



Marine
Management
Organisation

Marine Pollution Contingency Plan



...ambitious for our seas and coasts

Document Control

Title	Marine Pollution Contingency Plan
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0.1	C Williams	Revised Plan	September 2023

1 Summary

This plan specifies:

- the Marine Management Organisation's (MMO) support to response to major marine pollution incidents; and
- the MMO's statutory role regarding the use of oil spill treatment products in responding to oil spills.

As a non-departmental public body, the MMO takes direct responsibility for maintaining and implementing this plan.

The plan will be reviewed regularly. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) and Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) will be notified of any changes to this plan. The most recent version will always be available on the MMO's website.

1.1 Aims and objectives

This plan aims to provide a mechanism to coordinate MMO's response in major marine pollution incidents. It will also be suitable for use during smaller incidents led by a harbour master or offshore operator.

This plan sets out how the MMO will:

- make decisions on requests to use oil spill treatment products (OSTP) within an hour in order to avoid damage to the marine and coastal environment from:
 - a delay in response to spilled oil
 - inappropriate use of an OSTP
- give advice to whomever is leading the incident through the environment group
- assess the environmental, social and economic impacts and brief Defra.

1.2 Scope

This plan covers marine oil pollution in English waters, or in the waters of British overseas territories, by oil or other pollutant liable to create hazards to human health, to harm living resources and marine life.

This plan does not cover incidents within offshore English waters from installations. The Offshore Installations (Emergency Pollution Control) Regulations 2002, made under section 3 of the Pollution Prevention and Control Act 1996, provides powers for the Secretary of State for DESNZ to give directions and to take such other actions as may be necessary in respect of an offshore installation to prevent or minimise pollution or the threat of pollution, including the authorization of an oil spill treatment product.

This plan does not cover deposits applied manually, or sprayed from backpacks. These are regulated by the Environment Agency (EA) under the Environmental Permitting Regulations (England and Wales) 2010.

This plan does not address the logistical issues involved in deploying response equipment and

coordinating a response, or ongoing efforts to minimise damage from chronic or operational pollution.

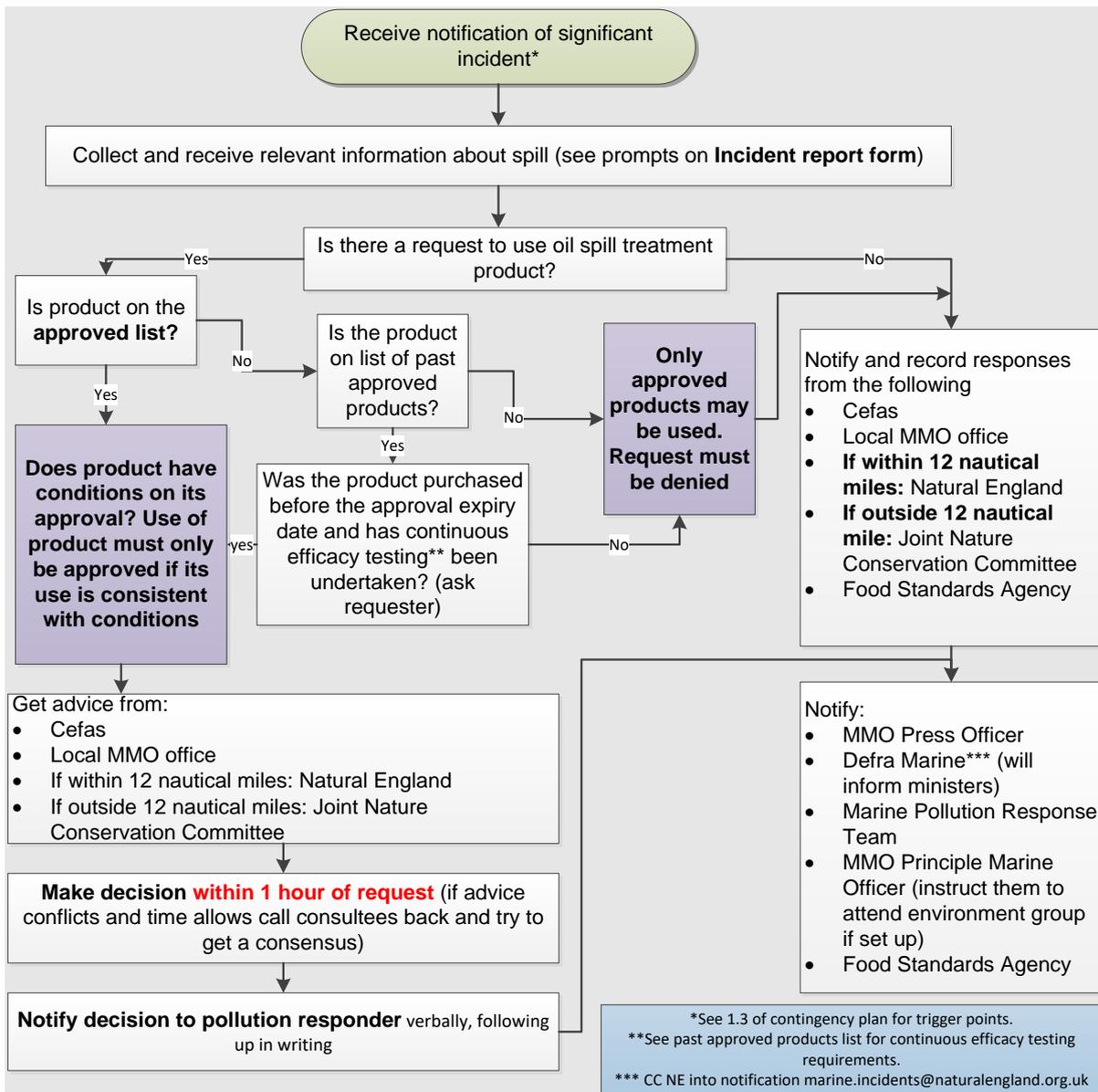
This plan does not cover marine pollution incidents in Scottish, Welsh or Northern Irish waters.

1.3 Trigger points

This plan will be triggered when:

1. a request to use an OSTP in English waters is made
2. an environment group is called
3. a significant incident occurs, for which Defra requires an official briefing
4. the MMO Marine Pollution Response Team (MPRT) deem that the plan should be activated in response to an incident.

2 Approval of use of an oil spill treatment product



The MMO is responsible for the approval of OSTPs in English waters, unless used under a standing approval or in relation to an offshore energy installation. The MMO is committed to give a decision on requests to approve OSTP within one hour of the initial request.

2.1 Initial communications

The MMO will receive requests for approval from responders and/or the lead government department (LGD) during an incident. Requests will be in the form of a phone call to the emergency phone (0300 200 2024).

The MMO will usually receive notification of developing incidents through a situation report (SITREP) or pollution report for an incident (POLREP) issued by MCA, or petroleum operations notices (PON1s) issued by offshore oil and gas operators. These are sent via email to the dispersants@marinemanagement.org.uk. Notification may also be made over the phone.

POLREPs and SITREPs give information against coded, standardised headings. The key to these codes can be found in [Annex A](#).

2.2 Recording information

It is extremely important to record information properly, both for use during an incident and to demonstrate proper decision-making processes following an incident.

Information received by phone should be recorded on the incident report form ([Annex A](#)), which contains fields for the different kinds of information to collect. As much information as possible should be collected from the initial phone call.

The MMO responder must establish whether there is a request for approval to use an OSTP, or if a request is likely.

Information from further telephone calls should be recorded on the incident telephone log ([Annex B](#)).

2.3 The need for approval

Approval is required for the use of an oil spill treatment product:

- for all uses on the surface of the sea
- for all uses under the surface of the sea

Authorisation will be given verbally and then followed the in writing via the authorisation form ([Annex C](#)).

2.4 Consulting on requests to use OSTP

When considering whether to grant approval for OSTP use, the MMO will consult with the following advisory bodies:

- Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) who will advise on the likely impact of the pollution and response options.
- The relevant statutory nature conservation body (Natural England (NE) or Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)) who will advise on the presence of protected and sensitive species and habitats which could be impacted by the pollution.
 - NE: English waters out to 12 nautical miles (nm)
 - JNCC: English waters out from 12nm
- Local MMO Coastal Officers will advise on the local areas of importance to fishing industry.

Having received information from these bodies, the MMO responder must decide whether or not to approve the request to use OSTP. If advisory bodies give conflicting advice, the MMO responder should use any remaining time to discuss with these to try to achieve a consensus.

The MMO and Defra Chief Scientific Advisors can also be called upon in an emergency to provide independent scientific advice and quality assurance to ensure the evidence base underpinning policy decisions is robust and fit for purpose.

2.5 Briefing other contacts

The MMO will also brief the following contacts:

- MMO duty press officer will liaise with press departments of other responders to establish a coordinated press response.
- MMO Executive Leadership Team, who will wish to be aware of high-profile incidents.
- Defra Marine and Fisheries Policy Team, who are responsible for briefing Defra Ministers.

A briefing template, suitable for all of the above is included as [Annex E](#).

- The Food Standards Agency (FSA) incidents branch may wish to issue a closure order for contaminated shellfish beds.
- The MMO Fisheries management team may wish to issue a Stop notice and/or fishing vessel license variation in order to close a fishery due to known or suspected contamination.

2.6 Approving OSTP

Initial approval can be made verbally, with conditions stated. Conditions may include the following:

- a test spray must be carried out to ensure the efficacy of the dispersant
- limits to the area or timing of use
- limits to the quantities to be used.

The requirement for the user to report all actual OSTP use to MMO within 72 hours (see [Annex F](#)) should also be stated at this point.

The initial approval must be followed up with written confirmation. The MMO responder must complete and sign the authorisation form ([Annex C](#)) and send it to the OSTP user.

2.7 Approved products

MMO may only authorise:

- a) currently approved products, or
- b) previously approved products which have had their efficacy maintained and which were purchased whilst the product was approved by MMO.

Oil Spill treatment products suitable for approval can vary in type such as dispersants, bioremediation agents, sorbents, surface cleaners and solidifying agents.

MMO will only approve use in accordance with the approved use stipulated on the approved products list¹.

Products can be approved for use 'at sea', 'beach' or 'rocky shore', or a combination of all three.

2.8 Standing approvals

In some locations a standing approval for use of an OSTP exists. This permits the use of OSTPs subject to certain conditions.

Common conditions are use of a specific, named OSTP only, limits on quantity to be used and conditions such as OSTP only to be used on an ebb tide. OSTP use under a standing approval must still be reported to MMO within 72 hours (see [Annex F](#)). Any use outside of the conditions of the standing approval requires specific approval from MMO MPRT.

Standing approvals are referenced in the relevant contingency plan for that location, for example port/harbour contingency plans (oil pollution preparedness, response and co-operation (OPRC) plans) or offshore installation oil pollution emergency plans (OPEPs).

2.8 Use of an emergency room

Lancaster house has the facilities to book private meeting rooms with technology to assist in facilitating video and audio teleconferencing. Consideration will be made as to whether this is required during an incident.

3 Marine pollution where approval to use an OSTP is not requested

The MMO is responsible for briefing Defra and preparing the MMO public response to incidents. The MMO responder should follow instructions in parts [2.2](#) and [2.4](#).

The MMO responder may also consult the contacts in part [2.4](#) if environmental fisheries or

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/approved-oil-spill-treatment-products/approved-oil-spill-treatment-products>
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conservation advice is required.

4 Joining an environment group

An environment group (EG), convened by the MCA, will provide advice on environmental aspects and public health impacts of the incident and associated response operations.

The MPRT will be contacted by the Chair of the relevant EG with instructions to join and will invite MMO Coastal staff as required.

4.1 MMO role

MMO's representation in the EG will be from the MPRT and local MMO Coastal staff.

Cefas will attend the EG if requested by MCA, MMO or others.

The role of local MMO staff is to give advice on fisheries, shellfisheries, marine licensing and dispersant use, but not dispersant approval, which is an MPRT function.

Local MMO staff may also act as an environmental liaison officer in the EG. This is a separate role that involves acting as a messenger between the core EG and other groups set up as part of the response, such as the Marine Response Cell and Shoreline Control Unit.

Participation in an EG is likely to remove a principal marine officer from their usual duties for a considerable amount of time. With line manager consent, HQ staff can be transferred to the marine office to backfill of this work where possible.

Marine officers should log all phone calls related to marine pollution response in the telephone log form ([Annex B](#)).

MPRT will undertake a debrief session with all involved following the conclusion of a major incident.

4.2 Further guidance

A guidance note with more detailed information on MMO involvement in an EG is given at [Annex G](#).

Further guidance can be found in the National Contingency Plan, available online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-contingency-planncp>

5 Out of hours arrangements for MMO

The MMO maintains the ability to respond to incidents quickly and effectively at any time.

During office hours the MPRT monitor the emergency phone and dispersants@marinemanagement.org.uk and responds to incidents.

The MMO duty marine officer (07770 977825) deals with incidents reported out of office hours, but can contact MPRT members if they require more support.

If contact cannot be made through the normal route, the Defra duty office (0345 051 8486) will be the point of contact, and Defra can contact MPRT members through alternative numbers.

MMO MPRT must update MMO duty officers by 17.00 each working day on any significant incidents where the duty officer may be called out of hours. The Defra Duty Room may also require briefing as how to handle out of hours calls. MMO duty officers must brief MPRT every working day at 09.00 of any relevant calls they have handled overnight or at the weekend.

Contact numbers (all 24 hours):

- Primary contact number: To report a spillage call your [local coastguard](#). To request approval to use an oil spill treatment product call the MMO Marine Pollution incidents line on 0300 200 2024 during office hours.
- Out of office hours please call 07770 977 825. At all times or if other numbers out of order, please call Defra Duty Office on 0345 051 8486.

6 Resources

6.1 Staff

The MPRT consists of two designated staff members. The wider Marine Conservation Team (MCT) are also trained responders. MCT staff can be called upon to join the MPRT in case of a major incident.

6.2 Teleconferencing and Video conferencing

All MMO staff have MS Teams facilities to attend calls and virtual meetings.

7 Legal basis

The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 and Marine Licensing (Exempted Activity) Order 2011

Section 66 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 requires that a licence is needed for the deposit of substances or articles within United Kingdom waters from a vehicle, vessel, aircraft, hovercraft, marine structure or container floating in the sea. This includes the deposit of OSTPs, here called "marine oil treatment substances" (MOTS) and the use of marine spill treatment equipment.

Under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 the MMO acts as the regulatory authority for the use of marine oil treatment substances in waters off England.

In Welsh waters Natural Resources Wales are the Approval Authority. In the waters off Northern Ireland, the regulator is the Department of Environment's Marine Division and for the waters off Scotland, the regulator is Marine Scotland.

The Marine Licence (Exempted Activity) Order 2011 provides for exemptions for the need for a licence for the use of marine oil treatment products (article 15) and marine oil treatment equipment (article 16), in certain circumstances, set out in more detail in 7.1 and 7.2, below.

The use of oil spill dispersant products in relation to offshore oil and gas exploration and production operations is specifically excluded from these legislative regimes and is regulated by DESNZ.

7.1 Marine oil treatment products

Oil spill treatment products (OSTP) (or marine oil treatment products as they are described in the legislation) cover any substance used or intended to be used for the purpose of treating oil on the surface of the sea (see s.107(2) Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009).

The MMO maintains a list of approved dispersants on the MMO's website which can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/approved-oil-spill-treatment-products/approved-oil-spill-treatment-products>.

Although a licence would normally be required for any deposits at sea (including for OSTPs), a licence is not required for the deposit of a substance for the purpose of treating oil on the surface of the sea, provided that:

- the substance is currently approved by the MMO
- the substance is used in accordance with the conditions of that approval
- the deposit of the substance is only made in accordance with the approval granted by the MMO for that purpose.

If these conditions are not satisfied then the exception does not apply and the deposit of OSTPs would require a licence. Failure to have a licence for any marine licensable deposit is an offence.

However, if UK approved OSTPs were to be used in an emergency situation (e.g. for the purpose of securing the safety of a vessel, aircraft or marine structure, or for the purpose of saving life) this may form a defence to any offence that could have been committed.

In the event of such an emergency however, it is vital that within a reasonable timeframe the MMO is informed of:

- the fact that the activity was carried out,
- the locality and circumstances in which it was carried out, and
- any substances or objects concerned.

Further details are set out in s.86 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.

7.2 Marine Oil treatment equipment

Equipment designed for the purpose of controlling, containing or recovering oil can also be used without the requirement for a marine licence (unless it relates to the deposit of explosives).

These may include the deposit of booms, mats and pillows (provided these are completely recovered from the sea after they have absorbed oil)

7.3 Manual deposits

Deposits into water (including the sea) within three nautical miles of the coastline and not from a vehicle, vessel, aircraft, hovercraft, marine structure or container floating in the sea – that is those applied manually, or sprayed from backpacks – are regulated by the Environment Agency (EA) under the Environmental Permitting Regulations (England and Wales) 2010.

8 Interfacing contingency plans

8.1 Local contingency plans

All offshore installations, ports and harbours where there is a significant risk of a spill or significant environmental sensitivities have a legal obligation to have contingency plans in place.

Some of these plans include a standing approval, issued by MMO (or DESNZ for offshore installations only), permitting use of OSTP in prescribed circumstances.

Many marine pollution incidents are small incidents which can be dealt with locally (tier 1) or with the additional aid of a contractor (tier 2) and response will be mounted in accordance with these local plans.

In such cases, the MMO will liaise with the local responders – harbour master, local authorities or offshore installations operators – to approve the use of oil treatment products if appropriate and give fisheries and other advice.

Tier 3 incidents are very large incidents requiring national, cross-boundary or international response resources.

8.2 National contingency plan

The MCA is the UK LGD for marine pollution incidents from shipping. The National Contingency Plan is available online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-contingency-planncp>

DESNZ is the LGD for marine pollution from offshore installations when responses require national resources, triggering the National Contingency Plan for Pollution from Shipping and Offshore

Installations. See www.gov.uk/oil-and-gas-offshore-emergency-response-legislation for DESNZ's role and responsibilities.

When a national plan response is required, and MMO is the appropriate approval authority for OSTP, MMO will liaise with the MCA to approve use of OSTPs if appropriate. MMO will ensure local participation in an environment group in most national plan responses. MMO (not the environment group or any other body) or DESNZ (offshore only) or EA (certain inshore use) grants approval for OSTP use.

The EA is the LGD for incidents where the source is land based, including discharges from pipelines originating from land.

In such cases, the MMO will liaise with EA to approve the use of OSTP if appropriate and give fisheries and other advice.

Different government departments will take the lead if the incident escalates to a national emergency, depending on the origin of the incident.

Origin of the pollution	Lead government department (LGD) or category 1 responder	MMO role
Shipping	Department for Transport or MCA	Approve dispersant use Brief Defra
Offshore installation	DESNZ approve dispersant use	No statutory role but can be contacted to provide support
Land-based sources up to three miles from the coast	EA	Approve dispersant use from vehicle, vessel, aircraft, hovercraft, marine structure or container floating in the sea (not manual deposits or those sprayed from a backpack) Brief Defra
Terrorist activity at sea	Home Office	Approve dispersant use Brief Defra

8.3 Devolved administrations and outside the UK

Wales

Natural Resources Wales act on behalf of Welsh Government to approve the use of oil spill treatment products in Welsh waters.

Scotland

For incidents which occur in waters adjacent to Scotland, Marine Scotland is responsible for approving dispersant use and coordinating environmental advice on behalf of the Scottish Government.

Northern Ireland

For incidents which occur in Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, an executive agency of the Department of the Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for Northern Ireland, is responsible for approving dispersant use and coordinating environmental advice.

The Isle of Man, the Channel Islands and British overseas territories

The Isle of Man, Channel Islands and British overseas territories are responsible for their own counter-pollution arrangements but may request assistance in a major incident.

9 Other marine emergencies

9.1 Waste disposal at sea

It is UK policy not to licence most disposal at sea if there is a safe and practical land-based alternative is available.

Incineration of waste at sea (including in situ burning of oil) is not normally permitted.

UK policy is directed by the OSPAR Convention² and London Protocol³.

Under the London Protocol dumping is prohibited except for activities highlighted in the "reverse list":

1. dredged material
2. sewage sludge
3. fish wastes
4. vessels and platforms
5. inert, inorganic geological material (such as mining wastes)
6. organic material of natural origin
7. bulky items primarily comprising iron, steel and concrete
8. carbon dioxide streams from carbon dioxide capture processes for sequestration.

The OSPAR Convention states that restrictions do not "*apply in case of force majeure due to stress of weather or any other cause, when the safety of human life or of a vessel, aircraft or of an offshore installation is threatened*" (OSPAR Convention Annex II article 7 and Annex III article 6);

Such exceptional disposals shall be conducted as to minimise the likelihood of damage to human or marine life and shall immediately be reported to the OSPAR Commission and the London Convention.

² [Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic](#)

³ Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter 1972 – Revised 1996

9.2 Algal blooms

Reports may be received about algal blooms. These should be reported to the FSA, who may wish to close fisheries or shellfisheries due to toxicity caused by the blooms.

9.3 Emergency marine works

The MMO Marine Licensing Team may expediate a licence for marine works (bypassing the several weeks required for the normal licensing process).

It is an offence under s.85(1) of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 to undertake works without the required licence. However, it is a defence to this offence if these actions were taken in an emergency. For this defence to be relied upon, however, it must be shown that:

- the activity was carried out for the purpose of securing the safety of a vessel, aircraft or marine structure, or for the purpose of saving life, and
- the person took steps within a reasonable time to inform the MMO of:
 - o the fact that the activity was carried out,
 - o the locality and circumstances in which it was carried out, and
 - o any substances or objects concerned.

Further details are set out in s.81(1) of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.

Annex A: Incident report form including key to POLREP codes

Report	Date	Time	Reported by	
Reporter (B)	Name	Organisation	Telephone	Fax

Pollution and source		
Source (G) Vessel/Structure name Type and size Cargo/contents	Pollution Confirmed? (A) Appearance Type (F) Diesel, heavy /light fuel oil, crude, chemical (type)	Position and extent (C) Volume of spill (tonnes) Volume remaining on vessel Location – latitude and longitude* Distance from coast
Conditions		
Tide (D) Ebb/ Flood High tide time Speed Direction	Wind (D) Speed (Knots/Wind Scale/Beaufort) Direction	Weather (E) Weather Conditions Wave height Sea State Swell
Response (K)		
Request to use oil spill treatment product? Name and type* (If dispersant) last tested for efficacy when? Volume	Responders on site? Other action (such as booming, closing dock gates?) Environment group called?	Others informed SoSRep Y/N MCA Y/N MMO coastal office Y/N Natural England/Natural Resources Y/N Wales Environment Agency Y/N Food Standards Agency Y/N

* Check if this is within/near a standing approval

**Check if this is on approved list

POLREP Key: A = Classification B = Date and time/Identity of reporter C = Position and extent D = Tide, wind speed/direction E = Weather and sea state F = Characteristics G = Source and cause H = Vessels in area J = Photographs/Samples K = Remedial action L = Forecast of likely effect M = Persons informed N = Other information

Additional notes

Annex B: Log form

A word version is available on the intranet for MMO staff.

Incident telephone log

Name of incident: _____

To/From	Name/Organisation	Telephone number	Time and date	Notes

Annex C: Form approving of marine oil treatment product use



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A word version is available on the intranet for MMO staff.

Marine Pollution Response
Lancaster House
Hampshire Court
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE4 7YH

T +44 (0)300 200 2024
www.marinemanagement.org.uk

[Recipient's name]
[Position, company]
[First address line]
[Second address line]
[Town/City Postcode]

To:

At:

Via email address:

Pages 2 +

Date:

Time:

Dear

Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009: Marine Licensing (Exempted Activities) Order 2011 (as amended)

Approval to use marine oil treatment substances at/in

Following discussions with the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science, the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), **within the Maritime and Coastguard Agency's environment group/and Natural England/Natural Resources Wales/Joint Nature Conservation Committee**, I am writing to confirm the MMO's approval of your proposal dated to treat oil **at sea/on rocky shores/on beaches/on marine structures/on vessels present at sea or standing on hard standings draining into the sea** at the following location/s:

.....

..... This approval is subject to the following conditions:

1. Only oil spill treatment products which have been approved by the MMO may be used and they must be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. In particular chemicals which are not approved for use on rocky shore use should not be used on such shorelines.
2. For dispersant use, a test-spray at sea must be carried out to ensure that the oil it intended to treat is amenable to the product it is intended to use. This approval is only valid if the test-spray is effective.
3. Access must be given to MMO officials to monitor the use of marine oil treatment substances if requested.
4. That the use of these marine oil treatment substances is discontinued if they prove to have no beneficial effect on the oil being treated or if any adverse effects are observed from their use, or a MMO official requests that these operations cease.
5. That a revised or further approval is sought from MMO before commencing treatment of oil at other locations or diverting from the proposals provided to MMO on the date specified above.
6. A report must be made in writing to MMO within 72 hours after use of marine oil treatment substances.

Yours

Signed by (capitals).....on behalf of.....

Date:

Time:

Copies to:

- MMO, Marine Pollution Response Team
- Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science
- MMO, coastal office/s at
- Food Standards Agency
- MCA environment group chairman

Annex D: Nautical miles (NM) to kilometres (KM) conversion table

KM	0.5	1	2	5	10	15	20
NM	0.27	0.54	1.08	2.70	5.40	8.10	10.80

Annex E: Marine pollution incident briefing

A word version is available on the intranet for MMO staff.

[Incident name] [Briefing #] [Briefing time and date]

This document is to be used as a template briefing for MMO ELT, MMO communications and Defra Marine. Information required will vary between incidents.

Name of incident:

Start time and date:

Pollution source:

Location:

Type and quantity – actual pollution:

Type and quantity – potential pollution:

Government bodies involved:

Press interest (likely, positive, accurate?):

Affected stakeholders (and how):

MMO lead responder:

Key points

The main potential impacts of the pollution are:

-
-
-

MMO involvement is:

-
-
-

Main risks are:

- MMO-authorized use of dispersant will be perceived to/cause actual damage to marine resources.
-
-

Lines to take

The MMO is responsible for the approval of oil spill treatment products (including dispersants) and provision of environmental advice during marine pollution incidents. Approval is given to use oil spill treatment products only:

- after consultation with Cefas and the relevant statutory nature conservation body
 - when environmental benefits are expected to outweigh environmental costs, or human life is at risk.

Timeline

Such as 25/02/2023 0900 – Vessels collide...and so on

Annex F: Sample of a report to use in an incident

There is no need to use this form itself – it is to help you decide what to put in a report.

Name of port authority/oil company

Incident number: Date:

Volume and type of oil:

Location:

Remedial action taken:

.....

Name and type of oil treatment product:

Volume of product used:

Start and finish times for spraying:

Date of manufacture:

Efficacy last tested on (if applicable):

Comments on effectiveness:

.....

.....

Report made to Marine Management Organisation as appropriate by:

.....

Other remarks:

.....

.....

Annex G: The role of the MMO in marine pollution response and environment groups/standing environment groups

Introduction

In the event of a marine pollution incident the MCA may initiate the formation of an environment group (EG) with the aim of providing environmental advice to operational command. EGs can also be formed by ports and harbours and the EA for incidents originating from land. DESNZ can call an EG for a pollution incident from an offshore oil/gas platform/pipeline.

The role of an Environment group (EG)

The role of an EG is to provide advice, using all relevant environmental information and local knowledge, concerning a marine incident. This should include:

- assessment of environmental risks
- potential impacts
- implications of any clean up or salvage operations
- monitoring the environment
- facilitating the welfare, rehabilitation or humane disposal of impacted wildlife
- information on fishing grounds, spawning and nursery areas, shellfish beds and mariculture.

Standing environment groups (SEG)

To respond quickly to an incident 7 SEGs have been set up around the coast of England so that members are ready to form an environment group in the event of an incident. Members include staff from local EA, MMO, NE/JNCC as well as the Health Protection Agency, local authorities, FSA representatives (local environmental health officials).

In addition, the group may be expanded to include representatives from inshore fisheries and conservation authorities and non-governmental organisations such as Royal Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals.

This group can either meet in person or virtually by telephone or email. SEGs may put in place a contingency plan which gives details of local priorities and outlines the SEG's response. This should consider cross SEG border issues. The plan should be compatible with the county council spill and booming plans.

SEGs are normally chaired by EA or NE. SEG chairs meet annually at which point the MCA and MMO HQ are represented. MMO marine officers (MO) should raise any concerns to the attention of the chair of their local group and copy to MMO HQ. Offshore SEGs may be chaired by DESNZ, with environmental advice being provided by JNCC.

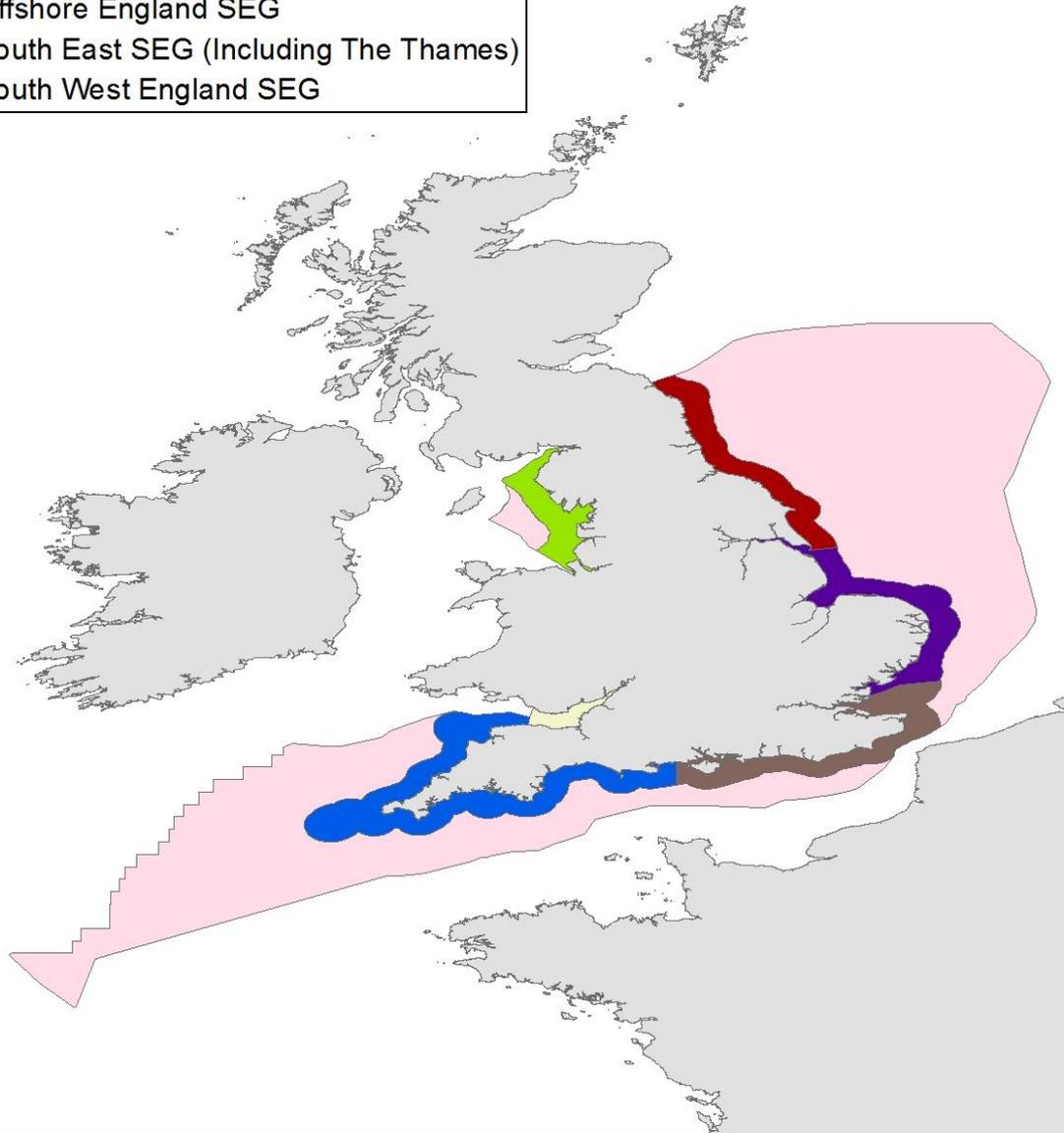
Local MO should attend SEG meetings and take part in any local/national pollution response exercises.



Standing Environment Groups

SEG boundaries

-  Bristol Channel SEG
-  East of England SEG
-  North West England SEG
-  North East England SEG
-  Offshore England SEG
-  South East SEG (Including The Thames)
-  South West England SEG



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The role of the MMO

The role of the MO within the SEG is to provide both the MMO HQ and the EG with information on local fisheries and shellfisheries and advice on monitoring these both in the short and long term. The MO must also relay on-going information relating to the incident to HQ.

The local MMO representative on the SEG is usually the Principle Marine Officer (PMO). It is important that he/she knows the SEG structure well and has contact details for other members handy. PMOs should nominate another MO to attend on their behalf, in person or over the phone, when they are absent.

The underlying principle for all SEG members is to provide informed advice to the oil/chemical spill response team, acting as a collective environment group. In addition, they are the MMO's eyes and ears during an incident and can take critical decisions following liaison with the MPRT in MMO HQ.

It is important that the MMO EG representative provide MMO HQ/duty officer (24 hours a day) with up-to-date information in relation to an incident, on a daily basis if necessary, as MMO have responsibility for briefing Defra officials who in turn may need to brief ministers. It is important that the briefing is consistent with MCA/DESNZ briefings.

In the event of a serious pollution incident, EG work needs to be given priority. PMOs should advise MMO HQ at an early stage about any resource implications, so that management measures can be discussed to ensure other MMO business is not too seriously disrupted. It should be noted that a major incident may last several months or years.

Approval to use oil spill treatment products

The authority to use dispersants and other oil spill treatment products in all English waters is given by MMO MPRT in consultation with local MMO, Cefas and NE.

Appendix A: Oil spill treatment products approved for use in the United Kingdom

Last updated: 03/03/2023

A list of the approved oil dispersant products can be found on the MMO's website at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/approved-oil-spill-treatment-products/approved-oil-spill-treatment-products>

This list has been compiled by the MMO as a guide to the range of oil treatment products currently approved for use in the UK.

For further information, see www.marinemanagement.org.uk/protecting/pollution/approval.htm