



VIRGIN ISLANDS (UK)

SPILL NOTIFICATION POINT

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COMPETENT NATIONAL AUTHORITY

Department of Disaster Management #3 Wailing Road MacNamara, Tortola, VG 1110 (POC Sharleen DaBreo)	Tel: 284 468 4200 Cell: 284 468 9121 Fax: 284 494 2024 Email: bviddm@surfbvi.com
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RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS

The National Contingency Plan was updated in 2005 and approved by government in 2008. As at 2015, an Oil Spill Prevention Bill had been developed by the Ministry of Communication and Works and was about to go before Cabinet for approval.

The lead agency for government control during an oil spill is the Department of Disaster Management within the Deputy Governor's Office. The response agency is the Department of Conservation and Fisheries (DCF), within the Ministry of Natural Resources & Labour. A Marine Pollution Action Group would be established when the threat of pollution became imminent. This group would include representatives from Environmental Health, Tourism and Public Works Departments, the Marine Police, Fire & Rescue, local oil companies, the Port Authority, MCW, DCF and the Civil Aviation Authority, and would include the Disaster Preparedness Coordinator. The group would be chaired by the Deputy Governor who would be in overall charge of operations.

At the operational level, an On-Scene Commander would be provided by the Marine Police for marine operations and by the DCF for terrestrial operations. Resources would be co-opted as necessary. Beach cleaning would involve resources from the Public Works department and civil contractors. Assistance would also be available from the private sector, including local fuel companies Sol and Delta.

The National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) at MacNamara, Tortola would act as the spill response operations centre.

Limited response capability is available locally and in the event of a major spill reliance would be placed on technical expertise, equipment and personnel from adjacent Caribbean countries and the UK. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is also in place with the US government whereby support would be made available from the US Coastguard and the US National Response Team during major spill operations. As at 2015, support had been received on two occasions involving pollution incidents from two cargo vessels that ran into trouble in the Territory's waters.



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RESPONSE POLICY

In the event of a major spill, national policy recognises that at-sea operations are likely to be limited and emphasis would be placed on beach cleaning operations.

The Marine Pollution Action Group would authorise the use of dispersants according to criteria agreed in the Caribbean Islands OPRC Plan, unless special overriding conditions apply at the time. Only licensed and approved dispersants are permitted.

In-situ burning is not permitted.

Small volumes of oily beach material can be landfilled at the BVI public refuse tip, but larger volumes would have to be exported for final treatment and disposal.

EQUIPMENT

Government & Private

The DCF, Fire Service, Public Works Department and Department of Labour can provide or locate labour and some mechanical equipment for shoreline clean-up. A small supply of skimmers, sorbents and boom is also available locally. Small vessels normally employed by the tourist industry, as well as helicopters and fixed wing charter aircraft, may be available to assist with response operations.

Additional assistance is available through the UK Government, Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), and Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).

PREVIOUS SPILL EXPERIENCE

The spill from the barge VISTA BELLA (1991) and from an unidentified source in 1994 both contaminated shorelines with tarballs. These were cleaned manually from beaches and the wastes disposed of to landfill. M/V VAGABOND ran aground at Fallen Jerusalem, BVI in October 2006. Fire and rescue officers, along with members from the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force responded to the incident, with assistance from the US Coastguard.

HAZARDOUS & NOXIOUS SUBSTANCES (HNS)

A draft HAZMAT Plan 2014 is before Cabinet for approval. BVI has no experience of ship-source HNS related incidents. In terms of equipment, only HazMat suites are available (kept by the BV Fire and Rescue Service). (Information from RAC-REMPEITC 2015).

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



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REGIONAL AND BILATERAL AGREEMENTS

Cartagena Convention - the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in the Wider Caribbean Region (a comprehensive, umbrella agreement for the protection and development of the marine environment with states of the Wider Caribbean Region).

MoU between the government of the BVI and the government of the USA concerning assistance to be rendered during discharge of oil or other hazardous and noxious substances into water of the BVI (information from RAC-REMPEITC 2015).

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