



ISCO NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter of the International Spill Response Community
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ISCO & THE ISCO NEWSLETTER

The ISCO Newsletter is published weekly by the International Spill Control Organisation, a not-for-profit organisation supported by members in 45 countries. ISCO has Consultative Status at IMO, Observer Status at IOPC Funds and is dedicated to raising worldwide preparedness and co-operation in response to oil and chemical spills, promoting technical development and professional competency, and to providing a focus for making the knowledge and experience of spill control professionals available to IMO, UNEP, EC and other organisation.

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International news

ENCLOSED SPACE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has adopted amendments to SOLAS Regulation III/19 which added a new rule - mandatory enclosed space entry and rescue drills

July 20 - From 1 January 2015 all persons involved in enclosed space entries, and / or assigned enclosed space rescue duties, are required to take part in enclosed space entry and rescue drills at intervals not exceeding two months.

Enclosed space entry and rescue drills should be planned and conducted in a safe manner, taking into account, as appropriate, the guidance provided in the recommendations developed by the Organization. Each enclosed space entry and rescue drill shall include, checking and use of personal protective equipment required for entry, communication equipment and procedures, instruments for measuring the atmosphere in enclosed spaces, rescue equipment and procedures and instructions in first aid and resuscitation techniques. [Green4Sea](#) [Read more](#)

[Editor – IMO requirements relate to safety of life at sea but have a much wider relevance that includes the protection and training of personnel in the spill response community]

You can also read more SAFETY4SEA articles on enclosed space entry:

- [Mandatory drills for entry into enclosed spaces](#)
- [CICs on crew familiarization for enclosed space entry and MLC](#)
- [New SOLAS requirements for enclosed space entry](#)
- [New SOLAS requirements for enclosed spaces agreed](#)
- [Enclosed Space Entry: a Deadly Serious Issue](#)
- [London P&I Issues Warning on Enclosed Space Entry Incidents](#)
- [Enclosed Space Entry video interview with Capt David Patraiko](#)

IMB PIRACY REPORT REVEALS CONTINUED SE ASIAN ATTACKS AGAINST SMALL TANKERS

13 vessels have been hijacked globally so far in 2015

July 23 - The latest global report reveals that a total of 134 incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships were reported to the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre (PRC) in the first six months of 2015; an increase on the 116 reports for the corresponding period in 2014. [Green4Sea](#) [Read more](#)

[Editor – The continuing illegal siphoning and theft of oil cargo / bunkers presents a significant risk of a major oil pollution incident]

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International news (continued)

NO RADIOACTIVE CONTAMINATION FROM SUNKEN SUBS IN BARENTS SEA, SAY EXPERTS, BUT CONDITIONS MUST BE MONITORED

July 14 - Russian and Norwegian scientists have tallied up 20 years of radiation studies in the Barents Sea, Kola Bay, as well as results of algae, sediments and other biological samples taken from the Novaya Zemlya Peninsula, Sayda Bay and Andreyeva Bay.

The work has put a special focus on the K-27 nuclear submarine, which the Soviet Navy sank in the shallows of Novaya Zemlya 34 years ago. The K-27 has been in the spotlight ever since Russian naval sources revealed to Bellona in 2012 a catalogue of radioactive waste dumped at sea over the course of decades. *Bellona* [Read more](#) [Thanks to Don Johnston of ISCO Industry Partner, the DG & Hazmat Group]

10th ANNIVERSARY OF THE PUBLICATION OF THE FIRST ISSUE OF THE ISCO NEWSLETTER

The first issue of the ISCO Newsletter appeared on 11 July 2005. From a starting point of about only 100 readers, the circulation has grown to around 2,500 in over 65 countries, not including the many readers who receive the publication via internal circulations carried out within many organizations.

During the whole of this time, the ISCO Newsletter has been maintained as a free publication, disseminating news on matters of interest to the spill response community – helping its readers to keep up-to-date on events, new legislation, technical developments, conferences and exhibitions, training courses, new publications, business opportunities, and much more. An important aspect is the educational role of the newsletter, with articles by recognised experts in their fields, case histories, and technical support features – all helping readers to develop their knowledge and build expertise in spill control and related matters.

If you find the newsletter useful you please give your support by becoming a member of ISCO – It is not expensive and you can apply online at <http://www.spillcontrol.org/2013-02-05-10-50-47/membership-application>

Incident reports from around the world (in chronological order)

USA: BARGE WITH 750 TONNES CAUSTIC SODA CAPSIZED AT VACHERIE WATERWAY IN LOUISIANA

July 3 - Barge with 750 tonnes of caustic soda capsized at Vacherie waterway in Louisiana, USA after collision between the towing vessels American Heritage and David G. Sehr.

After the accident several barges broke loose and went adrift into the waterway, while one of them went into the right descending bank and capsized, spilling 750 tonnes of caustic soda. *Maritime News* [Read more](#) [Thanks to Don Johnston of ISCO Industry Partner, DG & Hazmat Group]

CANADA: RESPONDERS WORK TO REMOVE FUEL FROM SUNKEN TUGS NEAR CORNWALL, ONTARIO

July 7 - A salvage operation to remove fuel from one of two tug boats that sank in the St. Lawrence River begins today. The tugs were towing a barge north of Cornwall island, near the bridge from Massena, N.Y., when they sank on June 22. *North Country Public Radio* [Read more and listen to audio](#) [Thanks to Don Johnston of ISCO Industry Partner, DG & Hazmat Group]

UK: PICTURES: £4,500 CLEAN UP BILL AFTER OIL SLICK ENTERS BROOK IN YEOVIL COUNTRY PARK

July 10 - The Environment Agency has had to carry out a four day clean-up mission at a cost of around £4,500 after a brook in Yeovil Country Park fell victim to an oil slick.

Officers from Wessex Water and South Somerset District Council were also on the scene trying to contain the slick from progressing further downstream in Dodham Brook after the alarm was raised over the weekend. *Western Gazette* [Read more](#) [Thanks to Don Johnston of ISCO Industry Partner, DG & Hazmat Group]

Incident reports from around the world (continued)

SINGAPORE: SECTION OF EAST COAST PARK BEACH CLOSED DUE TO 'OIL SLICK'

July 12 - A section of East Coast Park beach was closed off to swimmers today (July 12) due to an "oil slick", the National Environment Agency (NEA) said. Today [Read more](#) [Thanks to Don Johnston of ISCO Industry Partner, DG & Hazmat Group]

MALTA: BIRZEBBUGA OIL SLICK DRIFTS OUT, MONITORING CONTINUING

July 14 - An oil slick seen in Birzebbuga yesterday evening has drifted out and a danger to Pretty Bay has been averted, local council member Herman Schiavone said. He said oil had leaked from a ship. The Civil Protection Department was informed and a cleaning operation was underway. *Times of Malta* [Read more](#) [Thanks to Don Johnston of ISCO Industry Partner, DG & Hazmat Group]

CANADA: MASSIVE ALBERTA OIL SPILL BIGGER THAN KALAMAZOO DISASTER



July 17 - Oil sands giant Nexen has apologized for one of the largest petroleum spill disasters in Canadian history at its facility 35km southeast of Fort McMurray.

"We sincerely apologize for the impact this has caused," said Nexen vice president Ron Bailey in a press briefing in Calgary Friday morning.

The company said its pipeline near its Nexen Long Lake operation — called the "crown jewel" of its oil sands operation — released five million litres of "emulsion" — a mixture of bitumen oil, water and sand, starting Wednesday. Its "fail safe" spill-detection system didn't work, he said.

The volume released is equivalent to 31,000 barrels — a volume greater than the 27,000 barrels of oil spilled by Enbridge in Kalamazoo Michigan in 2010, in the worst land spill in U.S. history. *National Observer* [Read more](#)

Related Reports and Updates

July 18 – CBC News - Nexen Energy pipeline spill prompts environmental protection order - Alberta's energy regulator has issued an environmental protection order after a massive pipeline spill in the northern part of the province earlier this week. The order directs Nexen Energy to contain the spill, which saw five million litres of bitumen, sand and water released at the company's Long Lake oilsands facility near Fort McMurray. It also instructs Nexen to alert affected parties and develop a cleanup plan. [Read more](#)

July 18 – The Globe & Mail - Alberta oil spill cleanup begins, but cause still uncertain - The clean-up of a pipeline spill south of Fort McMurray is underway, but the cause of the contamination has yet to be confirmed. Vacuum trucks were on site Saturday and fencing went up to keep wildlife away near Nexen Energy's Long Lake oilsands facility, said Kim Blanchette, a spokesperson for the Alberta Energy Regulator. However Blanchette could not say what caused the breach in the double-walled pipe that spilled five million litres of oil emulsion into the area around the line. [Read more](#)

July 20 – Edmonton Journal - Crews working around the clock to clean up major emulsion spill near Fort McMurray - Clean up of a pipeline break south of Fort McMurray continued Sunday, four days after the five million-litre spill was discovered. Nexen says about 60 people are working to remove the bitumen emulsion from the site 36 kilometres south of Fort McMurray. Nexen said the company has conducted environmental monitoring surveys, wildlife monitoring and continued installation of a fence to keep out wildlife. [Read more](#)

July 20 – Newsweek - So-Called 'Failsafe' Pipeline Leak Detection System Failed in Massive Alberta Tar Sands Spill - The burst pipeline was less than one year old and was equipped with advanced monitoring systems that failed to detect the leak, according to CBC News. "We have pipeline integrity equipment, some very good equipment," Nexen's senior vice president, Ron Bailey, told reporters Friday. "Our investigation is looking through exactly why that wasn't alerting us earlier." [Read more](#) [Thanks to Shannon Geiger, Marine Pollution Control]

July 22 – The Record - Nexen Energy oil spill in Alberta prompts environmental alarm over pipelines - The double-walled pipeline is designed to take raw bitumen from the ground to the Long Lake processing plant. The pipeline operated at 100 degrees Celsius to keep the thick bitumen it carried fluid. It will take months before the company can determine what caused the leak. [Read more](#) [Thanks to Shannon Geiger, Marine Pollution Control]

Incident reports from around the world (continued)

USA: PORT OF HOUSTON BARGE COLLISION, FIRE AND OIL SPILL SHUTDOWN INTERCOASTAL WATERWAY



July 20 - A barge carrying one million gallons of petroleum naphtha caught fire and spilled the product in Intercoastal Waterway near Houston on Monday after colliding with another barge in the Texas, the U.S. Coast Guard said.

The Coast Guard closed a section of the Intercoastal Waterway from mile marker 348 near Bolivar Peninsula, but the incident is not affecting ship channel traffic, a Coast Guard spokesman said.

The Intercoastal waterway connects to the Houston Ship Channel, part of the Port of Houston, one of the busiest seaports in the United States.

As one of the most important oil shipping lanes in the United States, the Ship Channel allows barges and cargo ships to supply crude to more than a tenth of the nation's refining capacity and the export of refined fuels to international markets. *OilandGasPeople.com* [Read more](#)

Related Reports and Updates

July 20 – *gCaptain* - Barge Collision, Fire Closes Section of Gulf Coast's Intracoastal Waterway Near Houston – UPDATE

[Read more](#)

July 21 – *The Maritime Executive* - (Update) Barges Collide on ICW Near Houston – [Read more](#)

MALTA: SWIMMING BAN IN QAJJENZA BECAUSE OF OIL SPILL

July 22 - Swimming along a section of the Birzebbuga coast has been banned because of an oil spill from the San Luċjan Oil Terminal. The Environmental Health Directorate said bathing is prohibited on the coast near Triq il-Qajjenza pending the necessary clean-up. *The Times of Malta* [Read more](#)

RUSSIA: OIL SPILL OCCURS NEAR VLADIVOSTOK

July 23 - An oil spill took place in the Tikhaya Bay near Vladivostok on July 21, PrimaMedia news agency reported on its website. The Russian Emergencies Ministry said its specialists found oil slick on the surface of the water, but the source of pollution is unknown. The environmental prosecutor's office and the local port authority will investigate the causes of the spill. *Russia Beyond The Headlines* [Read more](#)

AUSTRALIA: BARRIER REEF OIL SPILL: OIL WASHES UP ON THREE BEACHES

July 24 - Palm-sized clumps of oil have been washed up Hinchinbrook Island, Great Palm Island and a third beach near Ingham after an oil spill near Townsville last week. Maritime Safety Queensland and Townsville Water Police on Friday afternoon confirmed clumps of "weathered oil" had been found in three locations. Oil has washed up on Forrest Beach near Ingham, on beaches on Palm Island and on Mulligan Beach on Hinchinbrook Island. *Brisbane Times* [Read more](#)

NIGERIA: SCORES FEARED DEAD AS EXPLOSION ROCKS NNPC PIPELINE IN AREPO – VANDALS DEAD!!



July 24 - An explosion on Wednesday occurred at one of the pipelines of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) in the Arepo area of Ogun State. Scores of pipeline vandals were reportedly killed. The explosion is said to have occurred after some of the vandals exchanged gunfire, ThisDay reports.

According to the report: "The vandals, who were said to be from opposing camps, had engaged in a gun duel in a show of supremacy over who should control the pipeline and siphon petrol illegally. ThisDay gathered from sources that one of the camps had first stormed the pipeline in order to tamper with the valves and then siphon fuel into their waiting jerry cans ...

It was during the gun duel that a bullet reportedly hit the pipeline, resulting in the explosion" *Najaloaded.com* [Read more](#)

Incident reports from around the world (continued)

USA: MARATHON WORKING TO CLEAN UP MOTOR OIL SPILL IN BIG SANDY RIVER, KENTUCKY

July 24 - Marathon Petroleum says crews are on the Big Sandy River working to recover motor oil that was released into the river earlier this week. Company officials say the release happened during routine maintenance work on a vessel at the Catlettsburg refinery about 9 p.m. Wednesday. *WSAZ News* [Read more](#)

Other news reports from around the world (countries in alphabetical order)

AUSTRALIA CONTINUES OIL-SPILL SEARCH NEAR GREAT BARRIER REEF

July 18 - Maritime authorities will continue searching an area near Australia's Great Barrier Reef where patches of oily water have been detected, after an aircraft Saturday failed to locate any material trace of oil.

Shoreline searches are being conducted and a helicopter will fly over the area south of Townsville looking for a possible spill, Queensland's Department of Transport and Main Roads said Saturday in an e-mailed statement. While samples of the sheen have been taken for analysis, no on-water response is needed as the residue is being broken up by the weather, it said. *Bloomberg Business* [Read more](#)

AUSTRALIA: BARRIER REEF OIL SPILL: 14 SUSPECT SHIPS TO BE TESTED IN LEAK HUNT

July 19 - Fourteen ships have been identified as possible sources of a film of oil stretching, in broken sections, 30 kilometres long and five kilometres wide south of Townsville, Patrick Quirk, general manager of Maritime Services Queensland said on Saturday. An oil slick was confirmed 18 nautical miles (33 kilometres) NNE of Cape Upstart on Friday evening, but was broken up into metre-sized blotches of oily film by the weather. *Brisbane Times* [Read more](#)

CANADA: OIL SPILL IN ENGLISH BAY REACHED SEVERAL VANCOUVER BEACHES, SCIENTISTS SAY

July 17 - Scientists have conclusively linked oil that washed up along numerous Vancouver beaches with the grain container ship that leaked bunker fuel in English Bay in April.

Testing by researchers from the Vancouver Aquarium also shows that the fuel may have harmed aquatic organisms and wildlife in the water and along the shores.

Peter Ross of the Vancouver Aquarium's Ocean Research Program and his team did a detailed forensic analysis of the oil from the MV Marathassa, looking at more than 100 hydrocarbons that create a unique so-called fingerprint. *CBC News* [Read more](#)

CANADA: ARCTIC OIL SPILLS TO BE STUDIED AT CHURCHILL RESEARCH FACILITY

July 20 - With increased shipping activity and plenty of potential drilling, researchers are hoping to better understand the effects of an oil spill in arctic sea ice and how to prevent it thanks to a multi-government, multi-university research centre in Churchill, Man.

"It allows us to sort of understand what it looks like for an oil spill to be amidst ice-covered seas," said John Yackel, the head of the department of geography at the University of Calgary and the lead researcher at the Churchill Marine Observatory who will focus on detection. *CBC News* [Read more](#) [Thanks to Jeff Taylor, Marine Pollution Control]

CANADA: PLANS TO IMPROVE VANCOUVER'S OIL SPILL RESPONSE TIME

July 24 - The federal government plans to set up a new office in downtown Vancouver to better respond to oil spill risks in the harbour, *The Vancouver Sun* reports.

Office space for a new environmental response office will be set up in the HMCS Discovery at Coal Harbour, headquarters for the Canadian Coast Guard inshore rescue boat station. A pollution response vessel will be docked at HMCS Discovery to respond to reports of pollution. *Green4Sea* [Read more](#)

FIJI: MOVE TO RATIFY IMO CONVENTION ON CIVIL LIABILITY FOR BUNKER OIL POLLUTION



Picture: A derelict vessel at the Government shipyard in Walu Bay, Suva, puts public safety and the marine environment at risk.

Ratifying the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) convention on Civil Liability for Bunker Oil Pollution will allow Fiji to be fully compensated for pollution damage caused by oil spills from fuel carried in ships' bunkers.

These were the comments of Ministry of Transport deputy secretary Lui Naisara yesterday as he presented his submission on the convention to the Standing Committee on Defence and Foreign Affairs. *The Fiji Times* [Read more](#)

Other news reports from around the world (continued)

JAPAN: FUKUSHIMA SCRUB-DOWN AIMS TO MAKE VILLAGES SAFE, ALTHOUGH WOODS MAY REMAIN NO-GO ZONES

Photo: Contaminated earth is piled up in bags at a collection site in Iitate, Fukushima Prefecture, on Friday. | AFP-JJJI

July 22 - Sweating inside their plastic protection suits, thousands of men toil in Japan's muggy early summer in a vast effort to scrub radiation from the villages around Fukushima. The mission is to decontaminate hundreds of square kilometers that were polluted when reactors went into meltdown after huge tsunamis struck the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear plant in March 2011.

No stone is left unturned: Diggers scrape away the top layer of earth in fields, school courtyards and around the buildings of villages, while houses, buildings, roads and parking lots are scrubbed clean. At least 20,000 people are involved in the cleanup, according to the Environment Ministry. The workers wear the special gloves, masks and boots required for workers in the nuclear industry. *The Japan Times* [Read more](#)



NEW ZEALAND TO MAP HIGH RISK WATERS

July 22 - An in-depth assessment of New Zealand's waters is set to improve maritime safety for ships, Minister for Land Information Louise Upston announced this week. Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) will map areas of high risk so charting improvements can be made where they are needed most.

"LINZ's risk assessments will use location information on vessel traffic, environmentally and culturally sensitive sites, and hazards such as reefs to create "heat maps" that show where risks are highest," said Upston *The Maritime Executive* [Read more](#)

NIGERIA: BAYELSA COMMUNITY ACCUSES SHELL OF ABANDONING OIL SPILL

July 19 - The residents of Oruma-Yibama, Ogbia Local Government Area, Bayelsa, have alleged that Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) is yet to clean up an oil spill that occurred in the area on June 2.

The Chairman of Oruma-Yibama Community Development Committee, Eliot Igbigikeme, stated this in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria in Oruma-Yibama on Sunday. He said that the spill flowed from Odau into the community through the natural water channels in the area. He said the community was concerned about the negative impact of continued exposure to crude oil.

However, Joseph Obari, Shell's spokesperson, said that the oil company had received reports of the incident from the Oruma-Yibama community. He said efforts made by the company to confirm the reported spill were thwarted by community members who denied the oil workers access to the site. "A team dispatched to the area was refused access by the people". *Premium Times* [Read more](#)

NIGERIA: BAN OF 113 OIL VESSELS, DESIRABLE FOR UPSTREAM SECTOR TRANSPARENCY – ANALYSTS

July 22 - Despite the pronouncements of many government officials, pipeline vandalism and crude oil theft have outlived past administrations with negative consequences on the nation and its economy. But UDEME AKPAN and CHIDI UGWU report that intervention of President Muhammadu Buhari-led administration could culminate in taming the monsters.

For several years, pipeline vandalisation and crude oil theft had haunted the nation without any decisive intervention to tackle them. These affected the operations of virtually all oil and gas companies. Take the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, NNPC an example. In 2014 alone, the Corporation maintained that it recorded 3,700 cases of pipeline vandalism, leading to a revenue loss of about N60 billion (\$299 million). *National Mirror* [Read more](#)

RUSSIA: SHOCKING OIL SPILL SCENES FROM SIBERIA: BUT IS THERE A WAY TO A CLEANER FUTURE?



These disturbing pollution cases show the toll suffered by Siberia as one of the world's foremost oil producing regions on which our nation's health and economic well-being depends. Shot over a number of years, these haunting images show the damage to wildlife and nature from oil spills often resulting from the rupture of old pipelines. There are rivers and lakes of oil, frequently in some of the remotest and inaccessible places.

Greenpeace Russia's volunteers have worked to highlight the problem, and here the organisation offers its solutions to avoiding such scenes in future. We run this story after recent weeks have seen a serious oil spill - and one that seemed hard to halt, never mind clean up - in the energy city of Nefteyugansk. *The Siberian Times* [Read more and see more photographs of the devastation](#)

Other news reports from around the world (continued)

USA: MASSIVE MARINE DEBRIS REMOVAL PROJECT TO GET UNDERWAY IN ALASKA

July 12 - A massive cleanup effort is getting underway in Alaska, with tons of marine debris — some likely sent to sea by the 2011 tsunami in Japan — set to be airlifted from rocky beaches and taken by barge for recycling and disposal in the Pacific Northwest.

Hundreds of heavy-duty bags of debris, collected in 2013 and 2014 and stockpiled at a storage site in Kodiak, also will be shipped out. The barge is scheduled to arrive in Kodiak by Thursday, before setting off on a roughly one-month venture. *US News* [Read more](#) [Thanks to SAC News and Dr Merv Fingas, Hon.FISCO]

USA: MICHIGAN: BAN HEAVY OIL FROM STRAITS OF MACKINAC PIPELINE

July 14 - Heavy crude oil will be banned from a pipeline that runs under a scenic waterway where Lakes Huron and Michigan meet, state officials said Tuesday, adding they also will require independent analyses of future alternatives to the pipes and worst-case consequences of a spill.

Only light crude presently moves through Line 5, two side-by-side pipelines below the 5-mile-wide Straits of Mackinac that transport nearly 23 million gallons of oil a day. It is run by Canada-based Enbridge Energy Partners, which told the state in February it has no plans to move heavy crude through the line built in 1953.

The Great Lakes would be at "greatest risk" from a spill of "diluted bitumen" oil from Canada's tar sands region, according to Attorney General Bill Schuette and Department of Environmental Quality Director Dan Wyant, who led a yearlong task force studying pipeline issues. About 840,000 gallons of heavy crude spilled from another Enbridge pipeline into Michigan's Kalamazoo River in 2010 — one of the largest inland oil spills in U.S. history. *ABC News* [Read more](#) [Thanks to Walter Putman, Marine Pollution Control]

July 15 – Related article in the Detroit Free Press - Pipeline is called an aging, oily threat to Great Lakes [Read this article](#)

USA: MICHIGAN COMPANY USES DOGS TO SNIFF OUT WATER POLLUTION

July 16 - One Michigan-based company has introduced a new way to detect and source illicit discharges in storm and drain systems. Karen and Scott Reynolds founded Environmental Canine Services in 2009 using dogs to detect waste water problems. *WKAR – Michigan State University* [Read more & Listen to Audio](#) [Thanks to Walter Putman, Marine Pollution Control]

USA: BSEE OIL SPILL PREPAREDNESS DIVISION CONDUCTS UNANNOUNCED EXERCISE IN GULF OF MEXICO REGION

July 17 - Alton Bates and Thomas Tregle from the BSEE Oil Spill Preparedness Division – Gulf Section - conducted a Government Initiated Unannounced Exercise (GIUE) with Enterprise Field Services, LLC on July 15, 2015. As the Exercise Designer and Controller, Alton Bates presented a scenario to Enterprise Field Services LLC that required the company to respond to a simulated oil spill from a damaged pipeline that resulted in a shoreline impact in the Sabine River at the Louisiana-Texas state border. The GIUE required Enterprise Field Services, LLC to activate a spill management team and to deploy oil spill response equipment, including a skimmer, vacuum transfer unit, and portable barge from a staging site in Lake Charles, Louisiana.

This exercise provided an opportunity for joint cooperation, partnership, and governmental efficiency between federal and state organizations. BSEE planned and executed the functional exercise in coordination with other offices within BSEE, the U. S. Coast Guard, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Texas General Land Office and the Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinator's Office. *BSEE* [Read more](#) [Thanks to Mike Rancilio, Marine Pollution Control]

USA: DESPITE FEDERAL PUSH AFTER BP OIL SPILL, NUMBER OF AGING TEMPORARILY SEALED WELLS GROWS

July 18 - Five years after the Obama administration promised to move swiftly to permanently plug unused oil and gas wells in the Gulf of Mexico, even more shafts are lingering for longer periods with only temporary sealing, an Associated Press investigation shows. It is not clear how many incompletely sealed wells may have leaked — they generally are not monitored as carefully as active wells — but they contain fewer barriers to pent-up petroleum and rupture more easily. The threat to the environment increases with time. *The Times Picayune* [Read more](#)

USA: SHELL GETS FINAL APPROVAL FOR ARCTIC DRILLING

July 22 - The U.S. Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement approved Shell's final drilling permits, which was the last hurdle before the company can begin drilling exploration wells in the Chukchi Sea. The company can begin to drill immediately on the top sections of two wells, but cannot drill down to where the oil and gas is located until the M/V Fennica, the ice breaker carrying the required capping stack for the wells, returns from receiving repairs to its damaged hull in Portland, Oregon.

The permits also restrict Shell to drilling only one well at a time, due to a U.S. Fish and Wildlife regulation. The federal government found that there is a 75 percent chance of a large oil spill should drilling occur in the Arctic Ocean, yet the Bureau concluded that Shell is able to adequately respond should a spill occur, despite the treacherous and unpredictable conditions in the Arctic Ocean. *The Maritime Executive* [Read more](#) Related reports in [Green4Sea](#) and [gCaptain](#)

FOCUS ON RESEARCH | CREATION TRANSFORMS SPILLED OIL INTO USABLE PRODUCT

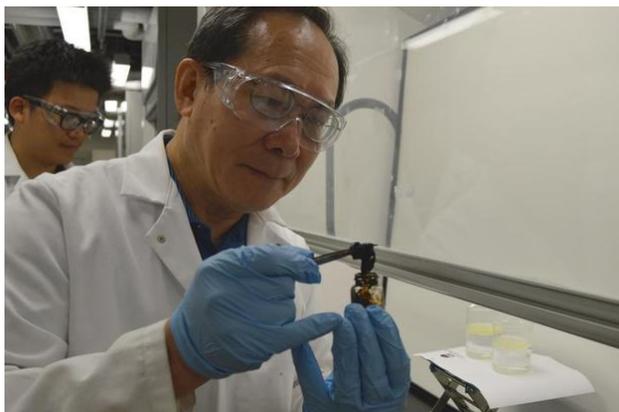


Photo: Michael Chung, professor of materials science at Penn State, holds a solid chunk of oil that is able to be reused. Chung and his team developed a material called PetroGel that completely absorbs spilled oil and transforms it into a usable product.

In 1989, Mike Chung became interested in how to clean up massive oil spills. As a researcher with Exxon Corporation, Chung participated in discussions about how to clean up the hundreds of thousands of barrels of oil spilled off the coast of Alaska by the Exxon Valdez. Unfortunately, every solution had drawbacks.

“One common approach to clean an oil spill is to use containment booms to physically corral the oil in one location, then either collect it with a skimmer, or burn it in a controlled manner. Another approach is to use dispersants that mix oil and water, much like soap we use to wash oil off our hands,” Chung said. “There are problems with both of

these approaches: the first doesn’t collect all the oil, and the second leaves pollutants in the environment, potentially hurting wildlife and seafood supply.”

Chung joined Penn State’s Department of Materials Science and Engineering later that same year, where he focused his research on synthesizing plastics and other materials with unique chemical and physical properties. Then in 2012, the largest oil spill in history occurred after the Deepwater Horizon oil rig exploded in the Gulf Coast . Chung decided to devote some of his research to oil spill cleanup solutions under the sponsorship of the Ben Franklin Foundation.

Chung and his research team began scouring the world of materials to find something that would be more effective than dispersants and containment booms. One thing they looked at was disposable diapers, which contain a material that behaves in a way that they thought might work well for oil spills.

A hydrogel is a kind of polymer that can absorb large quantities of water. It’s what turns squishy as a diaper gets full. It works by absorbing water upon contact and swelling in size.

“That mechanism of swelling in size while absorbing water really interested us. But we were seeking a material that would do this with oil instead of water, and one that would not interact with water. Additionally, we were looking for a material that would remain a solid rather than disintegrating after use, and something that could be sprayed from an airplane on top of the water, because you can’t always navigate by land or air to where oil spills happen. To effectively recover oil and reduce the environmental impact, we needed a material that could be used quickly, to prevent oil from evaporating, emulsifying or spreading in other ways,” Chung said.

After an exhaustive search through known materials produced no solution, Chung and his team ended up creating a new material in their lab that met all their needs.

Their creation is PetroGel, which is now trademarked and patented by Penn State. It is a plastic that, just like hydrogel in diapers, starts off as a small, barely visible particle. Then, as it touches oil molecules, it grows in size, absorbs the oil molecule and doesn’t disintegrate — instead, it congeals into a chunk. “In 10 minutes, PetroGel can absorb 10 times its volume in crude oil. After 24 hours, it absorbs 40 times its volume in crude oil, and it doesn’t absorb water,” Chung said.

Chung has tested PetroGel on a small scale in his laboratory and has seen positive results. Starting this winter, he will begin a large-scale performance test in partnership with the U. S. Department of Interior’s Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement. This will test whether 250 pounds of PetroGel can absorb 10,000 pounds of Alaskan North Slope crude oil in Arctic sea environments — accounting for wave size, water temperature and ice. If this proves successful, Chung will work with industry partners to mass produce PetroGel.

The foregoing is an abbreviated version of an article by Liam Jackson that appeared in the July 23 2015 issue of Centre Daily Times. Liam Jackson is a writer/web content strategist in Penn State’s College of Earth and Mineral Sciences [Read the complete text of this article](#)

Publications

VIDEO PRESENTATIONS AVAILABLE FROM THE GULF OF MEXICO OIL SPILL & ECOSYSTEM SCIENCE CONFERENCE

The [Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative \(GoMRI\)](#) has made available twenty-two video presentations from the 2015 Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill & Ecosystem Science Conference. [Click here to watch the conference presentations](#) about research that helps answer “what have we learned, what does it mean, and how can it be used?” This year’s event was especially significant as the Principal Investigators of [eight GoMRI consortia](#) presented highlights during the opening plenary from their groups’ three-year research efforts. During a conference poster session, directors of [twelve recently-funded GoMRI consortia](#) presented their groups’ planned research activities for the next three years. [Click here](#) for the latest information about the upcoming 2016 conference.

Publications (continued)

EI PUBLICATION - PIPELINE AND RISER LOSS OF CONTAINMENT 2001 – 2012 (PARLOC 2012)

This revision of PARLOC was jointly published with Oil & Gas UK and updates the previous report known as PARLOC 2001. The Pipeline and Riser Loss of Containment (PARLOC) report is the preferred source of risk assessment data for generic loss of containment frequencies and covers pipelines and risers in the offshore oil and gas industry.

The results presented in this report are based on data gathered for loss of containment incidents that occurred at pipelines and risers on the UK continental shelf (UKCS) during the 12-year period 2001 – 2012. This publication is [available to order online](#) in hard copy or PDF format. EI members can obtain the hard copy version at 50 % discount. 6th edition, March 2015 ISBN: 9780852937273

Links for recent issues of other publications (in alphabetical order)

AMSA Aboard	News from the Australian Maritime Safety Authority	July 2015 issue
ASME EED EHS Newsletter	News and commentary on HSE issues from George Holliday	Most recent issue
Bow Wave	Sam Ignarski's Ezine on Marine & Transport Matters	Current issue
Cedre Newsletter	News from Cedre in Brittany, France	June 2015
Celtic Biogenie enGlobe Newsletter	Latest Remediation and related technology news	Spring 2015 issue
CROIERG Enews	Canberra & Regions Oil Industry Emergency Response Group	Current issue
EMSA Newsletter	News from the European Maritime Safety Agency	July 2015 issue
Energy Institute eBulletin	News from the Energy Institute	April 2015 issue
Environmental Technology Online	Environmental Monitoring, Testing & Analysis	July 2015 issue
IMO News Magazine	News from the International Maritime Organization	No 2, 2015
IMO Publishing News	New and forthcoming IMO publications	June 2015
Intertanko Weekly News	International news for the oil tanker community	No 30 2015
IPIECA eNews	Int'l Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Assoc'n	February 12 issue
JOIFF "The Catalyst"	Int'l Organisation for Industrial Hazard Management	July 2015 issue
MOIG Newsletter	News from the Mediterranean Oil Industry Group	Most recent Issue
NOAA update	Oil spill response news from NOAA OR&R	April 2015
OCIMF Newsletter	News from the Oil Companies International Marine Forum	June 2015 issue
Pollution Online Newsletter	News for prevention & control professionals	July 22 issue
Sea Alarm Foundation Newsletter	Oiled wildlife Preparedness and Response news from Sea Alarm	Spring 2015 issue
SAC News	Oil spill related and other news from Alaska	July 24 issue 2015
Technology Innovation News Survey	From US EPA - Contaminated site decontamination	June 1 - 15 2015
The Essential Hazmat News	Alliance of Hazardous Materials Professionals	June 1 issue
Transport Canada Newsletter	News and articles re transport of dangerous goods in Canada	Winter 2014 issue
USA EPA Tech Direct	Remediation of contaminated soil and groundwater	July 1 2015 issue
USA EPA Tech News & Trends	Contaminated site clean-up information	Spring 2015 issue
WMU Newsletter	News from the World Maritime University	June 2015 issue

Training

BRIGGS AWARDED ISAA INLAND SPILL TRAINING COURSE ACCREDITATIONS

Three of the inland response training courses provided by Briggs Marine & Environmental Services have just been awarded accredited status by the International Spill Accreditation Association (ISAA). The newly accredited courses are –

Hydrocarbon - ROAD TANKER OVERTURN INCIDENT CONTROLLER REFRESHER COURSE
Hydrocarbon - ROAD TANKER OVERTURN OPERATOR RESPONSE TRAINING COURSE
Oil Spill Response - FIRST RESPONDER

The Environmental Services Division of Briggs Marine & Environmental Services is an international Level 3 ISAA accredited response organisation that also provides a wide range of Training Courses addressing spill response in both the marine and onshore environments. As part of its Quality Assurance Programme, the company's policy is to seek and maintain accredited status for both its spill response operations and the training courses it provides.

As an international accreditation authority ISAA carries out detailed assessments of training providers' course syllabuses and training capabilities for inland spill training. In a similar way to the accreditation process carried out by the Nautical Institute for marine response training organisations offering IMO, MCA and DEC courses, the accreditation process not only verifies course content but also assesses the competence of trainers' personnel on course delivery.

The Briggs training courses have been developed and are presented by Head of Training, Steve Guy, MISCO, who has more than 25 years' experience in UK and international spill response operations.

ISAA was formed in 2003 as a not-for-profit international association dedicated to improving standards of spill response by awarding accredited status to oil spill response organisations that meet required standards. ISAA auditors examine every aspect of each candidate's operations in accordance with a comprehensive accreditation matrix. The objective is not only to determine appropriate levels for award (or otherwise) of accreditation, but to help accredited spill response organisations, over time, to progress towards higher levels of accreditation. ISAA also organises training events and seminars, designed to help responders to maintain and enhance response capacity.

For information on the Training Courses provided by Briggs Environmental, contact Head of Training, Steve Guy at sguy@briggsevenvironmental.com or visit <http://www.briggsmarine.com/environmental/training/>

Events

CLEAN GULF CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION CELEBRATES 25TH ANNIVERSARY

It all started in 1991 – the first CLEAN GULF Conference & Exhibition took place in Austin, Texas. Fast forward 25 years later and CLEAN GULF is still a leading event for spill preparedness and response professionals in the United States!

For its 25th year, CLEAN GULF will focus on where we have come from, where we are now, and where we are headed. We have also made some exciting additions to the agenda to make our 25th year the best yet!

New additions include –

- Inland Preparedness and Response Track - 6 dedicated sessions
- Veteran's Day Commemoration
- Mega Session: OPA 90 and CLEAN GULF – 25 Years of Stewardship
- Exhibitor Showcase Theater
- More sessions with additional day added to the schedule [More info](#)

Job vacancies

NRC IS LOOKING FOR AN OPERATIONS SUPPORT MANAGER

For more information please contact Yolanda Chavi, HR Manager, International, NRC at ychavi@nrcc.com
Tel: +44 (0) 1908 467 800 Fax: +44 (0) 1908 662 967 Mob: +44 (0) 7920 339805 www.nrcc.com

Company news

ISCO MEMBER, ECO EQUIPMENTS TO COMMISSION ADVANCED OIL SPILL RESPONSE VESSEL



In August 2015, ECO Equipments will commission Asia's advanced oil spill response workboat, in conjunction with ECOCEANE (France).

The Spillglop 250 has a recovery rate of 120 m3/h, a cruising endurance 1700 nautical miles, can operate in waves up to 5 m, and has the capability of 24-hour operations. Eco Equipment is looking for partners in this venture. For more information contact Mr. Chiu at sales@ecoequipments.com

http://www.taiwantrade.com.tw/EP/ecoequipments/products-detail/en_US/901495/Ecoceane_Workboats_%26_Oil_Cleanup_Vessels_%E5%B7%A5%E4%BD%9C%E8%88%B9%E8%88%87%E6%B2%B9%E6%B1%A1%E8%99%95%E7%90%86%E8%88%B9_-_Recover_Hydrocarbons_%26_Solid_Floating_Waste_%26_All_Types_of_Floating_%26_Liquid_Waste%28Hydrocarbons%29/

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GY0pLKoTUxw>

JOIN ISCO ONLINE – IT'S QUICK AND EASY

There are lots of positive advantages in joining this organisation which has a worldwide membership in 46 countries –

Being part of a worldwide community of professionals who share a common interest + Receive rapid advice of emergency spill response supply requirements from governments, responsible parties and others arising from major spills and have the opportunity to offer support services, equipment and materials + Receiving ISCO's weekly newsletter keeping you up-to-date on events, developing technologies, new legislation and other matters of mutual interest + Access to a comprehensive online Technical and Reference facility for oil and HNS - spill response tools, guidelines, manuals and other information + Identifying opportunities for providing new products and services needed in domestic and overseas markets + Practical help in building incident response capacity and competence enhancement + Through ISCO, having a voice in the drafting of new legislation that will affect your area of interest + Opportunities to participate in ISCO work groups developing new ideas and projects + Through the International Offers of Assistance initiative opportunities to have a role in the response to very large oil spill events + Networking with other members, sharing experiences, discussing problems and helping find good solutions + Free listing in ISCO's International Directory of Supplies and Services with your entry hyperlinked to your own website.

[Complete the online application form](#)

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