



SPILL NOTIFICATION POINT

Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre Archipelago Sea Coast Guard District PO Box 16 FIN-20101 Turku	Tel: +358-204 1000 (24hrs) +358-204 1001 Fax: +358-2 250 0950
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COMPETENT NATIONAL AUTHORITY

Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE) (for oil & HNS) P.O. Box 140 FIN-00251 Helsinki	Tel: +358-9 403000 Mobile: +358 400 319390 Fax: +358-9 40300478 Web: www.environment.fi/oil
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RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS

The Ministry of Environment has overall responsibility for the management and control of oil and chemical spill response. The Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE), operating under the Ministry, is the competent government marine pollution combating authority. It is in charge of the response to major incidents and those occurring at open sea. SYKE is responsible for the purchase and development of governmental oil combating equipment and is empowered to request and give international assistance when the need arises.

When an oil spill is observed at open sea, the report may be given to the nearest Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC/MRSC) via coastal radio, pilot or Coast Guard stations; they will further inform SYKE's officer on duty. Where appropriate, SYKE will call for executive assistance from other authorities; dispatch recovery vessels and equipment; initiate and co-ordinate recovery efforts and acquire other necessary materials or staff.

At the local level, individual coastal municipalities are required to maintain a response capability for their areas of responsibility. Rescue Service Authorities (23 in number since the beginning of 2004) are charged with providing rescue services (including oil spill response services) to the local municipalities. A Rescue Service Authority will make a joint oil contingency plan for all municipalities in its area. These plans are subject to the approval of a Regional Environment Centre. The Regional Environment Centres advise and supervise the local municipalities and certain commercial companies in pollution preparedness and response.

Regional contingency plans have been drawn up for the three coastal areas with an additional plan for the inland waterways.

A local Response Commander will lead oil spill response actions for 'local scale' incidents. If the event escalates, neighbouring municipalities and state authorities, including SYKE through the Regional Environment Centres, can also be called upon. The Finnish Frontier Guard, the Navy, the Institute of Marine Research and private organisations can all be called to assist where required.

Harbour authorities, oil terminals and other oil handling facilities are required to maintain a limited response capability to deal with small spills.

Finland has its own national Oil Pollution Compensation Fund for purchasing equipment and financing oil spill response costs. The capital for the fund is raised by a fixed levy on each ton of oil imported to or transported through Finland. The Fund is administered by the Ministry of the Environment, but has its own independent Management Board responsible for making decisions on compensation. Municipalities are entitled to receive compensation from the Fund for purchases of equipment mentioned in an approved contingency plan. Governmental authorities are also entitled to reimbursement of equipment from the Fund, subject to consideration.

RESPONSE POLICY

Due to the sensitive ecology of the Baltic Sea, it has been internationally agreed in the Helsinki Convention that the oil combating policy of Baltic Sea countries is based on the mechanical recovery of oil. The Helsinki Convention allows the use of chemicals only with very strict limitations. Dispersants are not used in Finland.

EQUIPMENT

Government

SYKE maintains 13 main depots at Lake Saimaa (2), Oulu, Kokkola, Vaasa, Pori, Turku, Aland, Uto, Hanko, Helsinki, Porvoo & Kotka which have a variety of equipment, including booms and shoreline clean-up equipment. The Finnish government operates 13 oil recovery vessels, all furnished with fixed brush equipment and sweeping arms. Most coastal municipalities maintain small (from 10 to 20 metres) oil recovery vessels, 31 of which are equipped with advanced skimming systems. The municipalities also maintain stocks of light equipment suitable for use in sheltered waters and coastal areas with poor access.

Private

Oil terminals have stocks of equipment suitable for handling the most likely sizes of spills which could arise from their operations. There are no known oil spill clean-up contractors in Finland.

PREVIOUS SPILL EXPERIENCE

During the last 15 years, Finland has experienced 4 major spills, including the ANTONIO GRAMSCI in 1987. Recovery systems have worked well in open waters but have been hampered in ice conditions resulting in oil being scattered over a wide area.

HAZARDOUS & NOXIOUS SUBSTANCES (HNS)

SYKE has operational responsibility for dealing with marine pollution involving HNS. Finland's capability for responding to HNS incidents is rather limited and mainly relies on the same resources as for oil pollution response. Finland does not specifically cover response to HNS in its NCP, but a specific plan for HNS incidents is in preparation and will then be part of the existing national plan. Finland has made a risk assessment which included marine transport of HNS. The report Transportation of Liquid Bulk Chemicals by Tankers in the Baltic Sea (2006) provides an overview of the Baltic HNS traffic and associated risks. Finland has some specialised equipment for monitoring marine spills of HNS, including two surveillance aircraft. It also has two specialised vessels for HNS incidents and has ordered a new multipurpose vessel which will be classified as a chemical response vessel. It will have a tank for chemicals that can be pumped from a chemical cargo ship in an emergency situation. Finland has only been involved with some minor marine incidents with HNS in the past. (Information from EMSA, 2008)



CONVENTIONS

Prevention & Safety					Spill Response		Compensation						
MARPOL 73/78		Annexes III IV V VI*			OPRC '90	OPRC -HNS	CLC '69 '76 '92			Fund '92	Supp Fund	HNS*	Bunker
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓			✓

* not yet in force

REGIONAL AND BILATERAL AGREEMENTS

Helsinki Convention (with countries bordering the Baltic Sea).
 Copenhagen Agreement (with Denmark, Iceland, Sweden & Norway).
 Bilateral agreements exist with the Russian Federation and with Estonia.

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