

MEXICO

SPILL NOTIFICATION POINT

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The nearest port or naval authority should also be informed.

COMPETENT NATIONAL AUTHORITY

Contact details as above.

RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS

Under current contingency arrangements responsibility for responding to spills rests in the first instance with the spiller, who is obliged to take immediate steps to control the spill. However, there is usually little opportunity for this beyond reducing the escape of any oil. Under the General Law of Ecological Equilibrium and Environmental Protection (LEGEEPA), overall responsibility for oil pollution matters in Mexican ports and territorial waters rests with the Mexican Navy. Response to a spill is likely to be initiated through the Navy's Marine Environment Protection Division (PROMAM). Assistance is also likely to be sought from the national oil company, Petroleos Mexicanos (PEMEX).

A National Contingency Plan (Plan Nacional de Contingencia para Combatir y Controlar Derrames de Hidrocarburos y Otras Sustancias Nocivas en el Mar) was developed in 1981 by a sub-committee of the Inter-Departmental Commission for Environmental Health and was last reviewed in 1999. It aims to establish a national response network and provide overall co-ordination of resources in the event of a spill. The Navy, through 7 Naval Regions and 13 Naval Zones, maintains a regional and local organisational structure to implement the National Plan at these levels.

Local Contingency Plans tend to be port specific and are headed by the Commander of the Naval Zone who will also act as the On-Scene Commander (OSC). In the event of a spill, a local contingency plan will be activated whose local coordination body will be made up of personnel from units which will integrate with the national coordination body. The national coordination body is established to co-ordinate the local response and is made up of representatives from a number of organisations, including the Ministry of National Defence, Ministry of Communications and Transport (Port Captain), the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Fisheries (SEMARNAT), PEMEX (Marine Superintendent) and Health Dept (Port Health).

In the case of spills exceeding the resources and expertise of the local plan, responsibility for response will transfer to the regional contingency plans administered through the Navy Regions. An OSC will be provided from the relevant regional PROMAM office. Should the seriousness of a spill exceed regional resources, the National Contingency Plan is brought into force. Overall responsibility transfers to PROMAM Headquarters in Mexico City. Under the terms of the National Plan a permanent Technical

Council has been established to provide guidelines for formulating local and regional contingency plans. The Council, which contains representatives from a number of departments including, the Commander in Chief of the Navy (Chairman), Director of PROMAM (Secretary) and representatives from the Director of Harbour Masters offices, SEMARNAP and PEMEX, also provides advice and assistance to the regional OSC during serious incidents and acts as the National Response Team

MEXICO

(Equipo de Respuesta Nacional-ERN). The Council objective is to attend to administrative, technical and operational aspects, coordinate the combating actions as well as establish training and exercise programmes.

PEMEX possesses its own tiered system of response to deal with spills from its vessels and facilities. A response is mounted in the first instance by the vessel involved, then by the terminal or facility. Should the spill exceed the resources of these two entities, response actions will be co-ordinated from the company's headquarters in Mexico City. At this stage it is likely that the local or even regional plans will also be activated by PROMAM who will either assume overall control or leave PEMEX to respond under their supervision and monitoring.

Responsibility for shoreline clean-up falls primarily on the spiller and secondly on local regional and national organisations, depending on the size of spill and the resources available.

Environmental, biological and fisheries advice would be provided by SEMARNAP which maintains 18 fisheries research centres located around the country and four laboratories able to monitor hydrocarbon levels and undertake taint tasting.

The Director of Harbour Masters of the Ministry of Transport and Communications discharges its responsibilities through 109 offices along the Mexican coastline.

RESPONSE POLICY

Preferred response methods focus on containment and recovery of oil at sea, provided conditions allow. The application of dispersants and other chemical agents and the use of bioremediation techniques may be employed if approved by the local or regional coordination bodies. In situ burning may also be considered. Shoreline clean-up policy in Mexico focuses on the manual clean-up of affected areas and use of specialist equipment as available.

EQUIPMENT

Government

The Mexican Navy maintain small stocks of equipment in each of the Naval Zones on the Pacific and Caribbean coasts. This equipment consists of boom, skimmers, skimming vessels, barges, work boats, dispersant spray vessels, vacuum trucks, transfer pumps, dispersant and sorbent. PROMAM has access to about 40 trained personnel to supervise oil spill clean-up operations. Two vessels are available carrying at-sea containment and recovery equipment onboard.

Private

PEMEX has a large stock of equipment including dedicated skimming vessels, boom, vacuum trucks, pumps and dispersant. Cooperation exists between PEMEX and the Navy on access to their respective clean-up equipment. Most of the equipment is concentrated around the Campeche zone which is the main oil exploitation area of the country. In addition, PEMEX is a member of ARPEL, a reciprocal agreement between Latin American oil companies, based in Montevideo, and can call upon this organisation and its member companies for advice and resources. There are no private contractors.

PREVIOUS SPILL EXPERIENCE

The blowout from the oil rig IXTOC I (1979) resulted in a large release of crude oil. Aerial spraying and mechanical containment and recovery were undertaken. Mexico has also experienced a number of small operational spills from tankers and terminals. The LAZARO CARDENAS II (1996) spilt some 40 tonnes of crude oil at the Manzanillo terminal. Mechanical containment and recovery was undertaken and hot water washing was employed to clean affected jetties. In 2007 a collision between the jack-



MEXICO

up rig USUMACINTA and oil platform KAB-101 resulted in a reported spill of some 22,788 barrels of crude oil. This was dealt with using dispersants and mechanical recovery techniques.

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).
Operative Network for Regional Cooperation among Maritime Authorities of South America, Mexico, Panama & Cuba (ROCRAM).

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