

MAURITIUS

SPILL NOTIFICATION POINT

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COMPETENT NATIONAL AUTHORITY

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RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS

The National Oil Spill Contingency Plan (NOSCP), first produced in 1990 and updated in 2003, interfaces with contingency plans produced by Port Louis Harbour, resident oil companies and the National Disaster Management Plan, all of which may be used in conjunction with the NOSCP depending on the location and size of the spill. A Coastal Sensitivity Atlas, revised in 2012, details designations and priority areas for response. The NOSCP 2003 has been reviewed and updated as NOSCP 2021. The Coastal Sensitivity Atlas and tactical maps will be reviewed and updated under the Sapphire Project of the Nairobi Convention using GIS in 2022 (to be confirmed).

The National Plan recognises three categories of spill: Tier 1 signifies spills up to 10MT which would be dealt with using locally owned resources. Tier 2 spills are categorised as up to 100MT and would be managed by the National Oil Spill Response Team, possibly with support from regional resources. Any spill over 100MT is classed as Tier 3 and could involve assistance at an international level.

The Director of the Department of Environment is the Director of the NOSCP. For spills within port limits, the Port Master of the Mauritius Ports Authority (MPA) will assume the role of On-Scene Coordinator (OSC PORT). If a spill occurs outside the jurisdiction of the port authority or the oil companies and within the EEZ, the Director of the NOSCP assumes overall control. The Director will be represented by an On-Scene Coordinator who is responsible for all planning and field operations. For operations at sea and in coastal waters, the On-Scene Coordinator (OSC SEA) will be the Commandant of the National Coast Guard (Police Department) whilst the Commanding Officer of the Special Mobile Force will be the On-Scene Coordinator for inland spills and operations (OSC LAND). Three advisory teams are available to assist the On-Scene Coordinators: the Scientific Advisory Team, the Strike Force Advisory Team and the Socio Economic Advisory Team. The NOSCP outlines an incident command system comprising seven cells: evaluation, operations, logistics, communications, finance, a historian

MAURITIUS

(to record and document all events) and a support cell, which are under the command of the Spill Coordinator who reports to the Director of the NOSCP. Details of the role and composition of the cells are laid out in the NOSCP.

RESPONSE POLICY

For spills offshore, monitoring is a priority, unless the coast is threatened in which case containment and recovery is favoured. Only if sea conditions preclude mechanical recovery would spraying of dispersants be considered. An Oil Spill Dispersant Policy was produced in 2013 for dispersant product approval and authorisation. Dispersants are prohibited close to coral reefs, within lagoons or in shallow water.

There are no regulations or policies in place for in-situ burning.

According to a [workshop report](#) produced in 2020 under the auspices of the Nairobi Convention, no specific national waste management plan had yet been drafted. In previous spills, the collected oil was sent for recycling. Facilities for the disposal of large quantities of oily waste are very limited. Waste from the WAKASHIO incident was sent overseas for final disposal.

EQUIPMENT

Government

According to the Nairobi Convention workshop report cited above, the government has booms (high sea and beach), skimmers, pumps and nozzles, fast tanks, absorbant (booms and peat), dispersant, boats, vessels, and aircraft.

Private

Booms, skimmers, pumps and nozzles, fast tanks, absorbant (booms and peat), dispersant and a bunker barge are also held by private organisations, according to the workshop report.

PREVIOUS SPILL EXPERIENCE

In 2016 bulk carrier BENITA grounded whilst in ballast off the south-east coast of Mauritius, spilling an estimated 25 tonnes of heavy fuel oil. An international clean-up contractor, in cooperation with the Mauritian authorities, took charge of response operations and used a variety of techniques to clean the contaminated shoreline, including manual recovery with scoops and buckets, protective booming, skimming, flushing and high pressure washing, using equipment sourced locally and from overseas.

In 2020 bulk carrier WAKASHIO spilt an estimated 800-1,000 tonnes of very low sulphur fuel oil after grounding on a fringing coral reef off the southeast coast of Mauritius. Oil stranded along approximately 30 km of shoreline including stretches of mangrove habitat. Two international clean-up contractors were appointed to supplement local efforts. Clean-up took approximately five months (August 2020 – January 2021) and involved a variety of techniques, including containment and recovery in the lagoon, the manual removal of bulk oil using scoops and shovels, low-pressure flushing using absorbents to collect the released oil, and, in some areas, high pressure washing. Large quantities of liquid and solid waste were collected and transferred to Greece for final treatment.

MAURITIUS

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

Commission de l'Océan Indien (Indian Ocean Commission) together with Madagascar, Seychelles, the Comoros and Reunion, which supports sustainable growth in the Western Indian Ocean Islands through regional integration, including environmental protection.

Nairobi Convention which offers a regional legal framework and coordinates the efforts of member states to plan and develop programmes that strengthen their capacity to protect, manage and develop their coastal and marine environment.

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