

PREP - EPA works with other agencies and the regulated community to implement PREP. PREP exercises test the adequacy of government and industry spill response plans and resources.

RESPONSE

Conduct, Direct, or Monitor Inland Oil Spill Responses

- EPA maintains responsibility for ensuring rapid, effective response efforts are conducted for spills in inland waters. EPA also continues support for U.S. Coast Guard-led responses to offshore spills.

Environmental Response Team (ERT) - ERT

scientists and engineers are continually oncall, providing technical expertise to oil spill response personnel in the U.S. and globally.

RESEARCH NEW APPROACHES TO SPILLS

Evaluate New Spill Response Technologies - EPA manages the NCP Product Schedule. EPA is working with other Federal and State agencies to ensure that area planners, Regional Response Teams, and On-Scene Coordinators have the most up-to-date and complete information on chemical and biological agents, including effective application and monitoring techniques.

Research New Spill Response Methods - EPA

performs research to test the effectiveness of developing response methods such as new dispersants and bioremediation agents.

The Mission of the EPA Oil Program

Oil spills endanger public health, imperil drinking water, devastate natural resources, and disrupt the economy. The U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency's Oil Program plays an important role in protecting the environment through prevention of, preparation for, and response to oil spills.

U.S. Environmental
Protection Agency

Oil Program

Origins and Directions

Mandated under the Federal
Water Pollution Control Act
(Clean Water Act) and Oil
Pollution Act of 1990

To report an oil or hazardous
substance spill, call the
National Response Center:
800-424-8802

For information on the Spill Prevention
Control and Countermeasure rule,
Facility Response Plans, or
the Oil Pollution Act, call:
800-424-9346

email:

oilinfo@epa.gov

or visit the U.S. EPA Oil Program

Internet Site at:

www.epa.gov/oilspill

PREVENT

RESPOND

A BRIEF HISTORY

The U.S. EPA Oil Program has protected inland waters since the early 1970s; however, its roots trace back over a century from today. The following is an overview of the development of the Federal oil pollution prevention program and policy in the U.S.

1899 - The Rivers and Harbors Act generally prohibits the discharge of oil and other refuse matter from vessels.

1924 - The Oil Pollution Act, the first U.S. law directed specifically at oil pollution, bars discharges of oil into U.S. coastal waters.

1948 - The Federal Water Pollution Control Act is passed calling for State-developed water quality standards. This act is amended numerous times in the decades to follow to attempt to correct deficiencies such as increasing incidence of oil spills.

1970 - Section 311 of the Clean Water Act, formerly known as the Water Quality Improvement Act, calls for new oil spill planning, cleanup, and prevention measures. Later the same year, the U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is formed and charged with developing these measures. The EPA has jurisdiction over inland oil spills while the U.S. Coast Guard is responsible for coastal waters. This arrangement is retained today.

1973 - The National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP) details how Federal, State, and local officials must work with responsible parties to plan for and respond to oil spills.

1974 - EPA requires Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure (SPCC) plans for facilities having the potential to spill oil into U.S. waters.

1987 - The first full year of Emergency Response

Notification System (ERNS) operation. ERNS is a repository for vital data on oil spills including sources, oil types, volume, location, and damage. EPA uses the system to gauge the nature and extent of U.S. oil pollution.

1988 - Collapse of an aboveground storage tank at an Ashland oil facility spills 750,000 gallons of diesel fuel into the Monongahela River. Deficiencies in the facility's SPCC Plan prompt formation of a task force to determine if there is a need for changes to the SPCC Program.

1989 - The tanker *Exxon Valdez* runs aground of Bligh Reef spilling 11 million gallons of oil into Alaska's Prince William Sound. Americans react to the largest oil spill in their history with unprecedented support for stronger oil spill legislation.

1990 - The Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90) amended the Clean Water Act and expanded and strengthened U.S. oil spill policy. EPA is charged with implementing new measures of prevention, planning, and preparedness for oil spills from onshore facilities.

1994 - EPA finalizes OPA-mandated regulations requiring Facility Response Plans (FRPs). FRPs enhance oil spill response just as SPCC Plans increased spill prevention. Also, EPA and other Federal agencies issue guidelines for the National Preparedness for Response Exercise Program (PREP) to spill responders.

1996 - Integrated Contingency Plan guidance is published by EPA to help industry minimize regulatory burdens through the coordination of oil spill planning with other Federal planning requirements.

2000 - New FRP requirements for animal fat and vegetable oil facilities were issued by EPA in compliance with the Edible Oil Regulatory Reform

Act requiring differentiation between animal fats and vegetable oils and other classes of oils, based on properties and effects. The rule provides planning methodologies tailored to animal fats and vegetable oils.

2002 - A new SPCC Rule is issued by EPA addressing revisions previously proposed in 1991, 1993, and 1997. The new rule serves to continue to prevent oil spills from reaching waters of the U.S. and ensure effective response to spills while clarifying language and reducing the information collection burden on industry.

THE OIL PROGRAM IN THE 21ST CENTURY - PREVENT, PREPARE, RESPOND

The EPA Oil Program is more committed to protection of human health and the environment than ever before. The Agency is including new technologies in oil spill prevention and response and updating rules and regulations to streamline regulatory processes while maintaining maximum levels of protection. The following are several key elements of the current Oil Program.

PREVENTION AND PREPAREDNESS

SPCC Inspections - EPA performs SPCC inspections to ensure that facilities can prevent and control oil spills. EPA regulates approximately 419,000 facilities under the SPCC Rule.

Facility Response Plans - EPA approves and reviews FRPs at approximately 6,000 high-risk facilities.

Area Contingency Plans (ACPs) - EPA Regions have developed ACPs detailing how the NCP will be implemented in specific areas of the country. EPA continues to enhance ACPs by developing protection strategies and clean-up methods targeted at inland areas.