

SPILL NOTIFICATION POINT

Philippine Coast Guard Operations Center (for oil & HNS) Headquarters Philippine Coast Guard 139 25th Street Port Area Manila	Tel: 63 2 527 3880 (24 hr) 63 2 527 3870 (24 hr) Operator: 63 2 527 84 81 to 89 Fax: 63 2 527 3880 63 2 527 3907
Marine Environmental Protection Command (MEPCOM) Philippine Coast Guard Coast Guard Base Fayola Mueller DeIndustria, Binondo Manila	Tel/Fax : +63022459165/ +63027033451 Email mepcom_pcg2006@yahoo.com

COMPETENT NATIONAL AUTHORITY

Details are as for the spill notification point.

RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) is the responsible agency for preventing and controlling pollution in the country's territorial waters. The Marine Environmental Protection Command (MEPCOM), a unit of the PCG, is the point of contact for oil spill response operations and comprises the National Operations Center for Oil Pollution (NOCOP). The NOCOP Commander serves as the national on-scene commander and is able to request assistance from other government, private and military sources. In addition to the NOCOP, there are eight Marine Environment Protection Offices under the control of the eight Coast Guard districts.

Since the SOLAR 1 incident in 2006, the Philippine government has been reviewing oil spill contingency arrangements and a revised National Oil Spill Contingency Plan (NOSCP) was promulgated in 2008.

For a Tier 1 spill, the spiller is required to undertake the clean-up using their own resources which, by law, they must operate. For a Tier 2 spill the Coastguard District Command Oil Spill Contingency Plan comes into play; the local Coast Guard commander will act as the local on-scene commander and will work closely with the NOCOP. The NOSCP will be activated in cases where the spill escalates to a Tier 3 situation or in cases where the incident requires resources outside the capability indicated in the Coastguard District Command Oil Spill Contingency Plan.

Oil impacting the coastline is cleaned by personnel under the jurisdiction of the Coast Guard with assistance from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

In June 2007, a new Philippine law came into effect to establish an Oil Pollution Management Fund (OPMF) to cover the cost of clean-up and damages should another spill like the SOLAR 1 occur. The Fund is administered by the PCG and comprises fines and penalties for violations stipulated under this law.

RESPONSE POLICY

The policy for combating spills at sea is limited by the lack of suitable resources. Any floating oil would be monitored and defensive booming would be used to protect any threatened coastal resources. Dispersant spraying is an option but is, however, limited by several criteria such as proximity of the spill location to sensitive resources. Authorisation must first be gained from the director of the NOCOP to use dispersants and those used must first be accredited. Waste disposal options are incorporated into the NOSCP.

EQUIPMENT

Government

Stockpiles of equipment exist in Manila, Cebu and Palawan, provided by the Japanese Transport Ministry, through the OSPAR (Oil Spill Preparedness and Response in Asia) scheme. The stockpiles are maintained by the Philippine Coast Guard and include skimmers, boom, storage tanks, vessel based dispersant sprayers, transfer pumps, dispersant and sorbent. Two additional Oil Spill Response Centers in Iloilo and Batangas have recently been created (information from 2009).

The Sulawesi Sea Oil Spill Response Network, formed jointly with Indonesia and Malaysia with funding from UNDP, established a stockpile of equipment in Davao for use at spills in the Makassar Straits and Sulawesi Sea. This is operated on behalf of the member countries by the Philippine Coast Guard. The stockpile includes boom, several skimmers, a vessel dispersant spray system and a workboat.

Private

Under Philippine law, the oil industry must have resources available at their facilities to clean-up a Tier 1 spill. Such resources are located at refineries and depots in Manila Bay and at Batangas, Palawan and Cebu. In addition, Shell and Caltex have established the WISE (Waterborne Industry Oil Spill Equipment) cooperative. The equipment is stored on board tugs operating at the Batangas Bay refineries and includes containment and recovery equipment, storage facilities, pressure cleaners and dispersant spraying apparatus.

PREVIOUS SPILL EXPERIENCE

The bunker barge PETRO QUEEN (1994) spilt 7-900 bbls of fuel oil following a collision at the entrance to the Pasig River. Clean-up was performed using WISE equipment with impact limited to fouling of the yacht club. The SOLAR 1 (2006) sank in rough seas with a full cargo of heavy fuel oil in the Guimaras Straits. PCG led the response and was assisted by Petron Corporation (the charterer of the vessel). At-sea response focused on the application of chemical dispersants using aerial dispersant spraying methods and spray arms mounted on tugs and PCG patrol vessels. The incident created relatively little shoreline contamination but had a substantial impact on subsistence fishing. The decision was taken to remove oil remaining in the sunken wreck which was lying at a depth of some 600m, but at a location sufficiently close to coastlines to create a significant potential threat.

HAZARDOUS AND NOXIOUS SUBSTANCES (HNS)

The PCG would be responsible for handling HNS incidents at sea. Shore-based incidents would be handled by the Fire Protection Service. HNS contingency plans are being developed with assistance from the Japan Coast Guard. The Philippines has limited equipment available for spills of HNS; it includes PPE, detection equipment and laboratory facilities. The Philippines has previously experienced a spillage of 1000 tonnes of sulphuric acid in Batangas and the ferry, PRINCESS OF THE STARS, which sank in 2008 with heavy loss of life had drums of endosulphan onboard.

CONVENTIONS

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

* not yet in force

REGIONAL AND BILATERAL AGREEMENTS

The Sulawesi Sea Oil Spill Response Network, with Indonesia and Malaysia.

The ASEAN - OSRAP (Association of South East Asian Nations Oil Spill Response Action Plan) with the other ASEAN countries and with contribution from Japan.

Regional Programme for the Prevention and Management of Marine Pollution in the East Asian Seas with the ASEAN countries, Cambodia, China, PDR of Korea, Rep. of Korea and Vietnam.

Memorandum of Understanding on Joint Oil Spill Response (with Thailand)

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