many countries, if an oil spill occurs close to the coast, limits are imposed on the use of dispersants because of concerns that the shallow waters will not allow for sufficient dilution of dispersed oil subsequently leading to adverse effects. Nevertheless, in certain circumstances, the need to protect highly sensitive coastal resources may warrant consideration of dispersants in near-shore waters, especially if biodegradation of the dispersed oil is likely to occur.

This project is due to conclude at the end of 2012, but most of the experimental work has already finished. Preliminary results of the research into short term toxicity showed that for the organisms tested (species found in coastal and estuarine areas), the lethal concentration of dispersed oil is far higher than concentrations of chemically dispersed oil typically found in the water column during actual oil spills. The sub-lethal effects of dispersed oil were assessed over a two week period by monitoring a series of 'bio-markers' (biological measures used to assess health), the results of which indicate that the impacts of oil intoxication are reversible for the vast majority of the test organisms, at least according to the bio-markers studied. While these preliminary results may suggest that dispersants could be considered for use in near-shore waters, the results from all the experiments will need to be analysed before any final project conclusions are made.

[Source document](#) [More info](#)

NEW ZEALAND: LATEST NEWS ON THE RENA INCIDENT

1 December 2011: 10.45am

- Bad weather yesterday prevented any container recovery from the **Rena**.
- The total number of containers removed from the wreck so far is 166.
- Despite swells preventing any crane operation yesterday, salvors were still able to work on board **Rena**, focusing on the installation of rigging to prepare containers for removal, and the ongoing skimming of residual oil from the wreck.
- A dive operation was also undertaken yesterday, assessing the reef around **Rena** in anticipation of moving **Sea Tow 60** once it has removed all the containers within reach of its current position. It is not yet known when this will be done.
- There is no change to the state of **Rena**.
- The weather forecast for today is for swells of up to 3 metres, and it is unlikely container recovery will be possible today.
- Container processing on shore by Braemar Howells is continuing well with 160 containers landed at the port. Of these, only four are yet to be processed at Truman Lane.
- Braemar Howells specialists are working on White Island and Motiti Island today to locate and recover container debris around the shoreline.
- Oil spill response clean-up teams are working at Leisure Island and Mount Maunganui using warm water washing to clean residual oil from the rocky shoreline.
- There are also clean-up teams working near Papamoa using beach grooming machinery, and at Maketu.
- To date, a total of 962.6 tonnes of solid waste has been collected by oil spill response clean-up teams.

[More info from Maritime New Zealand](#)

USA: FINAL REPORT "IMPROVING THE SAFETY & ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE OF HYDRAULIC FRACTURING"



NATURAL GAS SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE
SECRETARY OF ENERGY ADVISORY BOARD
Safety of Shale Gas Development

On May 5, 2011, U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu charged the Secretary of Energy Advisory Board (SEAB) Natural Gas Subcommittee to make recommendations to improve the safety and environmental performance of natural gas hydraulic fracturing from shale formations.

President Obama directed Secretary Chu to form the Subcommittee as part of the President's "Blueprint for a Secure Energy Future" - a comprehensive plan to reduce America's oil dependence, save consumers money, and make our country the leader in clean energy industries. The Subcommittee's task is defined as:

"The Subcommittee will work to identify, within 90 days, any immediate steps that can be taken to improve the safety and environmental performance of fracking and to develop, within six months, consensus recommended advice to the agencies on practices for shale extraction to ensure the protection of public health and the environment." (Blueprint, page 13)

The Subcommittee met for the first time on May 18, 2011. Subsequently, they held public meetings on June 1-2, June 13, June 28, and July 13, and October 31 to gather information and discuss issues surrounding hydraulic fracturing. Details on those meetings can be found in the Resources section of this website.

The Subcommittee has received a tremendous amount of public input since its first meeting. You can view all comments on the Public Input page of this website. In addition, a number of comments were received regarding the Subcommittee's 90 day report. A summary of those comments is available.



The Natural Gas Subcommittee's August 18, 2011 90-day interim report and its November 18, 2011 Final Report are now available.

USA: WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY APPROVES OIL SPILL READINESS PLAN

November 29 - The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) has approved the umbrella oil spill readiness plan that covers more than 1,000 commercial vessels that transit the Columbia River.

Ecology has given final approval for the Maritime Fire and Safety Association's (MFSA) oil spill readiness – or contingency – plan. MFSA's plan enrolls nearly all large cargo and passenger ships, commercial fish-processing vessels and oil tankers as well as some fuel barges that make transits in the shared waters of the Columbia River.

MFSA is based in Portland, Ore. The association's plan covers commercial vessels from 3 miles west of the Columbia River mouth to the Glenn Jackson Bridge as well as the confluence of the Willamette and Columbia rivers and down the Willamette to Willamette Falls.

The plan helps ensure that large commercial vessels can mount a rapid, aggressive and well-coordinated response if they spill oil.

A large containership, for example, can carry up to 3 million gallons of fuel to power its engines and propulsion systems. State law requires that all large commercial ships and vessels must have contingency plans to operate in Washington waters.

"This is a significant achievement because we have vessels from around the world that transit the Columbia River," said Linda Pilkey-Jarvis, who oversees statewide oil spill preparedness activities for Ecology. "The MFSA plan gives us confidence that spillers can act quickly and mount an effective response."

Pilkey-Jarvis said MSFA's approved umbrella contingency plan also meets vessel emergency notification requirements under the state's new oil spill readiness law passed by the 2011 Washington Legislature. When there is a significant spill threat – such as a grounding, collision or fire – vessel operators and state and federal officials can put MFSA's plan into action and have equipment and people moving to the scene before a spill occurs.

"Umbrella oil spill contingency plans are good for business and our environment," she said. "Individual operators don't have to craft and maintain their own required contingency plans. Instead, they share costs with other operators to be covered a single, large spill readiness plan that's designed to protect the unique shoreline resources in the Columbia River system. This approach helps keep our ports competitive."

The plan identifies where different response equipment such as oil containment boom, skimming and towing vessels and vacuum trucks are located along the river – and how the equipment will be mobilized by private response entities during a spill to minimize impacts to important environmental, cultural and economic resources. [Read more](#)

NORWAY CITES FLAWS IN BP READINESS

November 30 - BP PLC's efforts to monitor and respond to sudden pollution releases such as oil spills in the Norwegian Sea suffer from "very serious shortcomings" that demand immediate improvement, Norwegian regulators said.

An October investigation during drilling at the Skarv field by Norway's Climate and Pollution Agency, a directorate under the Ministry of the Environment, found that BP couldn't document how it has designed preparedness against sudden pollution releases, the agency said Tuesday.

The report is the latest criticism of safety issues at BP, after a massive oil spill in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico in 2010 and numerous other accidents in recent years. In the wake of the Gulf spill, BP appointed a global head of safety to its executive management team.

"We take this situation very seriously," Bjorn Bjornstad, director of the agency's department of control, water and international affairs, said in a statement.

The investigation concluded that BP hadn't established sufficient systems to detect emergency contamination within three hours, nor could it prove that its preparations were based on national performance standards, the Norwegian agency said.

"Simply put, they weren't good enough," Mr. Bjornstad said, adding that the agency would impose stricter control on BP during 2012.

BP is now undertaking measures to correct the situation, and the agency met with the energy major Friday to discuss the issue. The U.K. company told the agency what measures it will implement to comply with the regulations and will shortly present it with a written report on the issue.

A BP spokesman said the company was "well on the way" to addressing the shortcomings identified. "It isn't the case that we don't have a response plan, but we can improve and strengthen our preparedness," said Jan Erik Geirmo. The measures concern both the Skarv field and future BP activities in Norway. [Read more](#)

UGANDA GOVERNMENT NEWS: NEMA ASSURES OIL SPILL PLAN IN OFFING



In the picture: NEMA Environmental Inspector, Mr Isaac Ntujju

November 28 - The National Environment Management Authority is developing a contingency plan to avert any effects of oil spilling in the Albertine Graben where oil production is expected to start.

This is in anticipation of any leakages from oil pipes during the exploration and production stages.

According to NEMA's Environmental Inspector, Isaac Ntujju, one of the major worries in oil rich countries is the oil spills, which pose a great environmental and health risk to surrounding areas.

Ntujju says NEMA is working with development partners and the Ministry of Energy to conduct studies on the plan to avoid or manage potential oil spills. [Read more](#)

NIGERIA: SLIPPERY JUSTICE FOR NIGER DELTA'S POLLUTED COMMUNITIES

Amnesty International's Aster van Kregten is helping point the finger at oil pollution in the Niger Delta

November 30 - Residents of Ogoniland, in Rivers State, have been struggling since 2008 to hold oil companies and the Nigerian government to account for [catastrophic pollution](#). Recent reports and NGOs say the longer communities wait for action to be taken, the worse the impact on people's health and livelihoods will get.

A [report by Amnesty International](#), a human rights NGO, and the Centre for Environment, Human Rights and Development (CEHRD), a Nigerian NGO, examines delays in addressing oil pollution caused by two spills from Shell's oil pipelines in Bodo, a Delta community of 69,000 people, in 2008.

The spills, which began in August and December 2008, each lasted for weeks before they were stopped. Royal Dutch Shell has accepted responsibility but local communities are still fighting for compensation and a clean-up of the oil that polluted water sources and destroyed livelihoods from fishing and farming.

This is not an isolated case, said Aster van Kregten, a researcher at Amnesty International.

A federal government committee looking into a study by the United Nations Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)) has submitted a report to the presidency, but the contents have not yet been made public. The UNEP study, released in August this year, revealed Ogoniland was so severely contaminated by oil pollution that a clean up could take up to 30 years and cost billions of dollars. Ogoniland communities have [criticized the committee](#) for not visiting the area or consulting residents while compiling the report. [Read more](#)



JAPAN: AGENT ORANGE BURIED AT BEACH STRIP?

November 30 - U.S. veteran fears toxin now beneath popular civilian area

Dozens of barrels of the toxic defoliant Agent Orange were buried in the late 1960s beneath what is now a busy neighborhood in the central Okinawa Island town of Chatan, near Araha Beach, according to a former U.S. soldier who has recently pinpointed the location thanks to a 1970 map of a U.S. base obtained by The Japan Times.

The alleged burial took place in 1969 when the area was part of the U.S. Hamby Air Field, but since its return to civilian use in 1981 the area has been redeveloped into a sightseeing area. Nearby today are restaurants, hotels and apartment buildings on a street running parallel to popular Araha Beach.

Recently there have been several other claims concerning the burial of Agent Orange within U.S. military installations in Okinawa, but this is the first time a site has been identified on civilian land, which may pave the way for independent environmental tests to be conducted. [Read more](#)

JAPAN: REACTOR CORE MELTED FULLY



Photo: Fuel rods in Fukushima Daiichi's No. 1 reactor, in March aerial photo, melted fully out of their pressure vessel, Tepco said Wednesday.

December 1 - Japan's tsunami-stricken nuclear-power complex came closer to a catastrophic meltdown than previously indicated by its operator—who on Wednesday described how one reactor's molten nuclear core likely burned through its primary containment chamber and then ate as far as three-quarters of the way through the concrete in a secondary vessel.

The assessment—offered by Japan's government and Tokyo Electric Power Co., the operator of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear complex—marked Japan's most sobering reckoning to date of the nuclear disaster sparked by the country's March 11 earthquake and tsunami.

But it came nearly six months after U.S. and international nuclear experts and regulators had reached similar conclusions. That lag echoes international allegations, in the tense weeks following the disaster, that Japan was underplaying the severity of the contamination and was slow to provide information to outside nuclear regulators.



Picture: Tepco released in March this photo of smoke rising from its reactor No. 3.

For the first time, Tokyo Electric, known as Tepco, said that nuclear-fuel rods in the complex's No. 1 reactor had likely melted completely, burning through their so-called pressure vessel and then boring through concrete at the bottom of a second containment vessel. Tepco estimates the fuel then eroded about 65 centimeters (about two feet) deep into the 2.6-meter (8.5-foot) concrete bottom. The government model estimated the erosion at up to 2 meters.

The molten core stopped short of reaching the vessel's steel casing, under which lies an additional 7.6 meters of concrete foundation, Tepco said. [Read more](#)

JAPAN LOOKS TO GIANT WASHER TO CLEAN FUKUSHIMA DEBRIS

December 1 - Japan is looking to launder tsunami debris in a giant washing machine to get rid of radiation from the Fukushima nuclear accident, a researcher said Friday.

In a scheme they hope will result in finally being able to dispose of contaminated waste left by the waves that crushed towns on the country's northeast coast, a cleaning plant will be built near the Fukushima Daiichi power station. Shredded waste — including the remains of houses and cars destroyed by the tsunami — will be put inside a huge water-filled drum where steel attachments will scrub away radioactive particles, the researcher told AFP. The plan is a joint scheme between Tokyo-based construction company Toda Corp. and the Japan Atomic Energy Agency. [Read more](#)

People in the news

ADMIRAL THAD ALLEN NAMED SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AT BOOZ ALLEN HAMILTON



Admiral Thad Allen (United States Coast Guard, Retired) has been named a Senior Vice President at Booz Allen Hamilton. Allen will join the firm's Justice and Homeland Security business and lead development of thought leadership and client engagement regarding the direction of law enforcement and Homeland Security 10 years after 9/11.

Allen brings to Booz Allen unique experience as the head of a major homeland security agency (USCG), as well as an unequalled record at achieving operational effectiveness at the interagency level.

[Read more](#)



In this issue of the ISCO Newsletter we are printing No. 54 in a series of articles 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](#)

KNOWLEDGE OF DISPERSANT USE (CHAPTER 54)

On the basis of the foregoing knowledge-acquisition (articles 50 - 53), it was concluded that aircraft with a payload of 1200lb or 540kg which is that of the Piper Pawnee and between those of the Hiller UH 12E and the Aerospatiale 365, would be able to deal with 10 - 12 tonnes of oil per sortie and to achieve 2 sorties per hour at 10 miles from the loading point; that while a helicopter could have a shorter loading time than a fixed wing aircraft by use of two bucket/spray units, all aircraft would have to refuel every two or three sorties; that such would equate to average hourly performance of a ship equipped with emergency deck-loaded pillow tanks out to fifteen miles from the loading point; that while helicopters do not require an airfield, this advantage is only marginal with small fixed wing aircraft such as the Pawnee; and that while this advantage increasingly lies with the helicopter as aircraft size increased, the cost advantage increasingly lies with the fixed wing.

However, now that the neat application of concentrate dispersant reduces the load-carrying advantage of ships over aircraft, we see that this later advantage was generally unavailable for dispersant carriage as indicated by recourse to deck-mounted pillow tanks and on-site dilution with sea water; that even when internal tanks are available this advantage is reducible by aircraft having more rapid activation, on-scene arrival, and treatment on arrival, than ships; that these advantages increase with aircraft size while the variable transit altitude of aircraft greatly increases their slick-finding ability over that of surface-bound ships particularly when the slick has become discontinuous windrows; that aircraft are thus preferable to ships; and that the choice of aircraft numbers/sizes become a matter of comparative cost effectiveness in terms of capital/running costs, and size/number of dispersant stockpiles at airfields nation wide.

To avoid the usual belief-based debate, the requirement was defined in general terms and contractors were invited to tender their proposals and costs. Thus, the need to locate and assess at an altitude of 1000 - 2000 ft and to spray accurately at 10 - 15 ft requires an aircraft sufficiently nimble to position and reposition with the necessary accuracy. However, the requirement is for larger payloads when spraying continuous layers close to source prior to windrow formation. Thus, potential responders were invited to consider mixtures of small and medium-sized aircraft which in combination would be sufficient to apply a minimum of 100 tonnes of dispersant at treatment rates of 10 tonnes per hour and 5 gallons per acre within 25 hours at a distance of 100 miles from replenishment bases or 200 tonnes at 50 miles and *pro rata*, these figures being compliant with the above trial results, the expectation of a maximum release of 5000 tonnes from damage to a single cargo tank designed to IMO requirement and the expectation of the residual cargo and bunkers being removed in a safe haven. Again, potential responders were invited to cost an activation time of 30 minutes in daylight hours and 2 hours in darkness for relocation to the forward base for commencement of spraying at first light. Yet again, to avoid responders opting for one large aircraft capable of delivering dispersant at 10 tonnes per hour, they were encouraged to consider smaller aircraft by inviting them to consider a rate of 5 tonnes per hour under the otherwise stated conditions on the reasoning that the quote for smaller aircraft could be doubled for the 10 tonne per hour requirement or if estimates were higher than expected, it might be possible to have at least the 5 tonne option within budget.

Thus, no particular aircraft, number or type was specified and no advantage was expected from mountable/demountable equipment in aircraft deployable on other uses, it being assumed that all aircraft would have to be dedicated to the spraying task because rapidly installable gear would not solve the problem of aircraft being physically absent on another task. Again, with the requirement for operations up to 100 miles of the forward supply bases implying bases at 200 mile intervals, potential responders were invited to cost the provision of tank capacity for one day's supply of dispersant at each base *i.e.* 100 tonnes for the 10 tonne h⁻¹ option and 50 tonnes h⁻¹ for the 5 tonne option.

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.

Training

O'BRIEN'S ANNOUNCES NEW TRAINING COURSE OPTIONS

O'Brien's training courses are routinely updated to assist our clients in meeting the ever changing regulatory requirements they face in their daily operations. Sharing our hands-on experience from actual emergencies with clients to help them better prepare, respond, communicate and recover are the core themes in our public courses. Closing out 2011, our training team is pleased to offer public training courses in the new [Houston office and alternate command center](#).

Upcoming courses dates and subjects include: December 7th - ICS 100/200 training ■ January 11th - QI training and exercise ■ January 18th - 8 hour hazwoper [More info](#)

Events

OPERATING IN REMOTE OIL & GAS LOCATIONS CONFERENCE

At the Operating in Remote Oil & Gas Locations Conference (31 JAN - 01 FEB 2012, London) you will find out about the latest challenges and solutions to operating oil and gas fields in remote and harsh environments. Take a look at a copy of the official conference programme >> [CONFERENCE PROGRAMME](#) [More info](#)

WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT – CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

The WCDM is now calling for presentations for the 22nd WCDM taking place June 25th – 27th, 2012 in Toronto, Canada at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

The 22nd WCDM will bring delegates from over 40 countries within the fields of Emergency Management, Business Continuity, Emergency Response, Risk Management, IT Disaster Recovery, Disaster Management Research, Emergency Communications, Emergency Health, Security, HR, Environmental, Community Planning, as well as for the organizations which supply and service these professions. [More info](#)

Publications

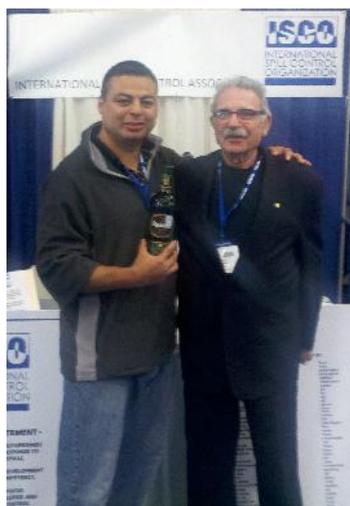
OIL POLLUTION LEGISLATION IN LITTORAL STATES OF THE USA - NEW EDITION

INTERTANKO published its first review of US state oil pollution laws in 1993 in response to the US Oil Pollution Act 1990. Following the Deepwater Horizon spill, we now publish a timely update of US State oil pollution laws focusing on the parties responsible, the range of claims, and potential financial liability. This publication is an essential guide for any tanker owner trading to US ports. [More info](#)

US EPA: TECH DIRECT - DECEMBER 1, 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. [Download](#)

ISCO announcements



ISCO AT CLEAN GULF IN SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

In the picture: ISCO President, David Usher (right) with Johnny Hernandez of MariFlex USA Ltd.

ISCO welcomed many friends and made many new ones at the 2011 Clean Gulf Conference and Exhibition which ended on 1 December.

The draw for a bottle of fine Scottish Malt Whisky was won by Johnny Hernandez of Mariflex USA Ltd.

THIS ISSUE OF THE NEWSLETTER WAS SENT OUT EARLY

This is because your Editor will be in Edinburgh over December 3-4 for a family event – the first birthday of his youngest grandson.

We plan to send out the next issue at the usual time – about 9 pm GMT on Sunday 11 December. Sending at this time ensures that our readers in Australia and the far east get the Newsletter first thing on Monday morning.

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. Products and services featured in the ISCO Newsletter and/or the ISCO website, including the International Directory of Spill Response Supplies and Services, have not been tested, approved or endorsed by ISCO. Any claims made by suppliers of products or services are solely those of the suppliers and ISCO does not accept any liability for their accuracy.