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Health and Safety in oil spill response

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The First Steps

- Who is at risk from potential hazards?
- What is the hazard/risk?
- Assessing the hazard/risk
- Control measures
- Monitoring
- Feedback

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Who is at risk?

- Clean-up personnel
  - supervisory staff
  - observers
- General public
  - local residents
  - volunteers
  - media (tv & radio)

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Risk Assessment

1. Look for the hazards
2. Decide who might be harmed and how
3. Evaluate the risks and decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done
4. Record your findings
5. Review your assessment and revise it if necessary

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Potential hazards in oil spill response

- Oil
- Weather
- Clean-up equipment
- Clean-up chemicals
- Working area
- Working practices
- Simultaneous operations

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Oil hazards

- Toxicity
  - inhalation / ingestion / contact
- Flammability
  - Fire / explosion
- Oxygen displacement
  - Confined spaces
- Slippery
  - Slips and falls

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Weather hazards

- Cold
  - Exposure, wind chill, hypothermia
- Wet
  - Discomfort, low morale
- Heat
  - Heatstroke, dehydration
- Sun
  - Sunburn, sunstroke

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Clean-up equipment hazards

- Rotating equipment
- Vacuum equipment
- Complexity / size
- Hand tools

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Clean-up chemicals hazards

- De-fatting of skin by detergents
- Product information sheets
- Hazard Data Sheets

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Working area hazards

- Unfamiliar work site
- Shoreline
  - cliffs
  - beaches / intertidal zone
- At sea
  - vessel movement
  - cluttered working area
- Wildlife

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Difficult working conditions

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Working practice hazards

- Night Operations
- Slips, Trips, and Falls
- Manual Handling
- Transport and Materials / Waste Disposal
- Fatigue
- First Aid

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Control measures

- Safe working practices
  - control of work (permit control)
  - task risk assessments
  - information/instruction/training
- Site control
  - barriers, police, access control
  - control zone concept
- PPE, last resort

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Site Safety Assessment

- Unfamiliar working environment
- Safety assessor
  - qualifications
  - experienced
  - analysis of risk
- Reporting
  - site assessment pro-forma
  - liaise with planning / operations

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Work Site Control

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Safe Working Practices

- Supervision and training
- Communications
  - emergency contacts
- Welfare considerations
  - personal protective equipment
  - food and shelter
- Decontamination
  - cleaning stations
  - personnel and equipment

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Management of Volunteers

- Register & co-ordinate
- Fit skills to roles
- Minimum training?
- Equipment
- Wildlife and Logistics

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