



# AUSTRALIA

## SPILL NOTIFICATION POINT

**For Oil & HNS**

AusSAR Rescue Coordination Centre  
Canberra

Tel: +61 2 6230 6811 (24hr)

Fax: +61 2 6230 6868

Tlx: 71 62349 MRCC AA

If a ship is within a port or harbour, reports are to be made to the relevant port authority.

## COMPETENT NATIONAL AUTHORITY

Environment Protection Response  
Australian Maritime Safety Authority  
25 Constitution Avenue  
PO Box 2181  
Canberra City, Australian Capital Territory (ACT) 2601

Tel: +61 26279 5929

Fax: +61 2 6279 5076

E-Mail: [eps@amsa.gov.au](mailto:eps@amsa.gov.au)

Internet: <http://www.amsa.gov.au>

## RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA), a federal government self-funded maritime safety agency established in 1990, is responsible for providing a national response capability for marine pollution. AMSA administers the "National Plan to Combat Pollution of the Sea by Oil and other Noxious and Hazardous Substances", a cooperative arrangement between the Federal, State and Northern Territory (NT) Governments and the shipping, oil, exploration and chemical industries, emergency services and fire brigades.

In 2005 the Australian Transport Council endorsed the establishment of a National Maritime Emergency Response Arrangement (NMEMA) to enhance response arrangements under the National Plan through ensuring the continuing provision of an appropriate level of maritime emergency towage capability around the Australian coastline and appointing a single national decision maker to coordinate the response to a maritime casualty. The Maritime Emergency Response Commander (MERCOC) is responsible for the management of responses to shipping incidents in Commonwealth waters, with intervention powers to take such measures as may be necessary to prevent, mitigate or eliminate a risk of significant pollution, including the power to direct a port to release a tug to provide emergency assistance to a vessel at risk or designate a place of refuge for a ship in emergency situations that present a risk of significant pollution.

The MERCOC's intervention will be for incidents where there is an actual or threat of significant pollution posed by a ship. State and Northern Territory governments retain powers to deal with lesser threats of pollution or other environmental damage within their respective jurisdictions.

In ports and within the 3 nautical mile limit, the relevant State/NT authority is the combat agency with assistance from AMSA. Beyond the 3nm limit, AMSA takes this combat role. The States/NT will be responsible for shoreline protection in this latter case. Foreshores and islands in national parks are primarily the responsibility of the relevant environment agencies.

Within the Great Barrier Reef, prime responsibility rests with the Queensland Government with aid from AMSA in consultation with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. The REEFPLAN contingency plan has been specifically developed for incidents within this area.

Each State/NT has nominated a Marine Pollution Controller to take overall control of an incident in their area of jurisdiction. Operational response is managed by a designated Incident Controller.

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The oil industry maintains resources for spills occurring at their facilities. For incidents that may require a response beyond individual company capabilities, the Australian Institute of Petroleum (AIP) through its Australian Marine Oil Spill Centre (AMOSC) subsidiary has established the AMOSPlan formalising mutual aid arrangements among member companies. AMOSPlan additionally formalises integration of industry resources into the National Plan, including AMOSC's Tier Three stockpile held at Geelong.

A National Plan Management Committee provides strategic oversight of the plan, and a National Plan Operations Group supports the Management Committee by addressing operational aspects such as equipment, training, contingency planning and exercises. State/NT Oil Spill Committees have additional responsibilities for contingency planning, equipment location and spill response. Support systems include a computer-based digital mapping system, known as the Oil Spill Response Atlas, and an advanced Oil Spill Trajectory Model.

## RESPONSE POLICY

Under National Plan arrangements, oil spills and the response they require are categorised into three tiers – up to 10 tonnes is Tier 1, between 10 and 1000 tonnes is Tier 2, above 1000 tonnes is Tier 3. Options available within the National Plan allow for surveillance and monitoring as responses within themselves. The use of dispersants as well as booms and skimmers are further options. Lightering or towing a vessel away from threatened resources is also considered. In the event that additional overseas resources are required, assistance from the oil industry's Global Alliance will be sought through Oil Spill Response (formerly OSRL/EARL).

## EQUIPMENT

Under National Plan arrangements, a wide strategic range of response equipment is held at nine regional stockpiles. Equipment provided by AMSA is generally targeted at larger spills (Tier 2 and 3). This is complemented by equipment held by port authorities, State Governments, individual oil and chemical companies and by the Australian Marine Oil Spill Centre stockpile in Geelong, Victoria. Types of equipment include oil spill control booms of varying types and sizes, self-propelled oil recovery vessels, static oil recovery devices and sorbents. A range of storage devices include free standing tanks and towable storage devices complement recovery devices. A contract, funded jointly by AMSA and the oil industry, is in place to provide six prime and two secondary large turbine-powered agricultural aircraft on a 4 hour notice for dispersant spraying operations. These are located in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia. Further aircraft are contracted to provide cover in other locations depending on availability.

All National Plan, AMOSC and other oil industry equipment are listed in the Marine Oil Spill Equipment System (MOSES) database.

## PREVIOUS SPILL EXPERIENCE

The tanker OCEANIC GRANDEUR (1970) spilt 1,100 tonnes of crude oil in the Torres Strait. The tanker KIRKI (1991) spilt 17,700 tonnes of light crude off Western Australia. In both cases a quantity of dispersants were applied although the majority of oil dispersed naturally. The IRON BARON (1995) spilt approximately 550 tonnes of heavy fuel oil near Launceston, Tasmania and the tanker LAURA D'AMATO (1999) spilt 250 tonnes of crude oil into Sydney Harbour. These spills required extensive at sea and on shore clean up operations.

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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

The conventions are extended to the following dependent territories: Ashmore and Cartier Islands; Australian Antarctic Territory; Christmas Island; Coral Sea Islands; Cocos (Keeling) Islands; Heard and McDonald Islands; and Norfolk Island.

## REGIONAL AND BILATERAL AGREEMENTS

Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region 1986 (includes a Protocol concerning Co-operation in Combating Pollution Emergencies in the South Pacific Region)

Memoranda of Understanding exist with New Zealand, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Singapore and Indonesia.

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