



PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

SPILL NOTIFICATION POINT

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COMPETENT NATIONAL AUTHORITY

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RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS

The China Maritime Safety Administration (MSA), part of the Ministry of Transport, has the mandate to investigate and respond to marine pollution incidents in Chinese waters. Central control is provided by the China MSA Headquarters in Beijing with 14 subordinate bureaus and about 100 local branches along the coast and the Yangtze River.

In recent years China has promulgated a series of new pollution regulations relating to ships which progressively came into force in the period 2010-12. These cover a wide range of issues, including oil pollution response planning, pre-spill clean-up arrangements and the emergency handling of pollution incidents. Regulations have also introduced a domestic ship-source oil pollution compensation fund.

One of the most obvious new requirements is that the operator of any ship carrying polluting and hazardous liquid cargoes in bulk and any other vessel over 10,000 GT must have a pollution clean-up contract with an approved ship pollution response organisation (SPRO) before the vessel enters a Chinese port. In 2011 this requirement was expanded in the "Regulations of the PRC on Emergency Preparedness and Response on Marine Environment Pollution from Ships" which came into force on 1 January 2012. SPROs must be qualified and approved by the MSA, and details of all approved SPROs are published on an MSA website and the website of the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Centre (www.osp.cn). Based on the equipment held and personnel available, SPROs are assessed and graded into 4 Levels. Certification is valid for approximately 3 years. Level 1 applies to SPROs with a capability to respond in all waters under the jurisdiction of the PRC, Level 2 up to 20 miles from shore and Levels 3 and 4 in port. The MSA has also approved SPRO consortia to provide response services across multiple ports. As at April 2013, there were 94 Level 1, 26 Level 2, 3 Level 3 and 2 Level 4 certified SPROs in operation in China. The regulations do not apply in Hong Kong.

The SPROs are financed by shipowners and operators through retainer fees (for their standby availability) and re-imburement of response costs for any clean-up services. Under the MSA agreed SPRO contracts, operators must give the SPRO notice of their arrival within an agreed timescale to enable the SPRO to mobilise and maintain the necessary resources on standby. It is also a requirement that operators cooperate with the SPRO in conducting oil spill drill exercises.

RESPONSE POLICY

At-sea response in China is often focused on the application of loose sorbent material and dispersants. Manual shoreline clean-up of the shoreline is usually undertaken by local people. For military areas, dealing with shoreline contamination is a challenge due to civilian access restrictions; manual clean-up in such areas is therefore typically performed by military personnel.

Oil spill incidents are graded into 4 tiers in China. "Significant" incidents, which cause a spill of more than 1,000 tonnes of oil or a direct economic loss of over 200,000,000 RMB, are handled by the State Council of China or the Ministry of Transport; "major" incidents, which cause an oil spill between 500 and 1,000 tonnes or direct economic loss between 100,000,000 and 200,000,000 RMB, are handled by provincial level government and relevant MSA branches; "large" incidents include oil spills of between 100 and 500 tonnes or direct economic loss between 50,000,000 and 100,000,000 RMB; "ordinary" incidents are incidents involving less than 100 tonnes of oil spilt or a direct economic loss of

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less than 50,000,000 RMB. Large and ordinary incidents are handled by local government and relevant MSA branches.

The use of dispersants is controlled in China, with authorisation dependent on the area and prevailing conditions. In the event of a threat to human life or of fire, however, dispersant may be applied before authorisation followed by submission of a detailed report. Only dispersant approved by the China MSA may be used. The certificate issued by China MSA for a dispersant product is valid for 5 years.

EQUIPMENT

Government

China MSA set up the Yantai Oil Spill Response Technical Center in 2006. This houses an equipment stockpile and provides emergency response, technical expertise, oil fingerprinting, spill surveillance and forecasting, and training. Another dedicated response centre has been established in Qinhuangdao (Qinhuangdao Marine Oil Spill Response Center). The MSA has also invested recently in some large response vessels based at key locations along the coast. However, since the introduction of new regulations in 2011, responsibility for response has largely been placed in the hands of private SPROs who maintain a great number of response vessels and stockpiles as part of their MSA certification requirements.

A large cache of offshore oil spill containment and recovery equipment is held by the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) for the protection of coastal exploration and production operations. Regional corporations based in the Bohai Sea and in Guangdong have small stockpiles of equipment designed for higher viscosity oil clean-up. Permission to use this equipment would be made through the MSA in Beijing.

Private

Each SPRO must maintain a minimum amount of specialised clean-up resources to achieve MSA approval, including response vessels, boom (including fire boom), skimmers, dispersant spraying equipment, dispersant and trained personnel. As a consequence, a significant amount of pollution response equipment is now available for use in China. Chinese salvage companies have additional response equipment, including large skimmers. Several foreign oil companies operating in China have tier one equipment.

PREVIOUS SPILL EXPERIENCE

Two large tanker spills, FEOSO AMBASSADOR (1983) and JACUI (1984) at Qingdao, were cleaned up using local manpower and equipment from a variety of small waterfront industries. In 1985 TANJA JACOB spilt approximately 200 tonnes of crude oil after colliding with a jetty at Hangpu Harbour. Contamination of nearby agriculture and mariculture facilities occurred. Clean-up was undertaken by local contractors using dispersant, boom and sorbent.

In recent years, China has experienced an increase in pollution incidents, in part due to the rapid expansion of the Chinese economy and the rise in shipping. These incidents include bunker fuel spills from non tank vessels and can result in substantial environmental damage and fisheries claims. A number of incidents are outlined below:-

In 2002, the tanker TASMAN SEA was involved in a collision at the entrance to the port of Tianjin, spilling some 350 tonnes of Champion Export crude. Most of the oil drifted out into Bohai Bay and quickly emulsified. The Tianjin Harbour Authority and local fishermen conducted clean-up operations in nearshore waters for about a week. Although the incident was relatively small and had no significant impact on the coastline, substantial claims were made in court for fisheries losses.

In 2005, the tanker ARTEAGA ran aground off the port of Dalian, spilling a relatively small quantity of Marib Light crude oil, a significant proportion of which evaporated within one or two days of the spill.

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No recovery, containment or dispersing operations were carried out, and no shoreline oiling was reported. However, numerous claims for damages were lodged with the local court by mariculture operators located close to the spill site. In 2009, the unladen container vessel AGIOS DIMITRIOS 1 spilt approximately 600 tonnes of bunker fuel after grounding close to Zhuhai in Guangdong province, affecting nearby oyster farms. Local fishermen applied sorbent material although most of the oil stranded on nearby shorelines to be collected by local villagers. The cargo vessel ZOORIK (November 2009) spilt some 500 tonnes of bunker fuel after grounding at the mouth of the Yangtze River, affecting nearby mariculture. The response primarily involved the use of sorbent and dispersant, often simultaneously. Also in 2009, the bulk carrier AFFLATUS grounded off Weihei, spilling about 800 tonnes of HFO. Containment booms were initially deployed around the vessel and local fishing boats were used to recover oil at sea using absorbent pads. Workers also manually scooped oil from the grounding site and other impacted areas, and a limited amount of dispersant was used. In 2010, a pipeline exploded during tanker discharge operations at the north-east port of Dalian, resulting in a large fire and causing around 1,500 tonnes of crude oil to be spilt into the sea. A number of specialist response vessels and small fishing boats were deployed to assist with the clean-up operation. In 2012, the general cargo vessel MAXIMA suffered a collision off Shanghai resulting in the loss of about 100 tonnes of HFO. At-sea response centered on the spraying of dispersant and shoreline oiling was cleaned up by local contractors. A collision some 100 nautical miles east of Shanghai in 2013 involving the bulk carrier CMA CGM FLORIDA resulted in the release of an estimated 590 tonnes of IFO 80 and IFO 180 into the East China Sea. The Shanghai MSA commissioned aerial reconnaissance and satellite imagery to monitor the movement of the oil which rapidly spread and fragmented. Response at sea was limited to small-scale containment and recovery and dispersant spraying.

HAZARDOUS AND NOXIOUS SUBSTANCES (HNS)

The MSA is responsible for the co-ordination of response to HNS at sea. A National Contingency Plan for HNS incidents exists as an extension of the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan. A carrier of liquid HNS in bulk should have a contract arranged with a Level 1 SPRO for lightering within Chinese waters beyond 20 nm from shore, and with a Level 2 SPRO for lightering within 20 nm offshore or before entering port.

China intends to establish a domestic fund for HNS incidents. Monitoring and modelling support is available through the Ministry of Environmental Protection, the State Oceanic Administration and manufacturers of HNS.

Recent HNS incidents in China include M/V DAE MYONG (2001), which spilt approximately 600 tonnes of styrene in the mouth of the Yangzi River and M/V GG CHEMIST (2005), which spilt 64 tonnes of toluene in the same area. In 2010, chemical tanker MV STEADFAST suffered a collision at Guishan anchorage, Huangpo in 2010 and sank with 1,800 tonnes of methanol remaining on board, close to Hong Kong. Container vessel BARELI (2012) lost some 160 containers overboard, including 80 dangerous goods containers, containing toxic herbicides, insecticides and sodium hydroxide in pellet form, some of which washed ashore on nearby islands. A quantity of the dangerous goods was collected by the SPROs involved and local villagers with arrangements made to clean contaminated containers and resources at the port.

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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

Fund 92 applies to Hong Kong only.

REGIONAL AND BILATERAL AGREEMENTS

The Action Plan for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northwest Pacific Region (NOWPAP) was adopted at the First Intergovernmental Meeting on NOWPAP in 1994 in Seoul, Republic of Korea, as one of the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP's) Regional Seas Programme. It comprises four member states: the People's Republic of China, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation (<http://www.nowpap.org/>).

Regional Programme for the Prevention and Management of Marine Pollution in the East Asian Seas with the ASEAN countries, Cambodia, PDR of Korea, Republic of Korea and Vietnam.

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