

THAILAND

SPILL NOTIFICATION POINT

Marine Department of Thailand (for oil & HNS)
1278 Yotha Road, Talardnoi
Samphanthawong
Bangkok 10100

Tel: +2233 1311-8
Hotline 2639 4782
Fax: +2236 7248
E-Mail: marine@md.go.th
Web: www.md.go.th

COMPETENT NATIONAL AUTHORITY

The Marine Department, as part of the Ministry of Transport, is the principal (lead) agency for dealing with marine pollution incidents.

RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS

The Marine Department acts as the coordination centre for national oil spill response. The Royal Thai Navy, provincial administrations and, from the private sector, the Oil Industry Environmental Safety Group Association (IESG), also have an operational role in oil pollution prevention and response in Thailand.

The Committee on the Prevention and Combating of Oil Pollution, established in 1982, incorporates all interested government bodies to review the current state of response readiness and to provide a suitable infrastructure at the time of a spill. This is chaired by the Minister of Transport. The Committee is responsible for the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan, which covers oil spills in inland waters, within port limits, coastal areas and at sea (in both territorial waters and within the Exclusive Economic Zone). The Plan was officially approved in 2002 and is exercised every two years at national level. The Plan is currently being revised and updated (Information from GISEA, 2019).

The Marine Department provides a coordinating role in the event of an incident; it would establish a coordination centre, process reports and coordinate response activities. The Marine Department would report to the prevention committee. A command post would be established either with the Marine Department if the spill was in a river, estuary, lake or within port limits, or with the Thai Navy if the spill was beyond port limits to the EEZ. The command post would report to the coordination centre. The Pollution Control Department (PCD) of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment provides information on slick movement and environmental sensitivities. It would also supervise and regulate the use of dispersants. Other government agencies that might offer support include the marine police, army, airforce, fishery department, meteorological department, and the customs, foreign affairs and environmental planning departments.

Oil companies have developed Tier 1 contingency plans to respond to spills at their facilities and formed the [Oil Industry Environmental Safety Group Association](#) (IESG), an industry cooperative designed to facilitate the movement of resources between companies in the event of a major spill.

An [environmental sensitivity index \(ESI\) atlas](#) is available for the Gulf of Thailand.

RESPONSE POLICY

The options available for oil spill response in Thailand are monitoring of natural evaporation/degradation; mechanical cleanup at sea, dispersal at sea; shoreline cleanup/protection and salvage of the damaged source vessel. The choice of combat strategy would be based on assessments and criteria set by the Marine Department and other concerned agencies. Mechanical recovery is the favoured response technique, although the use of chemical dispersants is permitted, subject to approval by the Director General of PCD. Guidelines on the use of dispersants in Thailand have been produced by the PCD and outline zones which are pre-approved for dispersant use and

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those which are sensitive to a high concentration of dispersed oil. They also provide a list of approved dispersants.

EQUIPMENT

Government

The Marine Department has sufficient response resources for a 1000 tonne spill. Equipment is located at the Marine Department Dredging Centre in Songkhla and the Merchant Marine Training Centre in Samutprakarn near Bangkok. It includes skimmers, boom, storage tanks, dispersant spray systems, transfer pumps, vacuum systems, dispersant and two anti-pollution vessels. Dispersant spraying aircraft and helicopters are available through the Royal Thai Navy and the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives. The navy also has a tugboat with OSR capability. On request, Royal Thai Airforce helicopters could be made available for aerial surveillance work and transportation of personnel and equipment.

Private

IESG, a not-for-profit oil industry group established in 1970, operates equipment, including dedicated skimming vessels for use in terminals and depots in Bangkok, Sriracha and Rayong. Small combating stations are located at Bandon, Songkhla, Phuket, Pakpanang and Chumporn. IESG members would share equipment and vehicles for oil spill response, and give assistance to the public sector.

PREVIOUS SPILL EXPERIENCE

In 1973 a spill of JP4, diesel and fuel oil totalling 1900 tonnes occurred in the estuary of the Chaophraya River. In 1992, a further 10 tonnes of fuel oil was spilt in the Chaophraya River from a holed tanker. Chemical dispersants were applied to these spills. The tanker ONCE (1996) spilt approximately 140 tonnes of crude oil at an offshore mooring south-east of Bangkok. Chemical dispersant was sprayed on the resultant slick using Royal Thai Navy aircraft as well as a C130 aircraft fitted with ADDS Pack dispersant gear brought in from Singapore. The chemical tanker EASTERN FORTITUDE grounded in Chon Buri province in 2002 spilling approximately 240 tonnes of bunker fuel, the bulk of which remained at sea for 10 days before stranding along stretches of sandy shore. Owing to the thickness and viscosity of the oil, manual collection of oil from booms into drums was the preferred response option over skimmer use at sea. The Navy, merchant marine cadets and local villagers undertook manual shoreline clean-up, co-ordinated by the Harbour Department (now Marine Department). Also in 2002, the tanker SKY ACE collided with a container vessel, close to the entrance of Laem Chabang Port, resulting in a spill of bunker fuel. Clean-up at sea involved containment and mechanical recovery; dispersant was also applied. The tanker DRAGON 1 grounded at the entrance to Pataya Bay in 2004, spilling approximately 150 tonnes of fuel oil; clean-up was carried out by mechanical and manual means. Two tanker spills were reported in 2019. DRAGON 2 partially sunk while berthed at the PTT Terminal in Bangkok, resulting in some light oiling of berths, hulls and vegetation along a nearby riverbank. GOLDEN BRIDGE 2 sank in the Gulf of Thailand, resulting in a continuous release of oil for approximately 24 hours. It is understood that a mix of response techniques were undertaken, including containment and recovery operations, and chemical and mechanical dispersion. No shoreline contamination was reported.

HAZARDOUS AND NOXIOUS SUBSTANCES (HNS)

Thailand is developing its capability to respond to spills of HNS.

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CONVENTIONS

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

* not yet in force

REGIONAL AND BILATERAL AGREEMENTS

ASEAN - OSRAP (Association of South East Asian Nations Oil Spill Response Action Plan) with the other ASEAN countries and with contribution from Japan initiated in 1991.

Memorandum of Understanding on ASEAN Cooperation Mechanism for Joint Oil Spill Preparedness and Response (ASEAN MoU) entered into force in 2014.

ASEAN Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan, developed under the MoU, adopted in 2018, provides a mechanism where ASEAN Member States can request and provide mutual support in response to oil spills.

Framework programme for joint oil spill preparedness and response in the Gulf of Thailand adopted by Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam in 2006

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