**2019 Oil Tanker Spill Statistics**

**Lowest number of spills recorded in half a century**

*Number of large (>700 tonnes) and medium (7-700 tonnes) spills recorded from 1970 to 2019*

Over the last five decades, the frequency of oil spills from tankers has continued to decrease. The average number of spills of 7 tonnes or more in the 1970s was about 79 per year and has now decreased by over 90 percent to a low of six.

Similarly, there has been a significant reduction in the quantity of oil spilled through the decades. The total amount spilled per decade has reduced by about 95% since the 1970s.

In 2019, one large spill (>700 tonnes) and two medium spills (7–700 tonnes) were reported. The large spill occurred in North America and both medium spills occurred in South Asia. Three spills, of size 7 tonnes or more, is the lowest recorded for any particular year in the last five decades. The estimated total amount of oil lost to the environment through tanker incidents in 2019 was approximately 1,000 tonnes.

ITOPF’s 50 years of oil tanker spill data reflect the hard work by governments and industry in improving safety and standards of operations.

**Notes for Editors**

ITOPF maintains a database of oil spills from tank vessels, including combined carriers, FPSOs and barges. This contains information on accidental spillages of persistent and non-persistent oil since 1970, except those resulting from acts of war. The data held includes the location and cause of the incident, the vessel involved, the type of oil spilt and the spill amount. For historical reasons, spills are generally categorised by size, <7 tonnes, 7–700 tonnes and >700 tonnes (<50 bbls, 50–5,000 bbls, >5,000 bbls), although the actual amount spilt is also recorded. Information is now held on over 10,000 incidents, the vast majority of which fall into the smallest category i.e. <7 tonnes.

Further details are available on the [statistics](http://www.itopf.org/knowledge-resources/data-statistics/statistics/) page of ITOPF’s website. A special edition of ITOPF’s annual statistics publication presenting 50 years of data will be available soon.

**Notes on ITOPF**

1. Established in 1968, ITOPF is maintained by the world’s shipowners and their insurers on a not-for-profit basis to promote effective response to spills of oil, chemicals and other substances in the marine environment.

2. ITOPF's Membership currently comprises around 8,000 owners and bareboat charterers of approximately 13,600 tank vessels with a total gross tonnage of over 430 million GT. The organisation also benefits from the participation of over 810 million GT of non-tanker tonnage owned and operated by its Associates.

3. ITOPF's priority service is responding to accidental marine spills and the organisation's team of highly experienced technical staff are at constant readiness to travel anywhere in the world at a few hours’ notice. ITOPF staff have attended on-site at over 800 incidents around the world, giving the organisation unparalleled practical experience of the realities of combating marine spills.

ITOPF also:

* assesses the damage caused by spills to the environment and economic resources;
* provides advice on the technical merits of claims for compensation;
* conducts contingency planning, advisory and training assignments;
* is a primary source of information on ship-source spills through its technical publications, films and website ([www.itopf.org](http://www.itopf.org)).

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