



# IRELAND

## SPILL NOTIFICATION POINT

Marine Rescue Coordination Centre Irish Coast Guard ( <b>Oil &amp; HNS</b> ) Department of Transport Leeson Lane Dublin 2	Tel: +353 1 6620922(24hr) +353 1-6620923 Fax: +353 1-6620795 E-mail: <a href="mailto:mrccdublin@irishcoastguard.ie">mrccdublin@irishcoastguard.ie</a> Web: <a href="http://www.transport.ie/marine/IRCG/index.asp?lang=ENG&amp;loc=2029">http://www.transport.ie/marine/IRCG/index.asp?lang=ENG&amp;loc=2029</a>
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## COMPETENT NATIONAL AUTHORITY

Irish Coast Guard Headquarters - details as above.

## RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS

The Irish Coast Guard (IRCG), a division of the Department of Transport, is responsible for organising and directing spill response at sea or in coastal areas. The service also directs and co-ordinates the functions of local authorities, who undertake clean-up of oil from beaches and nearshore waters. Upon notification of a spill, the Coast Guard may mobilise its Marine Pollution Response Team (MPRT) which would proceed to the scene and establish a local HQ. The MPRT would take control of the response, but would look to the polluter for additional resources and assistance.

Harbour authorities deal with oil spills in harbours, although the Office of Public Works is concerned in relation to state harbours, and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food - which has overall responsibility for the protection of fisheries and wildlife - in relation to the major fishing ports.

## RESPONSE POLICY

Ireland does not favour the use of dispersants, especially close inshore or in rivers and estuaries. The Coast Guard may however consider their use offshore if untreated oil is likely to reach the shore. Dispersants are not stockpiled and, if used, stocks and aerial-spraying contractors would be brought in from overseas. Only dispersants on the UK's approved list would be considered for use.

## EQUIPMENT

### Government

The Department has stockpiles of sorbents, booms, skimmers and portable storage tanks stockpiled at Dublin, Killybegs and Castletownbere. Dublin is by far the most significant of these stockpiles. Most local and harbour authorities also have small equipment depots which hold booms, skimmers, sorbents and work boats.

In terms of spill response vessels, the IRCG has a 50% share, with the Shannon Estuary Anti-Pollution Team (SEA-PT), in a 9.9m clean up Cataglop XLD catamaran based in Foynes. In the event of a major spill IRCG can call on the services of oil recovery response vessels via the European Safety Maritime Agency (EMSA)

Aerial surveillance for oil spill tracking is contracted from outside the Coast Guard as the IRCG has no specialised aerial surveillance capability. This is undertaken by Reconnaissance Ventures Limited which operates out of East Midlands Airport in the UK. For small incidents search and rescue helicopters (located at Sligo, Shannon and Waterford) can be used during daylight hours. Fishery Protection aircraft also play a part in this role.



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## Private

The IRCG is an associate member of Oil Spill Response, which enables the IRCG to contract specialised equipment and expertise at reduced rates in the event of a major incident.

The Whitegate refinery is located in Cork. Whitegate is Ireland's only refinery and has a crude oil processing capacity of 71 MBD. The refinery holds its own stockpile of boom and maintains an emergency response vessel. An annual exercise is held involving refinery personnel, Cork Harbour Authority and Cork County Council

SEA-PT Ltd, consisting of the port company, local authority and oil importers, operates and maintains a pollution stockpile for response to pollution incidents in the Shannon Estuary. This equipment is available to respond to any pollution incident or threat. Members contribute annually to maintain equipment, carry out exercises and training and purchase new and replacement equipment.

## PREVIOUS SPILL EXPERIENCE

There have been a number of spills in Bantry Bay and around the coast over the years, the most serious being the BETELGEUSE (1979) which suffered a fire and explosion alongside the oil terminal. Since the spill was beyond the capability of local and national resources, equipment was brought in from overseas by the tanker owner, including aircraft equipped to spray dispersant chemicals. The SALAVAT YULAEV (1995) spilled approximately 30 tonnes of bunker fuel after grounding inside Wicklow harbour. A pebble beach and a nearby river were affected, but the majority of the oil dissipated naturally in storms shortly after the incident occurred. The ADMIRAL KUZNETZOV (2009) was involved in a spill of approximately 300 tonnes of oil 50 mile south of Fastnet Rock, Ireland's most southwesterly point. It remains unclear whether this resulted from refuelling operations or from other activities. Skimmer deployment in the light crude proved ineffective and the vast majority of the oil dissipated naturally.

## HAZARDOUS & NOXIOUS SUBSTANCES (HNS)

The competent authority for dealing with marine pollution involving HNS is the Department of Transport through the Irish Coast Guard. In cases outside the expertise of the IRCG, international assistance would be requested. Ireland is currently preparing a risk assessment specifically aimed at marine transportation of HNS. It will also cover response to HNS in its national contingency plan, which is in the course of preparation. Ireland's capability for responding to marine incidents involving HNS is very limited and mainly relies on the same resources as for oil pollution response. Ireland has some modelling capacity and has the ASA CHEMMAP modelling system in place. It has not been involved in any marine incidents with HNS.

## 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



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**COUNTRY PROFILES**  
A Summary of Oil Spill Response Arrangements  
& Resources Worldwide

## REGIONAL AND BILATERAL AGREEMENTS

Bonn Agreement (with countries bordering the North Sea).  
A bilateral agreement exists with the United Kingdom covering the Irish Sea.  
Member of the European Community Task Force.

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