



NETHERLANDS BES ISLANDS

(Bonaire, Sint Eustatius & Saba)

SPILL NOTIFICATION POINT

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RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS

The Netherlands BES Islands (Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba) became special municipalities of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 2010 when the Netherlands Antilles ceased to exist as an autonomous country. The maritime administration transferred to the Minister of Infrastructure and the Environment (IenM) in the Netherlands. Rijkswaterstaat (Director General of Public Works and Water Management – RWS) is responsible for establishing and managing the organisation for responding to maritime incidents including the containment of oil spills and salvage at sea.

An oil spill contingency plan for the BES Islands was produced in 2014. This provides specific guidance to personnel who may be involved in a spill response on the BES Islands and works in partnership with the Emergency Response Plan for the Dutch Caribbean (2013) which sets out the strategic emergency response functions.

The responsibility for emergency response in the BES Islands is allocated to either the Lieutenant Governor or Harbourmaster of Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba, with IenM assuming overall responsibility for all incidents. Each island operates its own emergency response team (ERT) chaired by the Harbourmaster. The ERT is supported by each island's Insular Policy Team (called the EBT on Bonaire, the ERS on St Eustatius and the EOC on Saba), chaired by the Lieutenant Governor and includes the island secretary and the heads of the fire and police department.

The Caribbean Coast Guard (KWCG) is the regional focal point for incidents in the Dutch Caribbean and, if emergency response at sea was required, would have a coordinating function and could assume the role of On Scene Commander on request. It could also provide aerial surveillance.

As an incident escalates, additional organisations become involved in the emergency response, including the Calamity and Policy Teams of the Sea and Delta Department RWS, which support the local authorities during an incident by providing advice remotely with respect to water quality, control strategy and the use of resources. For large-scale incidents, employees of the Sea and Delta Department can be deployed on site as advisers or emergency response coordinators and can organise the deployment of additional emergency response equipment.

RESPONSE POLICY

Mechanical containment and recovery is the preferred option of response for RWS in line with the principles used in the North Sea and Wadden Sea. When mechanical containment and recovery



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resources are being overwhelmed, dispersant application will be used where necessary. Clear criteria must be met before dispersant application will be considered by RWS and dispersant application is only permitted in water depths over 60 m, more than 1 km from the coastline. Dispersant application on or near Saba Bank (Saba) is strictly prohibited by RWS.

In-situ burning is not an option for the Dutch Caribbean.

EQUIPMENT

Government & Private

RWS owns a small stockpile of Tier 1 equipment on the BES Islands, located in the harbours of Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba, as outlined in the NCP.

Aerial support would be provided by the Coast Guard.

BOPEC, NuStar and Curoil own and operate their own response equipment appropriate for the risk of oil spills from their operations on the BES Islands. This equipment could also be made available to the Harbourmaster, but it is not guaranteed and will only be volunteered if the operators are not already using their response resources.

Additional response equipment and responders can also be sought from the neighbouring islands in the Dutch Caribbean.

RWS is an Associate member with OSRL, therefore has immediate access to Tier 3 technical advice, resources and expertise 365 days a year on a 24 hr basis. OSRL can also facilitate the mobilisation of further resources through the Global Response Network (GRN).

PREVIOUS SPILL EXPERIENCE

There are no reports of any major spills in BES Island waters.

HAZARDOUS & NOXIOUS SUBSTANCES (HNS)

HNS response is not currently included as part of the NCP, but it is expected that response arrangements would follow the same format as for oil.



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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

Cartagena Convention (with states of the Wider Caribbean Region).
A bilateral agreements exists with Venezuela (for Bonaire).

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