

The purpose of any contingency planning is to try and ensure that there is a timely, measured and effective response to emergencies or other incidents. Oil spill contingency planning is an essential process if an effective oil spill response is to be carried out.

Contingency plans prepared by coastal local authorities, harbour authorities, and operators of offshore installations in the UK underlie and underpin the NCP. These local plans provide detailed information on the local response to marine incidents and should describe arrangements for mutual support.

Local authorities in England and Wales have a general power under section 138 of the Local Government Act 1972 to act with respect to emergencies or disasters. Local authorities in Scotland have similar powers under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. Local authorities have prepared, and implemented, local response plans based on these powers. The MCA does not have a statutory duty to approve these plans but will check them voluntarily and provide advice on oil and chemical spill contingency planning as necessary. Local authorities should also consider revising their contingency plans following the publication of the NCP and subsequently every five years, or earlier when local authority arrangements and structures change. Information that alters frequently, such as contact directories, should be updated at least annually.

For Tier 1 and Tier 2 incidents it is for local authorities to initiate such action as they consider necessary. In these circumstances, the MCA Counter Pollution staff are available, free of charge, for scientific / technical advice on the efficiency of available clean-up techniques and their application. If necessary, the MCA will also hire out items of specialised equipment from their shoreline clean-up stockpile to the local authority. If a Tier 3 response is required, overwhelming the local authority, and a Shoreline Response Centre (SRC) is set up, then the SRC and the shoreline response will be set up, controlled and financed by the Local Authority, with MCA resources provided free of charge.

The Civil Contingencies Act received Royal Assent on 18 November 2004, the following text is taken from the explanatory notes prepared by the Cabinet Office in order to assist the reader of the Act. They do not form part of the Act and have not been endorsed by Parliament.

The Act imposes a series of duties on local bodies in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland (to be known as "Category 1 responders"). These duties include the duty to assess the risk of an emergency occurring and to maintain plans for the purposes of responding to an emergency. The range of Category 1 responders is broader than the range of local bodies which were subject to the previous legislation. It includes certain bodies with functions which relate to health, the Environment Agency and the Secretary of State, in so far as his functions relate to responding to maritime and coastal emergencies.

The Act also provides the mechanism to impose duties on other local bodies (to be known as "Category 2 responders") to co-operate with, and to provide information to, Category 1 responders in connection with their civil protection duties.

Part 1 of the Act also enables a Minister of the Crown (or, for certain purposes in Scotland, the Scottish Ministers) to require a Category 1 responder to perform a function for the purposes of preventing an emergency, reducing, controlling or mitigating the effects of an emergency or taking other action in connection with an emergency.

Any oil spill contingency plan should comprise four main parts:

- **Introduction**
- **Strategy**

This should describe the scope of the plan, including the geographical coverage, overview of the perceived risks, division of responsibilities, roles of authorities and the proposed response strategy. This section should be used for reference and planning.
- **Action and Operations**

This section should contain information detailing emergency procedures which allow for the rapid mobilisation of resources and include such as notification flow charts and individual action cards.
- **Data directory**

This section should contain all relevant maps, lists and data sheets and support information required to assess an incident and conduct the response accordingly.

#### **4.1 Strategy section**

This section should clearly state ownership of and geographical area covered by the plan illustrated by an annotated map.

This specific and strategic aims and objectives of the contingency plan should be clearly stated. In the interest of consistency, all local authority's plans should be fully integrated with any other oil spill contingency plans in the area, such as those of neighbouring local authority oil spill plans and of specific facilities such as port and harbour plans. The roles and responsibilities of the local authority and all other organisations who would be involved in the response to a maritime pollution incident should be defined.

A risk assessment should be made based on potential oil spill sources, quantities of oils handled in the region, historical data on spill size and frequency in the region and the environmental and socio-economic resources at risk. These resources will include designated nature conservation sites and other environmentally sensitive sites in the region i.e. salt marshes / mudflats, sheltered rocky shores, seabird colonies, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Marine Nature Reserves (MNR's) etc., plus fisheries interests and amenity resources such as bathing beaches, marinas, seawater abstraction intakes. The relevant sections of the coastline may be mapped on the basis of sensitivity to oil pollution. These resources then need to be prioritised for protection from the effects of spilled oil. It will rarely be possible to protect everything.

The most effective strategies for protecting these prioritised resources need to be established. The possible response options that are feasible at the different locations, under different conditions and at varying times of the year need to be established. In practice, this will often mean identifying the sites where protection by booms can be achieved and where spilled oil can be recovered in a reasonable way, without causing further damage, for example by using heavy vehicles on fragile ecosystems. The logistics of conducting shoreline clean-up operations need to be carefully considered.

**The Coastal and Marine Resource Atlas** was commissioned by the project collaborators listed below in recognition of the need to update the 1990 Government and Industry sponsored coastal sensitivity maps produced by the Nature Conservancy Council. The

Atlas contains environmental and other resource datasets covering the Great Britain coastline and marine areas of the UK Continental Shelf. The Atlas is designed as a web based tool to access a wide range of information on coastal and marine resources.

### **Warning:**

- The Coastal and Marine Resource Atlas is NOT intended to substitute the provision of expert environmental advice during maritime and coastal incident response. The data has been compiled for the purposes of strategic environmental planning NOT incident operational response, unless this is in agreement with the statutory bodies responsible for providing environmental advice.
- In the UK environmental advice for maritime incident response is provided by a formal Environment Group as outlined in the National Contingency Plan for Marine Pollution from Shipping and Offshore Installations (NCP) and detailed in the MCA STOp notice: [Maritime Pollution Response in the UK, the Environment Group](#)

Data has been provided by a broad range of suppliers in a variety of formats, some of which are not ideally displayed in a GIS format due to the method of collection or the data formats used. It is important that users view the metadata associated with datasets to fully understand any limitations of the data provided.

### **Project Collaborators**

The Atlas is the product of a project managed and collaboratively funded by:

- Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)
- Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
- Scottish Executive (SE)
- Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)
- Energy Institute (EI)
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)
- Environment Agency (EA)
- English Nature (EN)
- Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)
- Hampshire County Council (HCC)
- Essex County Council (ECC)
- Kent County Council (KCC)
- British Geological Survey (BGS)

The Coastal and Marine Resource Atlas can be found at: <http://www.magic.gov.uk/>.

The equipment supplies and services needed to achieve this desired response need to be identified, and if necessary, obtained. The organisation of the response needs to be planned together with the control and communications system that will be employed.

## **4.2 Action and operations section**

This section needs to clarify the initial actions to be taken when pollution is reported. There should be a local authority initial call-out procedures and alerting procedures. An initial assessment of the incident will need to be made. The operations planning and mobilisation procedures should then be described. This may include setting up an SRC if the incident is judged to sufficiently serious, integrated with any MCA response.

The required response operations, such as boom deployment at specified sites and recovery of oil, need to be described in detail, together with the system of control and co-ordination of these operations. The system of planning, reporting back and reviewing these operations as conditions change and the response progresses should be described. Procedures for developing the termination criteria for beach-cleaning operations should also be described.

### **4.3 Data directory**

This section should contain all the maps, charts and lists that show the different shoreline types, the resources and their priority for protection. Sites for temporary, intermediate and final storage sites and routes for the disposal of waste need to be clearly marked. There should also be lists of the required equipment and sources of manpower. Contact numbers for national government personnel, regulatory authorities' experts and advisors should also be included.

### **4.4 Addressing safety issues during oil spill contingency planning**

Details describing the proposed arrangements for health and safety management and co-ordination should be included in contingency and emergency response plans with particular reference to the resourcing and organisation of the SRC.

#### Health and safety file

The contingency plan should detail responsibilities for the maintenance of a health and safety file, and may also describe typical contents, e.g. hazard information, health and safety contacts and telephone numbers, risk assessments, etc.

#### Risk assessments

Most clean-up operations use standard techniques, equipment, and material as detailed in this manual. Health and safety risk assessments, as required by statute, of standard clean-up operations and techniques should have been carried out by the various organisations holding or deploying equipment during an incident. Local authorities may wish to include copies of appropriate risk assessments in their contingency plan.

#### Health & safety policies and related documentation

Local authorities are advised to review their written safety policies and related documentation to ensure that appropriate information is included regarding health and safety issues arising from spill clean-up. Where local authorities intend to use spill contractors they should, as part of the specification of contract, request copies of the contractors' written health and safety policy and relevant safety information including details of safety procedures and precautions, staff training, and arrangements for supervision and management.

### **4.5 Training events and exercises**

Training events and exercises are designed to build individual skill and competencies and to test the organisational arrangements for spill and clean-up management.

Beachmasters should have attended at least one accredited training course on clean-up techniques and operations, or have gained sufficient and similar experience during the course of an oil spill incident. For protracted operations it is likely that some personnel will gain sufficient experience during the earlier stages of the operation to be considered for the Beachmaster role during a later stage of the same operation.