



ERNS and Oil

Emergency Response Notification System (ERNS) Fact Sheet

Office of Emergency and Remedial Response
Emergency Response Division 5202G

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

What is ERNS?

The Emergency Response Notification System (ERNS) is a computer database containing information on reports of oil and hazardous substance releases that have occurred throughout the United States and have been reported to the National Response Center (NRC), the ten EPA Regions, and the U.S. Coast Guard. Initial notification data may be updated with information from various Federal, State, and local response authorities, as appropriate. ERNS data can be used to analyze reports of releases, support emergency planning efforts, and assist decision makers in developing spill prevention programs.

Oil Release Notifications in ERNS

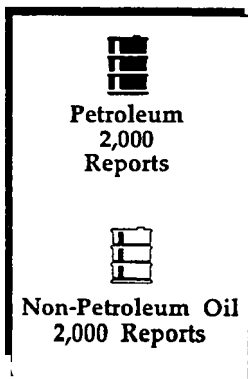
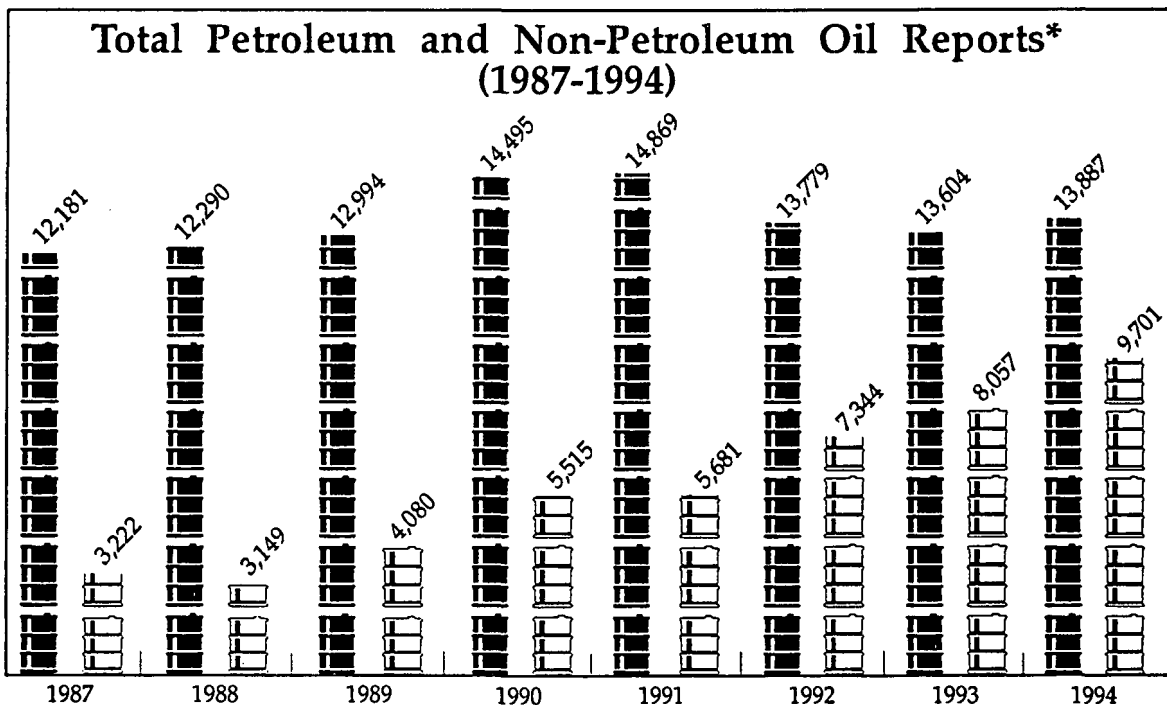
Most people think of oil spills as spills involving petroleum products; however spills of edible oils, which can be harmful to marine life, must also be reported to the NRC. To differentiate between the two types, oil release reports have been sub-divided into two categories, "petroleum" and "non-petroleum oil," which includes edible oils. On average, 57 percent of the approximately 300,000 reports of releases in ERNS are classified as oil, with petroleum reports outnumbering non-petroleum oil reports by approximately 2 to 1. The following are examples of petroleum and non-petroleum oil substances:

Petroleum Category

- Crude Oil
- Heating Oil
- Jet Fuel
- Kerosene
- Automotive Gasoline

Non-Petroleum Oil Category

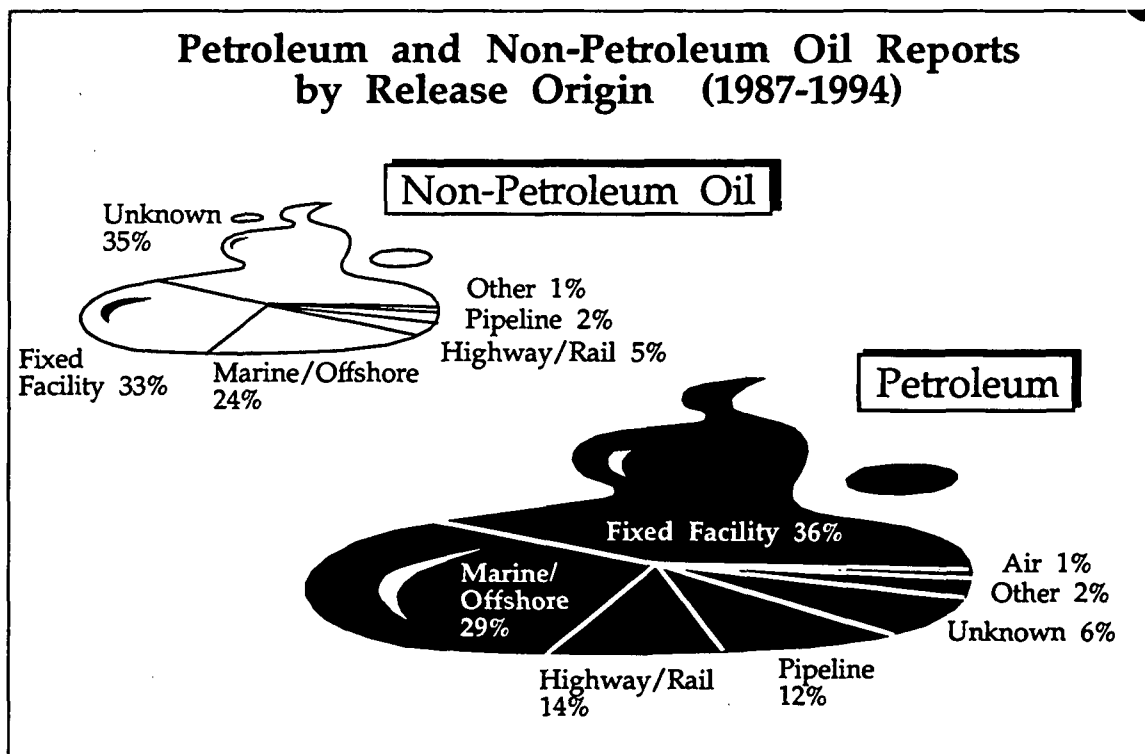
- Palm Oil
- Sunflower Oil
- Fish Oil
- Camphor Oil
- Creosote



*Petroleum and non-petroleum oil reports are not necessarily additive. A single report of an incident may be a spill of either petroleum or non-petroleum oil or both.

Origins of Oil Releases Reported in ERNS

Oil releases come from several sources as shown below. Information about the origin of the release is used to notify the appropriate agency to respond to the release.



When Do I Report a Release of Oil?

The NRC must be notified of discharges of oil affecting U.S. waters in accordance with the regulations issued under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act or Clean Water Act. These regulations require the person in charge to notify the NRC of a discharge of oil which:

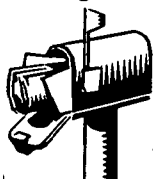
- Causes a sheen to appear on the surface of the water;
- Violates applicable water quality standards; or
- Causes a sludge or an emulsion to be deposited beneath the surface of the water or upon the adjoining shoreline.



When in doubt, call the NRC !
1-800-424-8802

Obtaining ERNS Data

Additional information on the ERNS database may be obtained by calling the ERNS Information Line at (202) 260-2342, by sending an e-mail request to erns.info@epamail.epa.gov, or by writing to EPA at the following address:



ERNS Manager
U.S. EPA
Mail Code 5202G
401 M Street SW
Washington, DC 20460



ERNS data are also available through the Internet at the following addresses:

World Wide Web: <http://www.epa.gov>
EPA Gopher Server: gopher.epa.gov
Anonymous FTP Server: ftp.epa.gov

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