

The National Plan to Combat Pollution of the Sea by Oil and Other Noxious and Hazardous Substances

Introduction

As a party to the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation 1990, Australia is obliged to establish a national system for responding promptly and effectively to oil pollution incidents. This system is to include a national contingency plan, which is to set out the organisational relationship of the various bodies involved, whether public or private.

Australian's national system is the National Plan to Combat Pollution of the Sea by Oil and Other Noxious and Hazardous Substances (National Plan), and is managed by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA).

The purpose of the National Plan is to maintain a national integrated Government and Industry organisational framework capable of effective response to oil or chemical pollution incidents in the marine environment and to manage associated funding for equipment and training programs to support National Plan activities.

Roles and Responsibilities

Under the terms of the National Plan Inter-Governmental Agreement (Clause 20(ii)), it is the responsibility of the National Plan State/NT Statutory Agency to develop and implement contingency plans for combating marine pollution under the National Plan. AMSA's roles as managing agency of the National Plan are to maintain the National Maritime Oil Spill Contingency Plan, and the National Maritime Chemical Spill Contingency Plan (Schedule 1 Clause 12(i)); and to provide advice and guidelines for contingency planning and audit the response plans (Schedule 1, Clause 12 (ix)).

Assessment of Contingency Plans

The OOWG Contingency Plan Sub-Committee, on behalf of AMSA, will review nominated contingency plans in accordance with these guidelines. It is acknowledged that the recommendations arising from a contingency plan review may or may not be adopted by the responsible agency.

Endorsement

The Contingency Planning Guidelines were endorsed at NPOG 14 for use by National Plan agencies and organisations when preparing oil spill contingency plans at industry, local, State/NT and National levels. Contingency Plan Format

Ideally plans should follow a common format irrespective of whether they are local, regional or national plans. This aids understanding and implementation, and assists with compatibility between plans during transition from one level to the next. A contingency plan may consist of four sections and a number of appendices (see below). It is acknowledged that the format may vary to accommodate the legislative requirements, and integration of other plans within each State/NT.

It is important to note that not all areas identified below will be required in every contingency plan, and this will be taken into consideration during the review. When developing a contingency plan the tiered response proposal should focus on what is considered to be the credible maximum spill size within the scope of the contingency plan.

Preface	
Title	Precise title stating location and the types of spills covered.
Controlled copy number	A controlled copy number for each of the plans, if printed.
Distribution List	A list that identifies the organisations that possess a controlled copy.
Amendments list	A table that identifies when the plan was last amended, and which sections were amended.
Table of Contents	
Abbreviations & Acronyms	A list of abbreviations and acronyms that are used throughout the document.
Introduction	
Background	Relevant to area covered.
Threat	Relevant to area covered.
Aim & Objectives	Outline the aim and objectives of the Plan.
Scope of Plan	Relevant to area covered.
Legislation	State relevant International conventions, National and State legislation.
Authorities and responsibilities, relevant agreements	Identify Statutory and Combat agencies, and Industry arrangements, and any relevant agreements.
Geographical limits of the Plan	Provide a detailed map that identifies the area that the plan covers either within the body of the plan or as an appendix.
Interface with other Plans	Show relationship and integration with other adjacent plans.
Preparedness (Strategy)	
Risk Assessment	Identify the risks, including the impact on public health, environment and socio-economic factors, taking into account the major activities involving oil and other hazardous and noxious substances in the area.
Types and quantities of oil likely to be spilled	Identify the types and quantities of oil likely to be spilled within the geographical region of the Plan.
Levels of Response	Explain the rationale of the tiered response approach adopted for relevant scenarios and method of moving up and down through the levels.
Probable fate of spilled oil	Develop oil spill scenarios, using for example, the Oil Spill Trajectory Modelling (OSTM). Show how the weather will affect the movement and fate of oil in each season and how that will affect the different strategies in spill response.
Environmental Sensitivity Mapping	Describe the environmental sensitivities in the area including seasonal particularities, i.e. migratory birds, spawning season etc. Identify priorities for protection, and special local considerations. Identify "No dispersant" zones etc.

Spill Response Strategies	
Spill response strategy	<p>Identify limiting and adverse conditions.</p> <p>Identify strategies for offshore, coastal, and shoreline zones.</p> <p>Set out a procedure for the development of incident specific response action plans as appropriate.</p>
Response Decision Tree	<p>Set out the spill response decision support flowchart taking into account the environmental, population and socio-economical factors and the amount of resources available in the area.</p>
Equipment, supplies and services	<p>Explain where on-water oil spill equipment, shoreline equipment can be sourced, and the method to obtain the equipment. A list of local equipment should be provided in an Appendix.</p> <p>Identify the site for the Incident Control Centre (ICC), and an alternative site.</p> <p>Outline the layout of the ICC to include a separate media room. Ensures availability of additional phone lines, additional fax machines and lines, and a photocopier.</p> <p>Identify potential regional operations centres.</p> <p>Identify other locations such as wildlife centres.</p> <p>Identify waste reception facilities.</p> <p>Describe the communications plan for a response considering the communication equipment available or means of obtaining other communication equipment.</p> <p>Indicate where report templates, manuals, maps, charts and incident logs etc can be accessed.</p> <p>Identify suitable helicopter providers.</p>
Response Management	
Response Organisation (OSRICS structure)	<p>Detail coordination and control arrangements. Describe the roles of the response team and illustrate the Oil Spill Response Incident Control System (OSRICS).</p>
Roles and Responsibilities	<p>Identify personnel for the Incident Management Team (IMT) within the OSRICS structure .</p> <p>Identify an appropriate public health/fisheries/environmental spokesperson and, in regional contingency plans, the role of local government officers/committees of management.</p> <p>Identify agencies and roles of agencies in shoreline and wildlife cleanup.</p> <p>Establish and identifies regional environmental experts.</p> <p>Identify advisors and consultants</p> <p>Identify adequate numbers of administrative staff across all disciplines.</p>
National Response Team	<p>Identify the role, function and activation procedure of the National Response Team (NRT) who are available to provide support across all response disciplines to the Commonwealth and the States/NT and combat agencies in the event of a major pollution incident.</p>
Training	<p>Highlight and plan for training of response staff as well as support and relief staff.</p>
Exercises	<p>Describe the need for different exercises and the exercise planning cycle.</p>
Records	<p>Explain the requirement for records. Detail a financial system for control and tracking of costs incurred during an incident.</p>
Updating the Plan	<p>Specify how often the plan should be reviewed.</p> <p>Provide details for whom to provide suggestions to for future amendments.</p> <p>A loose-leaf format facilitates regular updating.</p>

Response (Operations)	
Activation	Outline the means by which the plan is formally activated.
Initial Response	Define the mechanism for notification and call out.
Response Process Flow Chart	Illustrate the response process by means of a schematic if necessary.
Initial Reports	Incorporate an incident control system, which includes standardised notification and reporting procedures and formats (POLREPS, SITREPS etc), personnel tracking, tracking and logging of communications and events, display and communication of status reports.
Response Plans	Provide brief details of response strategies appropriate to the plan. Describe and guide on initial and subsequent assessment on the spill.
Strategic Plans	Provide for personnel in terms of adequate briefings, equipment, clothing and facilities and assesses accommodation options. Detail the process on mobilisation of the relevant resources in the different government and industry agencies. Detail the actions of the key players in the plan.
Supporting Documentation	Identify where supporting documentation such as the Places of Refuge Guidelines, Sampling Procedures, a Vessel Charter Agreement, and Salvor agreements can be found.
Occupational Health and Safety	Detail site-specific management plans, and risk assessments. Emphasise human life, health and safety is paramount.
Communications	Detail a communications plan.
Media Plan	Detail a media plan.
Incident Action Plans (IAPs)	The Incident Action Plans (IAPs) are the short-term operational objectives and activities. The IAP will provide details of the operational activities and objectives to be achieved over a specified, short-term period.
Assessment Guidelines	Include where to find the Appearance of Oil on Water Guidelines
Cultural and Heritage Issues	Stresses consultation with, and involvement of local community throughout and beyond the incident, including liaison and consultation with Aboriginal communities.
Dispersant Options	State clearly the Environmental & Scientific Coordinator (ESC) is responsible for dispersant testing effectiveness during a spill response, and identify where National Plan Dispersant Effectiveness Test Kits can be found.
Obtaining Samples for Evidence and Analysis	Identify where the guidelines for obtaining samples for evidence and analysis can be found.
Termination of operations	Outline the means by which the plan is formally terminated. Consider inclusion of guidelines for deciding final and optimal levels of beach clean-up; and standing-down equipment, cleaning, maintaining, and replacing.
Debriefing arrangements	Set out the debriefing arrangements on completion of the response emphasising the value of debriefing arrangements. Provide guidance to preparing a formal detailed report, including the review of the Plan and procedures from lessons learnt during the incident response.

Appendices	
Contact Information	Provide contact details for key personnel, and also resource lists for potential contractors such as civil aviation, small craft, plant and equipment, waste disposal.
Charts & Maps	Geographical limits of the Plan; areas of sensitivity.
Response Structure	OSRICS Structure
Equipment List	Provide a list of equipment available within the region of the Plan.
Pollution Report (POLREP)	Provide a <i>pro forma</i>
Situation Report (SITREP)	Provide a <i>pro forma</i>

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