



# REPUBLIC OF KOREA

(South Korea)

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

## SPILL NOTIFICATION POINT

Korea Coast Guard 3-8 Songdo-dong Yeonsu-Gu Incheon-si	Tel: 032 835 3000 Web: <a href="http://coast.kcg.go.kr/">http://coast.kcg.go.kr/</a>		
Alternatively spills should be reported to the nearest Coastguard station:			
Pusan	Tel: +82-51 6325050	Yosu	Tel: +82-662 6625050
Pohang	Tel: +82-562 475050	Sokcho	Tel: +82-392 828114
Donghae	Tel: +82-394 328494	Taeon	Tel: +82-455 6742113
Kunsan	Tel: +82-654 637000	Mokpo	Tel: +82-631 426085
Chungmu	Tel: +82-557 22906	Cheju	Tel: +82-64 527000
Ulsan	Tel: +82-522 615050		

## COMPETENT NATIONAL AUTHORITY

Contact details are as for spill notification point.

## RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS

In January 2000 the National Maritime Police Agency (MPA) prepared the National Disaster Prevention Master Plan to provide for response to spills of oil in the marine environment. The MPA is now called the Korean Coastguard and is a department of the Ministry of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs (MLTMA). The Coastguard has overall responsibility for marine pollution response in Republic of Korea waters. It has four regional headquarters (Incheon, Mokpo, Busan and Donghae).

In accordance with the Korean Marine Pollution Prevention Act, the spiller is under obligation to respond to an oil spill incident, to undertake any clean-up and prevent the oil from spreading. The Act gives the Coastguard, who have jurisdiction over all maritime activities relating to the safety and security of the Republic, authority to undertake the clean-up if actions by the spiller are insufficient. It is normal practice, however, for private contractors to take over in the early stages of an incident with the Coastguard monitoring the situation and, if necessary, intervening to demand more assistance. In the principal ports the District Harbour Authority will respond to minor spills, of less than 100 litres, within port limits. The Coastguard tend to confine their own activity to control on water, particularly booming. For shore cleaning, reliance is placed on local labour with essential equipment and supervision coming from contractors. Shoreline clean-up is overseen by the local authorities, though in larger spills, the Coastguard would also be heavily involved.

The Marine Pollution Prevention Act requires all tankers over 500GT and non-tankers over 10,000GT, whilst in Korean waters, to stockpile a specified amount of clean-up equipment and chemicals on board or partially at an on-shore facility. Shipowners can nominate the Korea Marine Environment Management Corporation (KOEM), (formerly the Korea Marine Pollution Response Corp. (KMPRC), renamed in 2008) originally established by the major Korean oil companies, to satisfy the on-shore aspect of this requirement. A further amendment to the Act requires shipowners to have response measures of a specified recovery capacity in place when visiting certain Korean ports. To satisfy this requirement, the Act requires Korean registered vessels to become members of KOEM. Foreign flag vessels may nominate KOEM vessels and equipment to satisfy these requirements on a per visit basis on payment of a fee. KOEM responds to spills at sea in liaison with the Coastguard.



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## RESPONSE POLICY

The primary response is containment and recovery, the latter either using skimmers or manually, followed by the use of sorbents and then dispersants. Guidelines issued by the Ministry of Environment on the use of dispersants state that they should be used selectively and as a last resort. An offshore response is mounted in certain cases, with dispersants occasionally applied from vessels early in an incident.

Real emphasis is placed on rapid shore cleaning, as it is impossible to defend sensitive resources because of the convoluted nature of the coastline. Manual methods using local manpower and resources are favoured to remove bulk oil, although dispersants are used to clean rocky and stony shores. Disposal of recovered oil is difficult since many shorelines have little or no road access.

## EQUIPMENT

### Government

Government resources for combating spills are primarily those of the Coastguard and are held at the principal ports (booms, skimmers, dispersants, sorbents and work boats). Other government owned resources include skimming vessels belonging to the Harbour Administrations of Pusan, Chungmu and Incheon. Navy vessels may be used to spray dispersant.

### Private

Significant clean-up resources are owned and operated by private contractors (ships agents, marine or oil companies), several of which are available in each of the main ports. They have extensive stocks of dispersant and dispersant spraying equipment together with boom, sorbent, pumps and work boats and have access to significant forces of trained and experienced manpower. In particular, the Honam refinery at Yosu has several dedicated response vessels.

KOEM, with headquarters in Seoul, maintains a fleet of approximately 50 response vessels, together with specialised pollution response equipment, at 10 response bases throughout the Republic of Korea. These resources are available to supplement those of the Coastguard.

## PREVIOUS SPILL EXPERIENCE

Due to the nature of the coastline, climate and tonnage, South Korea has experienced a significant number of oil spills. In 1993 the KEUM DONG No.5 spilt 1300 tonnes of Bunker C. This was cleaned using dispersant, sorbent and hot water washing on the shoreline. The SEA PRINCE (1995) spilt between 2000 and 5000 tonnes of bunker fuel and cargo after grounding. This contaminated shorelines and mariculture facilities near Yosu. The HONAM SAPPHIRE spilt over 1000 tonnes of crude oil in the same area later that year. In 2007 the fully laden HEBEI SPIRIT was struck on her port side by a crane barge whilst at anchor off Taean, spilling about 10,500 tonnes of three different crude oils, which over a period of weeks contaminated some 375km of Korea's western coast to varying degrees. Clean-up operations were carried out at sea and along the shoreline. Twenty three separate clean-up contractor companies were involved, hiring many local villagers as labourers (up to 10,000 people a day). Significant numbers from the armed forces were also deployed and there was a huge volunteer effort (over 50,000 a day). Extensive areas of fisheries and mariculture resources were badly affected by the spill with serious socio-economic implications.



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## 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

A Memorandum of Understanding exists with Japan for the Sea of Japan. Regional Programme for the Prevention and Management of Marine Pollution in the East Asian Seas with the ASEAN countries, China, Cambodia, PDR Korea and Vietnam. The Action Plan for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northwest Pacific Region (NOWPAP) was adopted at the First Intergovernmental Meeting on NOWPAP in September 1994 in Seoul, Republic of Korea, as one of the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP's) Regional Seas Programme. Its geographical scope covers the marine and coastal zone of the five States of the Northeast Asia: [Democratic People's Republic of Korea], Japan, People's Republic of China, Republic of Korea, and Russian Federation (<http://merrac.nowpap.org/>)

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