

FINLAND

SPILL NOTIFICATION POINT

Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre
West Finland Coast Guard District
PO Box 16
FIN-20101 Turku

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COMPETENT NATIONAL AUTHORITY

Finnish Border Guard
P.O. Box 3
FI-00131 Helsinki

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RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS

The Ministry of the Interior has overall responsibility for the management and control of oil and chemical spill response. The Finnish Border Guard, operating under the Ministry, is the competent government authority for marine pollution response. Rescue departments are responsible for spill response in coastal waters and on the shore.

The Response Commander (RC) is nominated by the Finnish Border Guard for incidents in open sea and by the Rescue Department for incidents in coastal waters or originating from shore. The Finnish Border Guard will nominate the Supreme On-Scene Commander (SOSC) to lead the response activities carried out by ships. The Finnish Border Guard is responsible for the purchase and development of governmental response readiness and is empowered to request and give international assistance when the need arises.

When an oil spill is observed at sea, the report would be given to the nearest Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC/MRSC), which will inform the Rescue Departments when needed. Where appropriate, the RC will request for assistance from other authorities, dispatch recovery vessels and equipment, initiate and co-ordinate recovery efforts, and acquire other necessary materials or staff.

MRCC is the single point of contact to request and provide international pollution response assistance.

Regional contingency plans have been drawn up for the two regional sea areas by the Finnish Border Guard. Each Rescue Department has a contingency plan for their area. Joint plans of the Finnish Border Guard and Rescue Service Districts have been agreed for the two regional sea areas.

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

RESPONSE POLICY

Due to the sensitive ecology of the Baltic Sea, it has been internationally agreed in the Helsinki Convention that the pollution response policy of Baltic Sea countries is based on the mechanical recovery of oil. The Helsinki Convention allows the use of chemical agents only in exceptional cases and after authorization, in each individual case, by the appropriate national authority. Dispersants are not used in Finland.

Finland has been investing in equipment to response to oil spills in ice and cold conditions.

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EQUIPMENT

Government

The Finnish Border Guard maintains four depots which are located at Hanko, Loviisa, Kalajoki and Pori. These have a variety of equipment such as booms, power packs and skimmers. The Finnish government has six oil recovery vessels, all furnished with fixed brush equipment and sweeping arms. In addition, the Finnish Border Guard has contracts with five private oil recovery vessels which are at governmental readiness. The Rescue Departments have about 150 small (from 10 to 20 metres) oil recovery boats of which 32 are equipped with advanced skimming systems. The Rescue Service Districts also maintain depots of equipment mainly for use in sheltered waters and coastal areas as well as on shore response equipment. In addition, Finnish Border Guard's heavy-duty oil containment boom is stored in 10 Coast Guard Stations along the coastline.

Private

Oil terminals, harbours and oil storage facilities have stocks of equipment suitable for handling the most likely sizes of spills which could arise from their operations.

PREVIOUS SPILL EXPERIENCE

The largest oil spill in Finnish waters resulted from the grounding of M/T ANTONIO GRAMSCI in 1987. This spilled about 7000 tonnes of crude oil. Since 1990, there have been six cases involving spills of over 30 tonnes of oil.

HAZARDOUS & NOXIOUS SUBSTANCES (HNS)

The operational responsibility for dealing with marine pollution involving HNS has the same structure as for oil pollution response. Finland's capability for responding to HNS incidents is rather limited and two of the oil recovery vessels are built according to the CHEMREC class. From 2027 onwards, Finland will have four CHEMREC class recovery vessels.

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

Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (with Denmark, Estonia, the European Union, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russian Federation and Sweden).

Agreement between Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden about Cooperation concerning Pollution Control of the Sea after Contamination by Oil or other Harmful Substances.

The Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Spill Preparedness and Response in the Arctic (with Canada, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Russian Federation, Sweden and the United States of America).

Bilateral agreements with the Russian Federation and with Estonia.

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