



Oil Notifications

Emergency Response Notification System (ERNS) Fact Sheet

Office of Emergency and Remedial Response
Emergency Response Division OS-210

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

The Emergency Response Notification System (ERNS) is a national computer database which provides the only centralized mechanism for documenting and verifying incident notification information as initially reported to the National Response Center (NRC), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and to a limited extent, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG). This initial notification data may be followed up with updated information from various Federal, State and local response authorities, as appropriate. ERNS contains data that can be used to analyze release notifications, support emergency planning efforts, and assist decision makers in developing spill prevention programs. This fact sheet provides summary information on notifications of releases of oil reported in accordance with the Clean Water Act (CWA). Under Section 311 of the CWA, discharges of oil which: 1) cause a sheen to appear on the surface of the water; 2) violate applicable water quality standards; or 3) cause sludge or emulsion to be deposited beneath the surface of the water or adjoining shoreline, must be reported to the NRC.

In the ERNS database, notifications involving the release of oil products are divided into two categories. The first category, "Petroleum," refers to all releases of materials that are petroleum or its by-products. ERNS specifies 64 different petroleum products. These products include: crude oil, heating oil, jet fuel, kerosene, automotive gasoline, and motor oil. Releases involving these 64 types of petroleum-based oil products account for approximately 41% of all the releases reported to ERNS, and 78% of oil and petroleum notifications, made in compliance with the CWA. The second category of oil products in ERNS contains all of the non-petroleum types of oil. There are 156 different non-petroleum types of "Oil" in ERNS. These materials include substances ranging from coconut, sunflower and other edible oils, to anthracene oil and coal. The non-petroleum oil notifications account for approximately 12% of all releases reported to ERNS.

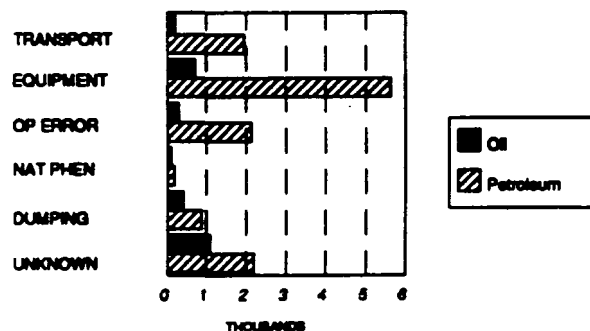
NUMBER OF OIL AND PETROLEUM NOTIFICATIONS RECEIVED ANNUALLY*

Type of Release	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
"Petroleum" Notifications	12,550	12,399	12,567	14,085	14,520
"Oil" Notifications	3,027	2,768	3,507	4,761	4,744
Total Oil/Petroleum Notifications	15,577	15,167	16,074	18,846	19,264
Total Number of ERNS Notifications	28,677	29,874	34,104	34,259	35,653

Number of Oil/Petroleum Notification by Cause*
(1987 - 1991)

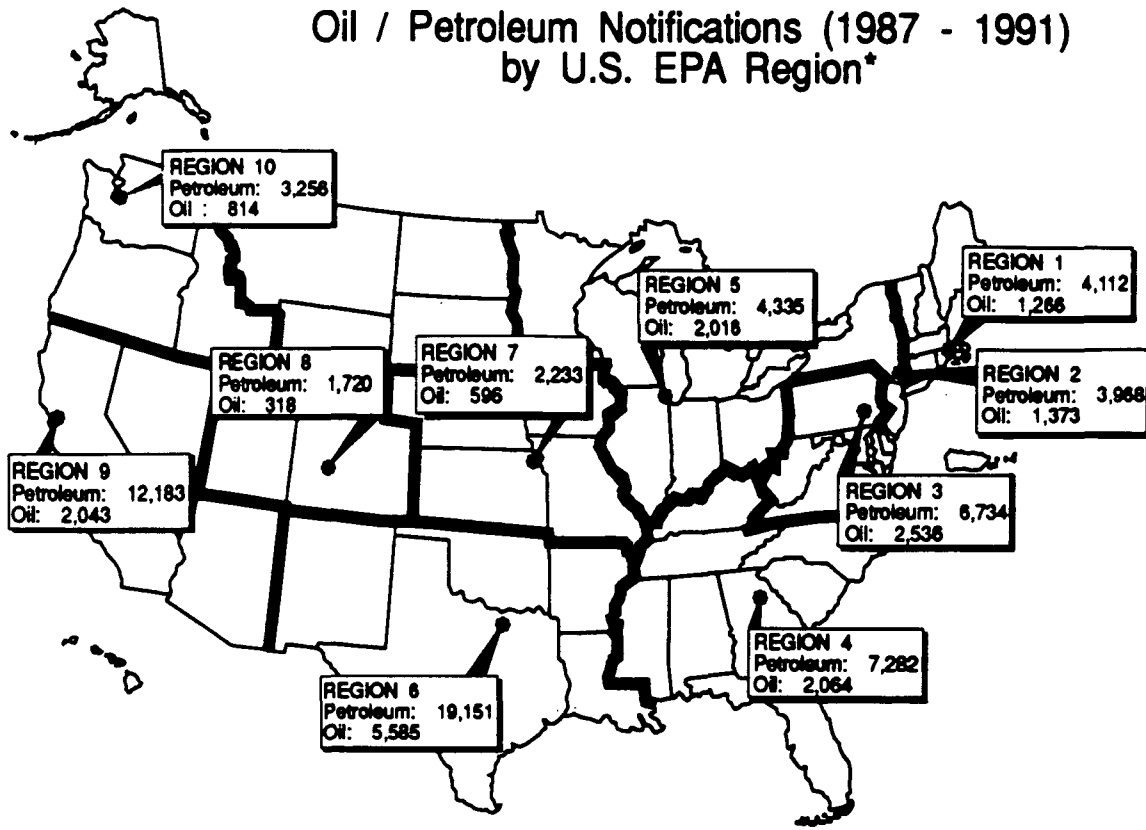
The following chart is a graphical representation of the distribution of oil and petroleum releases among the six "causes of release" in ERNS. The six causes are transportation accident, equipment failure, operator error, natural phenomenon, dumping, and unknown.

As the chart reveals, petroleum releases outnumber oil releases in all categories, by more than 2 to 1. Additionally, petroleum releases caused by equipment failure represent the largest number of recorded releases in ERNS.



*All numbers are based on initial notifications to the Federal government and may not have been verified.

The map below shows the number of oil and petroleum releases for each of the ten EPA regions. The largest numbers of reported oil/petroleum releases occurred in Regions 6 and 9. The data used in the map are cumulative, from 1987-1991.



The following table shows the size distribution of oil and petroleum notifications. ERNS data reveal that the largest number of notifications for both categories involve releases less than 1,000 gallons. Notifications involving releases in quantities greater than 100,000 gallons represent an average of .2% and .1%, for petroleum and oil respectively.

NUMBER OF OIL/PETROLEUM NOTIFICATIONS BY SIZE *

		1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
No Quantity Reported	Oil	1,230	1,189	0	0	0
	Petroleum	1,364	1,283	3	2	0
Less than 1,000 gallons	Oil	1,662	1,432	3,372	4,635	4,636
	Petroleum	10,001	10,052	11,424	12,895	13,321
1,000- 9,999 gallons	Oil	102	119	109	95	83
	Petroleum	980	878	938	980	998
10,000- 99,999 gallons	Oil	26	17	22	23	23
	Petroleum	177	163	170	184	181
100,000 gallons or greater	Oil	7	11	4	8	2
	Petroleum	28	23	32	24	20

For further information regarding ERNS, call the ERNS information line at (202) 260-2342, or write the ERNS Manager, U.S. EPA, at OS-210, 401 M St., SW, Washington, DC 20460.

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