APPENDIX 10 - Sampling Procedures

SAMPLING PROCEDURES OIL SPILLS

Samples of oil/oily mixtures from the marine environment (water and foreshore areas) and all potential sources should be taken with the **minimum of delay** so that changes in the oil composition due to weathering are kept to a minimum. All samples should be contained in clean glass jars (preferably sterilized glass jars if available) and information about where the samples were taken should be recorded. This information should be provided to the laboratory to assist with the analysis of the samples. All samples should be kept in a cool, dark, secure location (i.e. within an insulated container, an esky or a refrigerator if available).

Marine environment - Every effort should be made to obtain representative samples of the pollutant from the water and foreshore areas or other polluted areas (including oiled wildlife). A number of samples should be taken from various locations within the spill. Note that any drains or outfalls in the area should also be sampled to be eliminated as a potential source of the spill. Blanks or clean water samples should also be taken upstream/outside the spill area and provided to the laboratory.

Ships – Sampling ships should only be undertaken with the assistance of an authorized officer with relevant shipping expertise. Samples from all potential ships that could have been responsible for the spill must be obtained. It is important to be able to eliminate ships as well as identifying the source of the spill. Samples should be taken from all waste oil tanks, bilge and bilge holding tanks, fuel oil tanks and the discharge from the oily water separator for comparison purposes, particularly if prosecution is envisaged. Information on how the sample was obtained should also be recorded and provided to the laboratory (e.g. from drain tap, valve, dipping into tank etc). Samples should be contained within solvent washed or clean glass jars.

Continuity of Samples

To be admissible as evidence, samples taken must be proved conclusively to be in an appropriate person's possession until delivery to the laboratory. This requires that rigid controls be instituted and maintained to establish continuity for the samples from the time of initial sampling.

Delivery of Samples

Where samples are collected for the purpose of prosecution appropriate safeguards need to be ensured during their transport. AMSA has identified that TNT Failsafe Couriers can provide transport of samples from the person responsible for its collection and/or custody to the designated analyst, incorporating rigid controls and security.

Transport of samples is organised for all State/NT locations by the TNT Failsafe's Sydney office.

Analysis of Samples

AMSA has arrangements in place whereby analysts appointed under the provisions of the Commonwealth Protection of the Sea (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) Act 1983 will carry out testing of all samples for the purposes of prosecutions under that Act. State/NT legislation may also have similar provisions.

Further Details

AMSA and State/Territory agencies have dedicated sampling kits including documentation to be used for these purposes. The International Maritime Organization publication "IMO Guidelines for Sampling and Identification of Oil Spills" 1998 provides more detailed information on this subject. (All State/NT National Plan Committee Chairs have been provided with a copy.) Further details concerning sampling procedures and appointed analysts are available from AMSA Environment Protection Unit.