



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

National Maritime Oil/HNS Spill Contingency Plan 2020



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FOREWORD BY THE MINISTER

This National Maritime Oil & HNS Spill Contingency Plan (NMOSCP) establishes Ireland's national framework and strategy to coordinate marine pollution preparedness and response. The NMOSCP has been developed with due regard to our international obligations in this domain, notably the International Convention on Oil Pollution, Preparedness, Response and Co-operation (OPRC) and pertinent EU Directives on Vessel Traffic Monitoring Services (VTMS) and EU operational guidelines on Places of Refuge (POR).

The Plan addresses all oil and Hazardous Noxious Substance (HNS) pollution whether it originates from ships, harbours, offshore units, Oil/HNS handling facilities or land-based sources and covers waters in the Irish Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). In addition, it provides for and supports current mechanisms in requesting assistance from other countries through bi-lateral and multi-lateral arrangements in the event of a major maritime pollution incident.

The Irish Coast Guard (IRCG), a division of the Department of Transport, Tourism, and Sport (DTTAS), is responsible, inter alia, for monitoring or intervening in marine salvage operations which may pose a threat of pollution and for preparedness and response to incidents from maritime casualties which pose a threat of pollution by oil and HNS within the EEZ. Coordination between the IRCG and other government/non-government entities is an essential feature of the NMOSCP. The implementation of the NMOSCP not only addresses Ireland's international obligations in this domain, it will provide a framework for benchmarking the IRCG operations against best international practice in this area.

Shane Ross

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CRU	Commission for Regulation of Utilities
DCCAE	Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment
DTTAS	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
EAS	Equipment Assistance Service of EMSA
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EMSA	European Maritime Safety Agency
ERCC	EU Emergency Response Coordination Centre
EU	European Union
GIS	Geographic Information System
HNS	Hazardous and Noxious Substances
ICS	Incident Command System
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IOOA	Irish Offshore Operators' Association
IRCG	Irish Coast Guard
LGD	Lead Government Department
MAS	Maritime Assistance Service
MEM	Major Emergency Management
MER	Marine Emergency Room
MoU	Memorandum of Agreement
MRCC	Marine Rescue and Coordination Centre
MRSC	Marine Rescue Sub-Centre
MRT	Maritime Response Team
NCP	National (Maritime Oil/HNS Spill) Contingency Plan
NMPRC	National Maritime Pollution Response Committee
NEBA	Net Environmental Benefit Analysis
NECC	National Emergency Coordination Centre
NECG	National Emergency Coordination Group
NMOC	National Maritime Operations Centre
OPRC	International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation
OPRC-HNS	Protocol on Preparedness, Response and Co-operation to Pollution Incidents by HNS
OSRL	Oil Spill Response Limited
OWRN	Oiled Wildlife Response Network
PAD	Petroleum Affairs Division (of DCCAE)
PIN	Petroleum Incident Notification
PRA	Principal Response Agency (An Garda Síochána, Health Service Executive and Local Authorities)
SAR	Search and Rescue
SEA-PT	Shannon Estuary Anti-Pollution Team
SEM	Strategic Emergency Management
SIMA	Spill Impact Mitigation Assessment
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SSP	Scenario Specific Plan
STS	Ship-to-ship (transfer)

1 CONTEXT FOR THIS NCP

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Ireland has an obligation under international treaty to protect and preserve the marine environment¹. Furthermore, Ireland is signatory to the OPRC Convention², obliging it to have a National Contingency Plan (NCP) for oil pollution in place. Irish legislation also commits to extend this NCP to address marine pollution due to hazardous and noxious substances (HNS).

This document establishes a national framework and strategy to coordinate marine pollution preparedness and response. It addresses all oil and HNS pollution whether it originates from ships, harbours, offshore units³ or oil/HNS handling facilities and land-based sources. It covers waters in the Irish Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) – see Figure 2.

The ‘polluter pays’ principle underpins this NCP and is reflected in Ireland’s ratification of various international instruments relating to compensation in the event of oil pollution from shipping (see section 1.3).

1.2 STRATEGIC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTAS) is identified as the Lead

Government Department (LGD) for marine and coastal pollution under the Strategic Emergency Management (SEM) National Structures and Framework. Responsibility for this function within DTTAS is delegated to the Irish Coast Guard (IRCG).

1.2.1 Maritime emergencies

The IRCG is responsible for developing and co-ordinating an effective regime for response to marine casualty incidents, monitoring or intervening in marine salvage operations, and preparedness and response to pollution by oil and HNS within the Irish Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

Search and rescue (SAR), salvage and intervention activities will be prioritised above pollution response during a maritime incident. This would be in cases where actions to ensure safety of human life or to limit further pollution were needed. The IRCG maintains a National SAR Plan which would be activated as needed alongside this NCP.

The IRCG’s Marine Rescue and Coordination Centre (MRCC) is the internationally designated Marine Assistance Service (MAS) for Ireland. The main tasks of the MAS function are to:

- Receive reports from ships in need of assistance.
- Monitor the situation of the ship.
- Act as a point of contact between the ship, other organisations and coastal authorities.

The Minister of Transport, Tourism and Sport or authorised officers⁴ also have various powers, as described in section 1.3.2.

¹ United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)

² International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, response and Co-operation 1990

³ Defined in the Sea Pollution Act 1999 as “any fixed or floating offshore installation or structure, in the State or a designated area, engaged in gas or oil exploration, exploitation or production activities, or the loading or unloading of oil” and including “installation” as defined in Part IIA of the Electricity Regulation Act 1999

⁴ See Section 26 of the Sea Pollution Act 1991, as amended

1.2.2 Preparedness and response to pollution

The Minister of Transport, Tourism and Sport has responsibility to ensure a national structure is in place to ensure preparedness and response to maritime oil or HNS pollution incidents. This responsibility is delegated to the Director of IRCG and includes:

- A Maritime Response Team (MRT) providing either (a) oversight and support to a harbour authority, facility or local authority response undertaking response or (b) command, control and coordination in cases of ship-source incidents outside of port limits or major incidents requiring national-scale resources to be mobilised.
- Ensuring oversight and approval of contingency planning and response of other entities, including local authorities, harbour authorities, offshore units and oil/HNS handling facilities.

Coordination between the IRCG and other government or non-government entities is an essential feature of the national organisation represented in this NCP. It also addresses the mechanisms to request assistance from other countries through bi-lateral and multi-lateral arrangements.

The SEM Framework provides guidance on how government coordinates its response to major emergencies, as shown in Figure 1. This includes the establishment of a National Emergency Coordination Group (NECG) at the National Emergency Coordination Centre (NECC) convened by the Office of Emergency Planning, as requested and chaired by the LGD. This structure provides the coordination mechanism for all relevant arms of government to work together in support of the LGD. The SEM Framework identifies the key supporting government department and agencies for marine pollution as shown in Table 1.

There is specific coordination and cooperation between the Principal Response Agencies (PRAs) and the IRCG under the Framework for Major Emergency Management (MEM).

IRCG also has an Operational Agreement with the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU), contained within the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between CRU and the Irish Maritime Administration of DTTAS⁵. This Agreement details areas of cooperation and coordination, including the review of oil spill contingency plans relating to offshore developments and general cooperation with respect to offshore emergency planning and preparedness.

In practice, a serious pollution incident that threatens or affects the marine, coastal and shoreline environment may involve a range of government and non-government entities extending beyond those listed in Table 1.

⁵ Under revision in 2020

NATIONAL MARITIME OIL/HNS SPILL CONTINGENCY PLAN

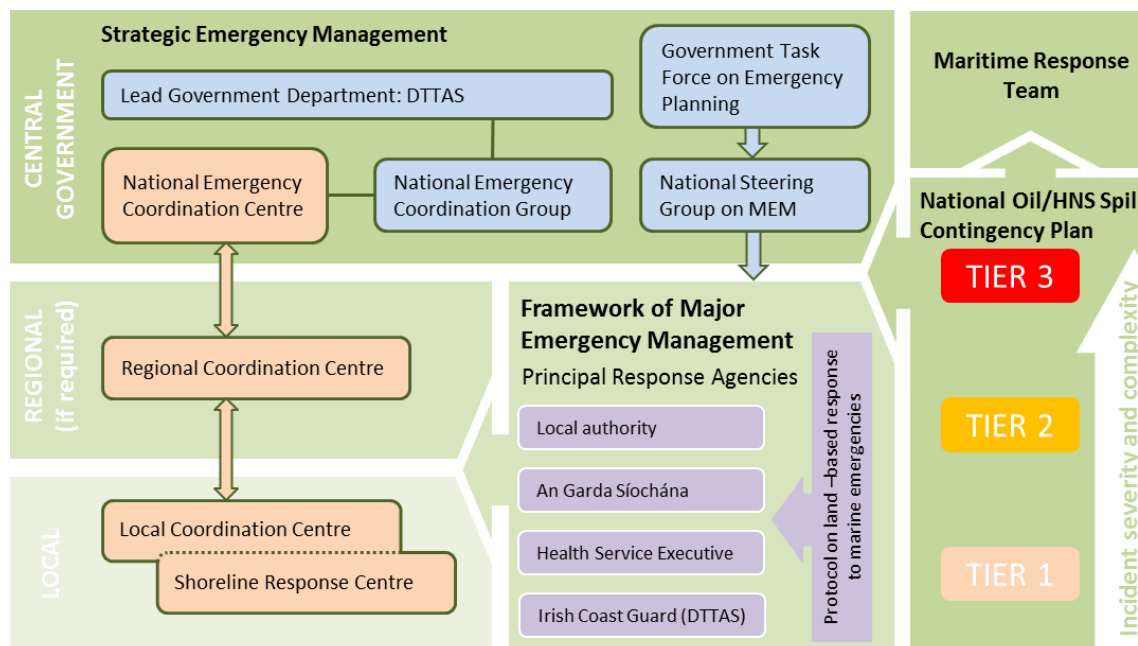


Figure 1: The NCP's interface with the Emergency Management framework - see section 1.1.5 for an explanation of the three tiers and section 2.3 for the hierarchy of contingency plans

Table 1: Lead and support government department / bodies (from SEM framework, Annex A)

Emergency / incident type	Lead Government Department (LGD)	Principal Support (Bold) and Other Support Roles
Marine and Coastal Pollution	DTTAS <i>Note: For onshore impact, the lead may pass from DTTAS to DHPLG⁶ or DCCAE⁷ as circumstances dictate.</i>	IRCG (DTTAS), Local Authorities (DHPLG), DCCAE and DF⁸ (DOD⁹) <i>Other support roles:</i> Commissioners of Irish Lights; Harbour Master & Port Authorities
Marine Emergency Impacting On-shore		IRCG (DTTAS), Local Authorities (DHPLG) and DF (DOD) <i>Other support roles:</i> Commissioners of Irish Lights; Harbour Master & Port Authorities; DCCAE; CD ¹⁰ (DOD); AGS ¹¹ (DJE ¹²); HSE ¹³ (DH ¹⁴)

⁶ Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government

⁷ Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment

⁸ Defence Force

⁹ Department of Defence

¹⁰ Civil Defence

¹¹ An Garda Síochána

¹² Department of Justice and Equality

¹³ Health Service Executive

¹⁴ Department of Health

1.3 LEGAL BASIS

Ireland has either ratified or considered the requirements of various international instruments relating to preparedness and response to marine oil or HNS pollution, including:

- Protocol relating to Intervention on the High Seas in Cases of Marine Pollution by Substances other than Oil (Intervention Protocol 1973);
- OPRC Convention;
- OPRC-HNS Protocol;
- International Convention on Civil Liability for Bunker Oil Pollution Damage, 2001 (Bunker Convention);
- 1996 Protocol of Convention on Limitation of Liability for Maritime Claims (LLMC Protocol);
- 1992 International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage (CLC);
- 1992 International Convention on the Establishment of an International Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage (Fund Convention);
- Supplementary Fund Protocol;
- International Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with the Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances by Sea, 1996 (HNS Convention);
- International Convention on Salvage;
- Nairobi International Convention on the Removal of Wrecks (Nairobi WRC);
- European Directive 2002/59/EC establishing a Community vessel traffic monitoring and information system; and the
- European Directive 2013/30/EU on safety of offshore oil and gas operations.
- European Directive 2008/56/EC establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive).

The requirements of these instruments are implemented through the following key national Acts:

- Sea Pollution Acts, 1991 to 1999;
- Pollution of the Sea (Civil Liability and Compensation) Acts 1988 to 2005;
- Sea Pollution (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006;

- Merchant Shipping (Salvage and Wreck) Act 1993;
- European Communities (Vessel Traffic Monitoring and Information System) Regulations 2010; and the
- Electricity Regulation Act 1999, as amended by the Petroleum (Exploration and Extraction) Safety Act 2015.

1.3.1 Requirement to develop the NCP

This NCP addresses various requirements as follows:

OPRC Convention

Article 6(1)(b) of the OPRC Convention requires that a national contingency plan is developed. Reflecting this, legislation¹⁵ requires the Minister of Transport, Tourism and Sport to prepare a plan for preventing and minimising oil or HNS pollution damage.

SEM Framework

The SEM Framework stipulates that the LGD should develop Scenario Specific Plans (SSPs) related to the emergency types for which it is responsible. This NCP fulfils this requirement for marine pollution.

EU Offshore Safety Directive

The NCP also addresses requirements concerning an external emergency response plan and emergency preparedness for offshore oil and gas installations or connected infrastructure¹⁶.

1.3.2 Delegation of powers to IRCG

The Irish Government's Decision (S.15675D) directed that the Minister¹⁷ should have overall responsibility for dealing with all aspects of pollution of the sea and coastal areas. This responsibility is delegated by the Minister to the IRCG.

¹⁵ See Section 8 of the Sea Pollution (Amendment) Act 1999, as amended

¹⁶ See Article 29 of EU Directive 2013/30/EU on the safety of offshore oil and gas operations

¹⁷ Functions now transferred to the Minister of Transport, Tourism and Sport

The IRCG Director and Deputy Director and other IRCG personnel as may be identified, are authorised officers under various Acts, with authority to:

- Stop or detain a ship if it appears that the owner of the ship has incurred a liability for pollution damage caused by any ship which he owns¹⁸.
- Prevent the entry of a ship into the State where it will cause serious threat of hazards to human health, damage to human life, harm to living marine resources, or harm to flora or fauna, or damage to amenities, or interference with legitimate uses of the sea¹⁹.
- Give directions, for the purpose of preventing, mitigating or eliminating danger from pollution or threat of pollution by oil, or by any substance other than oil, to owner, master, salvor or person in charge of a ship following upon a maritime casualty or if this is inadequate to take such actions and do such things as he considers necessary and reasonable²⁰.
- Sanction discharge into the sea of pre-described substance for the purpose of minimising the danger from pollution²¹.
- Enter a facility or ship, make inspections and carry out such tests, including the monitoring and assessment of the effects on the marine environment, of any oil pollution incident or a pollution incident by hazardous and noxious substances²².
- Require any person in a relevant facility or ship to produce relevant documents, records or materials including provision of related information²³.
- Take various actions in relation to the accommodation of ships in need of assistance²⁴.

¹⁸ Section 13 of the Pollution of the Sea (Civil Liability and Compensation) Act 1988

¹⁹ Section 23 of the Sea Pollution Act 1991

²⁰ Section 26 of the Sea Pollution Act 1991

²¹ Section 11 of the Sea Pollution (Amendment) Act 1999

²² Section 22 of the Sea Pollution (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006

²³ *ibid*

²⁴ Regulations 23-25 of the European Communities (Vessel Traffic Monitoring and Information System) Regulations 2010 (SI No. 573 of 2010)

1.3.3 International agreements

Ireland is a member of European Union and thereby has member State access to the marine pollution surveillance and combatting resources of the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA)²⁵.

Ireland is also a Contracting Party to the Bonn Agreement²⁶ and can request support to marine pollution incidents from other Parties.

Furthermore, Ireland is a Contracting Party to the, OSPAR Convention²⁷. OSPAR aims to prevent pollution by continuously reducing discharges, emissions and losses of hazardous substances. It has an objective in relation to offshore oil and gas activities, to prevent and eliminate pollution and take the necessary measures to protect against the adverse effects - by setting environmental goals and improving management mechanisms. OSPAR is a sister organisation of the Bonn Agreement, sharing secretariat resources and currently developing a Memorandum of Understanding for greater cooperation in pollution prevention and environmental protection.

²⁵ See www.emsa.europa.eu/operations/pollution-response-services.html

²⁶ See www.bonnagreement.org/

²⁷ Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic, www.ospar.org

1.4 SCOPE OF THE NCP

This NCP covers pollution by oil or HNS, as defined in the Sea Pollution Act:

“**Oil**” means petroleum in any form including crude oil, fuel oil, diesel oil, lubricating oil, sludge, oil refuse and refined products and any oil or oily mixture.

“**Hazardous and noxious substances**” means any substance other than oil which, if introduced into the marine environment, is likely to create a hazard to human health, to harm living resources

and marine life, to damage amenities or to interfere with other legitimate uses of the sea.

This NCP covers all incidents in, or likely to affect, the Irish Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2: Irish Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), shown as a white line; the smaller SAR region is shown for comparison (dashed blue line)

1.5 INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM

The incident command system (ICS) this NCP implements is consistent with the guidance published by the International Maritime Organization (IMO)²⁸.

This establishes a framework of consistent principles, structure, functions, and process that can be applied to any maritime emergency response. This consistency is of importance when different organisations are working together in a response. IRCG has promoted wider understanding and familiarity of ICS through training programmes that have targeted coastal local authorities and encouraged its adoption in local authority, harbours and oil/HNS handling facilities' pollution emergency plans.

1.5.1 Approach to incident readiness – the three tiers

Following international practice and guidance, Ireland has implemented a three-tiered approach to all aspects of marine pollution readiness and response. This approach means an appropriate response capability is identified and available to deal with spills commensurate to the risks. The three tiers are as follows.

Tier 1 spills are responded to and resolved by the local authority, harbour authority or operator of offshore unit or oil/HNS handling facility, who must have an appropriate pollution emergency (spill contingency) plan.

Tier 2 oil spills are generally those beyond the capability of an authority or operator acting alone. The response is led by a harbour or local authority, depending on the extent of on-water and shoreline pollution, and may involve joint marine and coastal operations. The pollution emergency plans should identify how the parties will work together.

Tier 3 oil spills are generally more complex, of longer duration and higher impact, and beyond

the response capability of the affected or threatened local authorities, harbour authority or facility operator. The response is nationally led and will involve a range of government departments. DTTAS is the lead government department (LGD) under the SEM framework. Coordination and oversight are by the IRCG, who have access to national resources and can request international support (see sections 1.3.3 and 2.2.5). This NCP provides the framework for all Tiers but focuses on contingencies for Tier 3.

Figure 3 outlines the process for determining these response tiers.

1.5.2 Objectives and provision of a National Tier 3 response

People's safety and health are the highest priorities and must be incorporated into any spill response. The primary objectives of any Tier 3 response, the achievement of which this NCP facilitates, are to prevent and minimise damage in the State resulting from discharges of oil or HNS from ships, offshore units, oil handling facilities and HNS handling facilities²⁹

The NCP provides for the requirements of the OPRC Convention's Article 6 (national and regional systems for preparedness and response), through the:

- placing of national stockpiles of equipment and materials;
- training of persons in the use of equipment and carrying out spill operations;
- conducting exercises to ensure the greater effectiveness of spill operations;
- maintenance and improvement of co-operation and communication during spill operations; and
- co-ordination of Tier 3 spill operations.

²⁸ IMO Guidance on the Implementation of an Incident Management System (IMS), 2012

²⁹ Section 8 of the Sea Pollution (Amendment) Act 1999, as amended

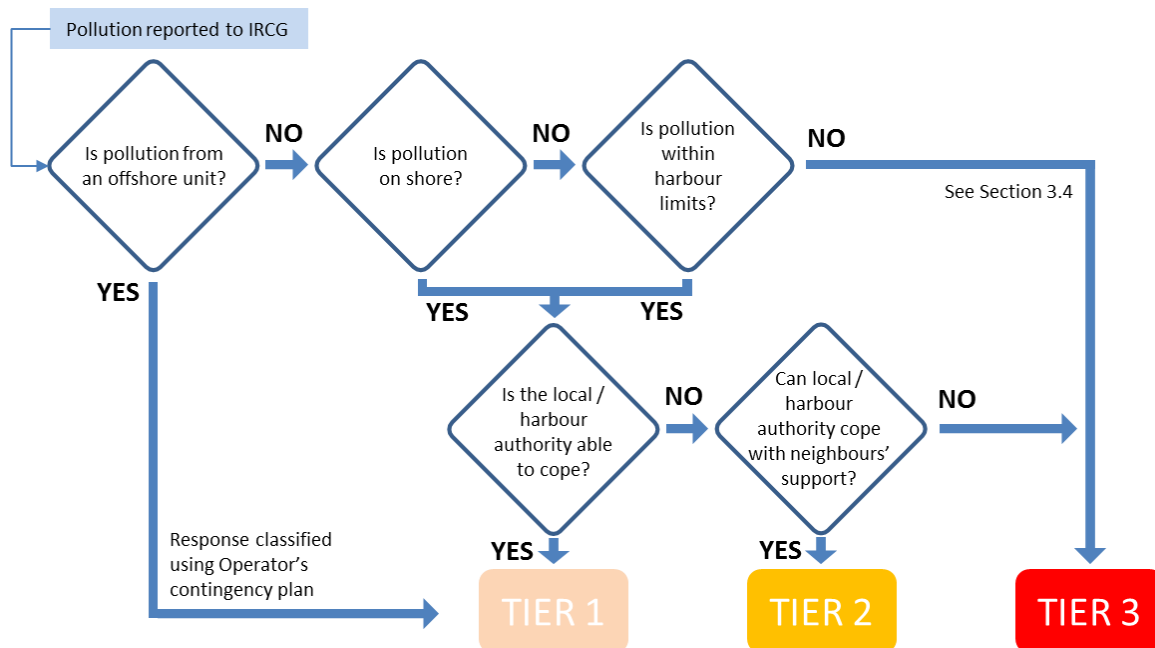


Figure 3: Determining the tiers of response

1.6 MANAGEMENT OF THE NCP

1.6.1 Audience for this NCP

IRCG's Operations Section and others with response functions within the Maritime Response Team (MRT) will be the main users of this NCP. This plan also:

- serves as a reference for the National Emergency Coordination Group (NECG) under the SEM framework, specifically for those organisations with key roles in supporting marine or coastal pollution response;
- provides an umbrella document for those mandated to develop harbour, offshore units, oil/HNS facility or local authority spill contingency plans;
- has a role in building and maintaining the confidence of the wider public in IRCG's and the government's ability to manage effectively a response to a major marine pollution incident; and
- supports the IRCG's Operational Agreement with the CRU – see section 1.2.2.

1.6.2 National Maritime Pollution Response Committee (NMPRC)

The National Maritime Pollution Response Committee provides strategic coordination, guidance and leadership for the implementation and review of this NCP. It will meet on an annual basis and for consideration as the situation requires.

It is chaired by a representative of the IRCG. The members of the Committee are drawn from the primary stakeholders (i.e. the Principal Response Agencies under the MEM Framework), as well as representatives from supporting governmental bodies as identified by IRCG. The objectives of the Committee are to:

- review the performance and adequacy of the NCP and make recommendations to the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport on how the NCP can be enhanced in line with emerging demands, technology and other factors;

- promote effective and efficient cooperation and coordination amongst the various Government Departments, emergency services and other organisations including military, voluntary and statutory bodies for the provision of an effective, efficient and safe marine pollution preparedness and response, nationally and internationally;
- ensure international cooperation agreements are fit for purpose based on periodic reviews;
- ensure adequate mechanisms are in place to provide sufficient assurance in relation to safety and regulatory compliance of the key elements of the marine pollution preparedness and response system as described in this NCP;
- ensure that the MRT contains an appropriately trained and resourced personnel, as part of the incident command system (ICS) described in this Plan;
- ensure compatibility between this NCP and the MEM Framework; and
- report annually to the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport

1.6.3 Consultative National Maritime Pollution Response Forum

The National Maritime Pollution Response Consultative Forum is a group of external stakeholders, including private sector and non-

governmental organizations. This group is convened by the IRCG on an ad hoc basis but typically closely following meetings of the NMPRC. The Forum enables IRCG to consider feedback from non-statutory stakeholders concerning relevant issues arising from NMPRC's discussions and implementation of the NCP.

1.6.4 Structure of this NCP

This NCP is structured to reflect the process of a Tier 3 response:

- response preparation;
- response initiation;
- response operations;
- response termination and demobilisation; and
- post-response.

1.6.5 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

This NCP is supported by a variety of SOPs (identified throughout the Plan and listed in section 7). These provide:

- guidance for the application of specific response arrangements detailed within the Plan;
- advice on specific technical issues; and
- explanations of how to undertake specific activities in a response.

2 RESPONSE PREPARATION

2.1 PURPOSE OF THIS SECTION

This section outlines the response arrangements and policies that are in place in preparation for a response to a Tier 3 spill in Ireland.

2.2 CAPABILITY – MAINTENANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

In preparation for a response, IRCG maintains capability across the techniques, personnel, and equipment needed for an effective Tier 3 response. IRCG has also developed relationships with other parties at national and international levels for the provision of additional support and specialised pollution services.

2.2.1 Response techniques – policy statement

It is Ireland's policy that no recognised marine pollution response technique should be ruled out or limited in advance, except for the use of non-approved oil spill control agents.

2.2.2 Net environmental benefit

The response technique(s) identified in spill contingency plans, and utilised in case of pollution incidents, will be chosen with primary consideration to:

- ensure the safety and health of responders, maritime users and the wider community; and
- minimise the overall damage to the ecology and socio-economic activities within the affected or threatened area.

Those developing plans or responding to incidents should utilise net environmental benefit analysis (NEBA) or spill impact mitigation assessment (SIMA) to aid the choice of response techniques. NEBA / SIMA are the process of weighing the advantages and disadvantages of taking a response action, including recognising the likely outcomes if the action is not taken (the impact with no intervention). The result will

determine whether the proposed response action(s) will have a likely net (overall) beneficial or detrimental outcome.

2.2.3 Oil spill control agents

Prohibition of the discharge into the sea of any prescribed substance does not apply, if it is for the purpose of minimising the damage from pollution, provided that the discharge was sanctioned by or on behalf of the Minister³⁰. Therefore, oil spill control agents (including dispersants) can only be used in Irish waters with the authorization of the IRCG, acting on behalf of the Minister, and only approved agents can be used. Further information is contained in *SOP 03-2020: Standard operating procedure on oil spill control agents*.

This SOP also outlines IRCG's framework to reach and document dispersant-use decisions. Any consideration of dispersant use in contingency plans should follow the procedures described in this SOP.

Oil dispersant cannot be used without authorisation unless it is deemed that the immediate situation requires its use to prevent, or reduce substantially, hazards to human life and to reduce substantially explosion or fire hazards. Where any dispersant is used in such circumstances, the IRCG and Petroleum Affairs Division of DCCAE (if an offshore operator) are to be informed immediately.

2.2.4 Response personnel

Personnel involved in a spill response can come from:

- the party responsible for the pollution, including a ship or facility owner/operator and their advisors;

³⁰ See Section 11(c) of the Sea Pollution Act 1991, as amended

- harbours affected;
- local authorities affected;
- IRCG;
- other relevant government bodies;
- representatives from other States, facilitated through bi-lateral or multi-lateral agreement;
- oil spill response contractors; and
- volunteers, including the IRCG network.

The Maritime Response Team (MRT), led by the IRCG, will provide either oversight and support or command and control as determined by the scale and needs of the incident.

2.2.5 Response equipment

Ports, offshore units, oil/HNS facility and local authorities are expected to maintain equipment capability commensurate with their Tier 1 and Tier 2 pollution risks. A national capability has been established to supplement response in the case of major incidents.

National equipment stockpile

IRCG maintains a national stockpile of oil spill response equipment. The principal stockpile is situated in Blanchardstown, just outside Dublin and two smaller stockpiles are maintained in Killybegs and Castletownbere, as shown in Figure 4. The stockpiles are wholly owned by IRCG and can be drawn upon by Local and Harbour Authorities. The equipment is intended for use in Ireland but may be offered abroad to assist other States, through established international co-operation mechanisms.



Figure 4: IRCG equipment stockpile locations

Contractor support

IRCG has contractual arrangements in place to call on additional dispersant, specialised response equipment and technical support / advice.

European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA)

EMSA has one of its network of Standby Oil Spill Response Vessels (OSRVs) based in Cobh, Ireland. Other vessels cover the rest of Ireland. Additionally, EMSA maintains an Equipment Assistance Service (EAS) consisting of stockpiles of stand-alone oil pollution response equipment. Following a request for assistance, the maximum time for the mobilization of equipment (i.e. equipment loaded on trailers and ready to be shipped) is 12 hours, excluding the transit time. The requesting party may choose one or multiple equipment sets from those available through the EAS. In addition to the equipment, the requesting party can also hire technical support personnel to assist in the equipment handover and familiarization process.

Additional international arrangements

The Bonn Agreement between the North Sea States, Ireland and European Union (EU)

facilitates cooperation to large maritime disasters and other emergencies.

The EU has available its Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC). This Centre coordinates the delivery of assistance, such as expertise and civil protection teams and specialised equipment. The Centre ensures the rapid deployment of emergency support and acts as a coordination hub between participating states, the affected country, and civil protection experts.

The IMO can coordinate requests for assistance under the OPRC Convention.

HNS response

Ireland can contract specialised capability for response to maritime pollution involving hazardous and noxious substances.

EMSA's chemical pollution response services offer support to requesting parties in their decision-making process during an emergency, by rapidly providing expert information and advice on specific chemical substances.

EMSA, in close cooperation with the European Chemical Industry Council (Cefic) and the Centre of Documentation, Research and Experimentation on Accidental Water Pollution (Cedre) has established a network of experts (MAR-ICE network).

The MAR-ICE network offers rapid access (via email or telephone) to a chemical expert who can provide product and incident-specific information and expert advice within 1 hour of the request and more detailed information shortly thereafter. The information provided includes:

- relevant substance-specific documentation;
- additional expert advice on specific product properties and hazards through direct contact with a knowledgeable chemical company;
- risk assessment for responders and the environment;

- drift and weathering modelling results, indicating areas potentially impacted by the released chemical; and
- advice on response methods and options.

The Marine Chemical Information Sheets (MAR-CIS) provide concise, substance-specific and maritime relevant information on chemicals. The information is designed to assist competent authorities during the initial stage of the response to maritime incidents involving such substances. The information sheets have been made available to the IRCG and can also be provided through the MAR-ICE network.

MAR-CIS information sheets have been developed for >200 chemical substances. The information categories covered includes:

- substance identification, including physical and chemical properties;
- shipping information (maritime transportation codes, GESAMP profile);
- hazards and risks (health hazards, environmental hazards, substance intrinsic hazards); and
- emergency measures (health measures, response measures, environmental protection measures).

The IMO has also published guidance on HNS response through its Manual on Chemical Pollution³¹.

³¹ Available from: <http://www.imo.org/en/Publications>
 Part 1: *Problem Assessment and Response Arrangements*
 Part 2: *Search and Recovery of Packaged Goods Lost at Sea*
 Part 3: *Legal and Administrative Aspects of HNS Incidents*

2.3 OIL AND HNS POLLUTION EMERGENCY PLANS

The legal framework described in section 1.3 mandates a comprehensive system for oil and

HNS pollution, whereby the provisions of key international instruments are addressed. These arrangements are shown in simplified and schematic form in Figure 5.

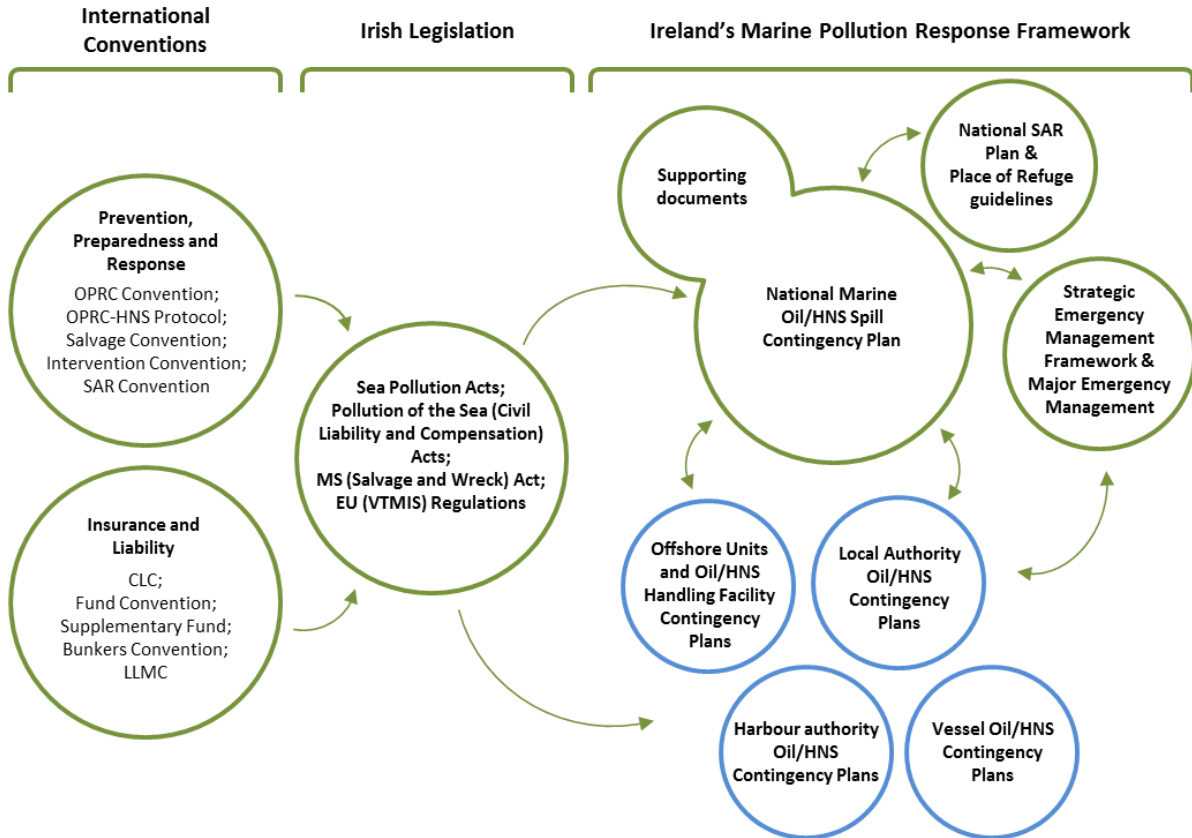


Figure 5: Overview of Ireland's arrangements for marine pollution

A key element in this system is the development of oil and/or HNS pollution contingency plans under the national framework, shown in blue in Figure 5. The following must have in place oil and/or HNS pollution contingency plans³²:

- harbour authorities;
- operators of offshore units or oil/HNS handling facilities;
- masters, or such other persons as may have charge, of:

- Irish ships³³;
- ships registered in a country which is party to the OPRC Convention and OPRC-HNS Protocol;
- ships registered in a country which is not party to the OPRC Convention and OPRC-HNS Protocol, as required by regulations;
- coastal local authorities

Local authority requirements to develop a plan are at the discretion of the Minister of Transport,

³² See Sections 2 and 3 of the Sea Pollution (Amendment) Act 1999, as amended

³³ 'Ships' means an oil tanker >150 gross tons and other vessels >400 gross tons (same in subsequent bullets)

Tourism and Sport. Implementing the Minister's discretion, IRCG wrote to all coastal local authorities in 2004, requiring that they should develop and submit such plans to IRCG. The focus of local authority plans is on dealing with potential oil or HNS pollution which may directly affect their seashore.

Response to seashore pollution can raise inter-related issues, including community safety, ecological and socio-economic impacts, clean-up activities, waste management, wildlife care and intense public and media interest.

In order to ensure a coordinated approach between local authorities, IRCG and the Principal Response Agencies and others, a Protocol³⁴ has been developed under the Framework for Major Emergency Management (MEM). This Protocol fosters cooperation between the key organisations. The local authorities' pollution emergency plans should reference this Protocol and integrate with their broader emergency planning.

All pollution emergency plans should address Tier 1 and Tier 2 scenarios relevant to their geographic and operational scope. They should include procedures for the escalation to Tier 3, including integration with the national response framework explained within this document.

To facilitate the development, consistency and review of pollution emergency plans (also known as oil/HNS spill contingency plans), *SOP 05-2020: Standard operating procedure on the content and implementation of an oil/HNS spill contingency plan* has been produced by IRCG.

2.3.1 Ship-to-ship transfer

Ship-to-ship (STS) transfer operations should normally take place in a port/harbour authority area, where suitable infrastructure and port services are in place and oil spill contingency plans exist to deal with incidents.

³⁴ Multi-Agency Protocol (7), Land based response to marine emergencies

Transfer of ship's stores, cargo or oil to or from a ship in a place in the State (not being a harbour), including the EEZ, can only be carried in accordance with a permit granted by the Minister³⁵. The Minister may, upon an application being made by the owner, charterer, hirer or master of a ship, grant a permit to the applicant allowing the transfer to or from the ship concerned of ships stores, cargo or oil outside a harbour. This function is carried out by Authorised officers of IRCG.

STS permit will be considered subject to environmental and habitat assessments and adequate contingency plans being in place.

2.3.2 Wrecks

If a wreck poses a threat of harm to the marine environment or to related interests, the owner of a wreck shall as soon as possible raise and remove it or otherwise render it harmless. If a harbour authority, local authority or the Commissioners of Irish Lights is of the opinion that the wreck is or is likely to become such a threat to the environment, they shall serve a notice on the owner requiring the owner to raise and remove or otherwise render harmless the wreck³⁶.

Notwithstanding this, the IRCG retains powers to protect the marine environment and coastline in relation to maritime casualties under the Sea Pollution Act 1991. Under these powers, IRCG will require any salvor of a wreck to develop pollution contingency plan, which will be subject to IRCG approval prior to undertaking operations. The plans should include an assessment of pollution risk and associated mitigation measures.

³⁵ See Section 12 of the Sea Pollution (Amendment) Act 1999

³⁶ See Section 51 of the Merchant Shipping (Salvage and Wreck) Act, 1993

2.4 TRAINING AND EXERCISES

The implementation of a training and exercise programme is a required under regulation³⁷. The IRCG has responsibility to:

- manage the development and training of personnel from the Maritime Response Team (MRT) port authority and local authority, through the provision of National OPRC and National HNS training courses, seminars and workshops; and
- in conjunction with other bodies, develop and resource a programme of multi-agency exercises to test validity and applicability of national and regional response plans.

The IRCG maintains a *National Register of Pollution Response Training and Exercises* and summarises this in their Annual Reports. Holders of harbour and local authority oil spill contingency plans are expected to report their training and exercise activities to the IRCG annually, for inclusion in the National Register.

Other plan holders, such as operators of oil/HNS handling facilities and offshore units, are expected to attain at least the level of training and exercises as stipulated in *SOP 05-2020: Standard operating procedure on the content and implementation of an oil/HNS spill contingency plan*.

2.5 ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

Monitoring of oil or HNS spills may be required in order to understand risks and impacts to the marine ecosystem and commercial resources. Furthermore, monitoring can gather the data necessary to establish the effectiveness of the response operations and any subsequent actions taken to mitigate impacts or promote recovery.

It is important that scientifically robust approaches, methods, and processes are considered in developing a monitoring plan, so

that it can be implemented in a prompt and cost-effective manner.

There are obligations under the European Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) to evaluate the marine environment to ensure contaminants are at levels not giving rise to pollution effects. This includes assessment of significant acute pollution events involving polluting substances³⁸, including crude oil and similar compounds. This assessment must consider:

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| Primarily | The spatial extent and duration of significant acute pollution events are minimised. |
| Secondarily | The adverse effects of significant acute pollution events on the health of species and on the condition of habitats are minimised and, where possible, eliminated. |

The assessment of this secondary element is directly linked to the aftermath of an acute pollution event having implications for the levels of monitoring and assessment around species and habitats impacted.

The monitoring carried out for European Directives³⁹ may provide essential baseline data to assist in determining the impact of a spill event and the conditions which need to be reached to determine recovery.

The requirement for, and extent of, environmental monitoring will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

³⁷ See Section 8(2)(b) and (c) of the Sea Pollution (Amendment) Act 1999

³⁸ Commission Decision (EU) 2017/848

³⁹ 2008/56/EC, 2000/60/EC (Water Framework), 92/43/EEC (Habitats) and 2009/147/EC (Birds)

3 RESPONSE INITIATION

3.1 PURPOSE OF THIS SECTION

This section describes how a pollution incident should be reported and when a Tier 3 response might be initiated.

3.2 POLLUTION REPORTING

The master of a ship and a person in charge of an offshore unit or an oil/HNS handling facility are required⁴⁰ to report immediately all oil/HNS spills, or the observation of such pollution, to either the IRCG or the harbour-master, if inside harbour limits. The harbour-master will subsequently inform the IRCG in the latter case.

In the case of offshore units, the operator shall also inform, without delay, the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU)⁴¹ using the Petroleum Incident Notification (PIN) Form and the Petroleum Affairs Division (PAD) of DCCAE.

Local authorities or the aviation authority may receive reports of marine or coastal pollution from the public or civil aircraft pilots respectively. They will pass these to IRCG. Figure 6 shows the routes for pollution reporting.

3.3 INCIDENT APPRAISAL

IRCG maintains 24/7 operational and communications capability through the Marine Rescue and Coordination Centre (MRCC) and Marine Rescue Sub Centres (MRSC). This is an integral part of the Maritime Assistance Service (MAS) for Ireland.

Pollution reports received by MRCC or MSRC will be appraised by the Station Officer. This will trigger various potential actions:

- further information may be sought to verify or clarify the details of the reported incident;
- activation of IRCG's internal assessment and notification procedures;
- the need for a national response will be assessed; and
- national resources may be mobilised.

3.4 ESTABLISHING RESPONSE LEVEL

Based on the appraisal, the IRCG identifies the scale of the incident and whether it is necessary to initiate a national (Tier 3) response. There are no rigid criteria for triggering Tier 3 and the decision invariably involves discussions with other bodies and local authorities.

Further details on the appraisal process and IRCG's procedures as available in *SOP 01-2020: Standard operating procedure for assessment and notification of a pollution incident*.

In some cases, where the scale of the incident is not formally regarded as Tier 3, the IRCG can mobilise support from national resources. This could include incidents where a local authority or harbour master requests specific expertise or equipment to supplement a Tier 2 response.

⁴⁰ See Section 7 of the Sea Pollution (Amendment) Act 1999

⁴¹ See Section 13S of the Electricity Regulation Act 1999, as amended by Section 15 of the Petroleum (Exploration and Extraction) Safety Act 2015

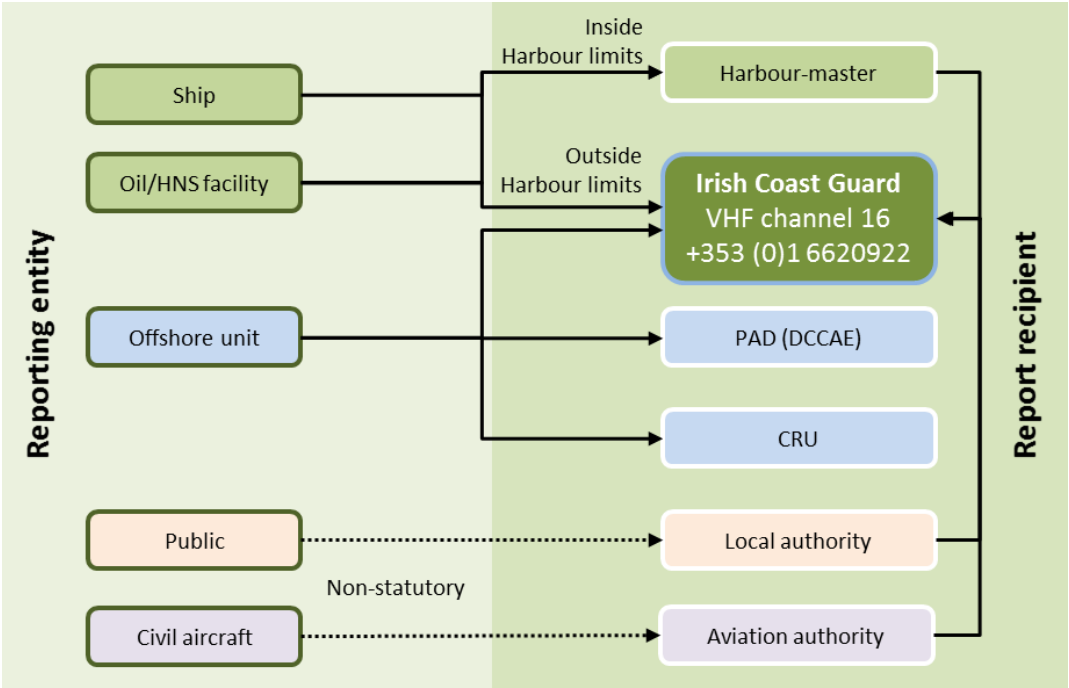


Figure 6: Pollution reporting routes

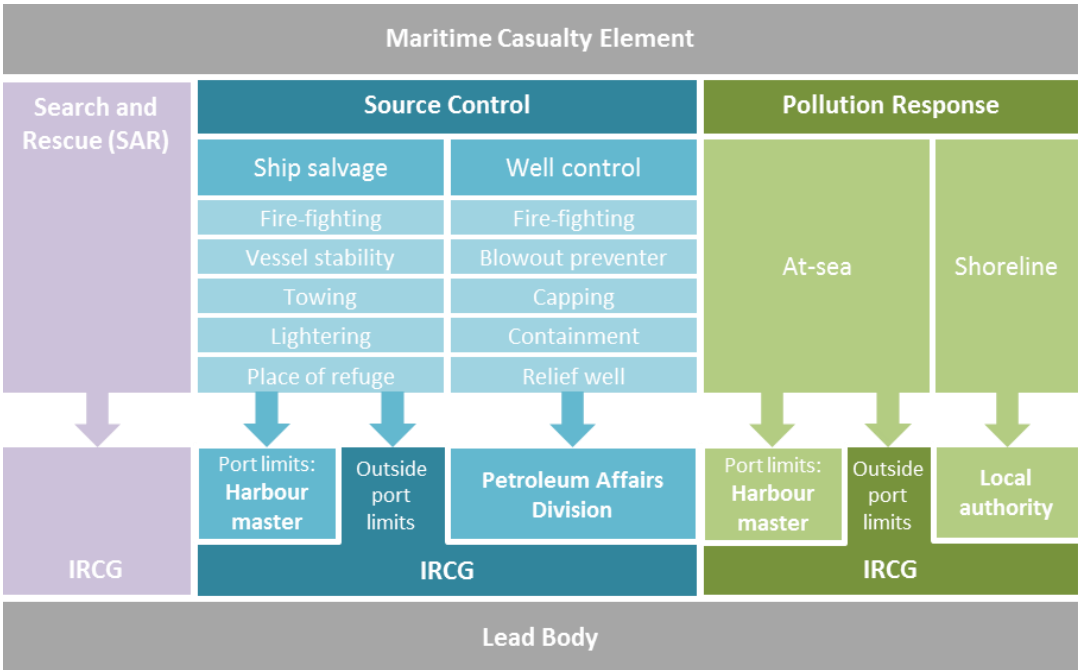


Figure 7: Potential elements of a maritime casualty and related lead bodies

3.5 INITIATION OF A NATIONAL (TIER 3) RESPONSE

It is unlikely that a maritime incident of national significance will only involve pollution. The response will almost certainly bring together several different disciplines. Figure 7 indicates the potential elements of maritime casualty and the associated lead bodies. Several of these bodies and other organisations will likely need to cooperate and coordinate their actions. In all maritime casualties and across all elements, the IRCG retains a key role in either leading the response or providing oversight and support.

The Maritime Response Team (MRT) will consider all elements of the casualty and apportion priorities and resources, including pollution response, in relation to the specific needs of the incident.

If the IRCG Operations Section Head or the Station Officer (out of office hours) decides that it is appropriate for IRCG to act in response to significant marine pollution, the IRCG Deputy Director or Director is informed. At this point the incident becomes a Tier 3 and will be responded to in accordance with this National Plan. A Tier 3 incident will likely also be considered a major emergency under the framework for MEM.

3.6 POWERS OF IRCG

Section 1.3.2 list the key powers delegated to Authorised Officers of the IRCG under various legislation. These include:

3.6.1 Intervention powers

Authorised Officers can give directions for the purpose of preventing, mitigating or eliminating danger from pollution or threat of pollution by oil or HNS⁴².

⁴² See Section 26 of the Sea Pollution Act 1991, as amended

3.6.2 Ships in need of assistance

The IRCG Director is designated as the competent authority with the powers⁴³ to take independent decisions concerning the accommodation of ships in need of assistance.

These powers of intervention allow IRCG to take control of a marine casualty and to make decisions which will reduce impacts on the marine environment. Measures can include directing a ship's movements, sending an evaluation team on board and requiring the vessel to go to a Place of Refuge and that the harbour authority, or local authority accept the place of refuge identified. The *SOP 06-2020: Standard operating procedure on Places of Refuge Decision-Making* provides further details.

3.6.3 Inspection powers

Authorised Officers can enter a facility or ship, make inspections and carry out such tests, including the monitoring and assessment of the effects on the marine environment, of any oil pollution incident or a pollution incident by hazardous and noxious substances⁴⁴.

⁴³ See Section 22 of the European Communities (VTMIS) Regulations 2010 (S.I. No. 573/2010)

⁴⁴ Section 22 of the Sea Pollution (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006

4 RESPONSE OPERATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This section explains response operations for a Tier 3 incident, including establishing the Maritime Response Team (MRT).

4.2 STRATEGIC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

4.2.1 National Emergency Coordination Group

The National Emergency Coordination Group (NECG) is the central Government platform established as part of the response to a threatened or ongoing national-level emergency.

It is convened by the Office of Emergency Planning (OEP), Department of Defence, at the request of the relevant Lead Government Department (LGD) and is chaired by the Minister or a senior official of that Department.

In the case of a maritime emergency, DTTAS / IRCG would be the LGD. The National Emergency Co-ordination Centre (NECC) may be activated by OEP at their facility in Agriculture House, Dublin, to house and support the NECG, depending on the scale and demands of the incident.

This provides the mechanism for strategic co-ordination of a national-level response and facilitates linking with the regional and local response as appropriate.

4.3 ESTABLISHING THE MARITIME RESPONSE TEAM (MRT)

The MRT will be led by the IRCG Deputy Director, Operations Section Head or another suitable person, taking on the role of Incident Commander. They will designate response personnel commensurate with the scale and needs of the incident. The MRT will usually work from the National Maritime Operations Centre (NMOC).

4.3.1 National Maritime Operations Centre

Most Tier 3 pollution responses will be one element of a significant maritime incident as described in section 3.5 and depicted in Figure 7. The required tactical and operational coordination, management and oversight will typically be established at the National Maritime Operations Centre (NMOC) which comprises the Marine Emergency Room (MER) and the immediately adjacent Marine Rescue and Coordination Centre (MRCC) in IRCG's Dublin headquarters. However, these functions can also be performed at a remote Marine Rescue Sub Centre (MRSC) or suitably equipped port operations room if the circumstances and geography of the incident favour this.

SOP 02-2020: Standard operating procedure for the establishment and operation of the Incident Command System (ICS) provides guidance on setting up and running the facility.

4.3.2 MRT structure and process

The structure and process used by the MRT are based on the Incident Command System⁴⁵, incorporating Command, Operations, Planning, Logistics and Finance Sections to manage and coordinate activities. The basic organisation is shown in Figure 8, which also indicates how legal, safety, public information and external liaison officers support the Command function.

The structure will be flexible in terms of the numbers of people and roles, depending on the nature of the incident and the phase of the response. The Incident Commander can determine the number of required positions and personnel.

The roles and responsibilities of all MRT positions, as well as an indicative response

⁴⁵ See IMO's guidance document on the Implementation of an Incident Management System

structure, are available in *SOP 02-2020: Standard operating procedure for establishment and operation the Incident Command System (ICS)*.

4.3.3 MRT responsibilities

The MRT is responsible for:

- ensuring response is undertaken safely and techniques are chosen and deployed to minimise the overall ecological and socio-economic damage;
- coordinating the release of equipment from national stockpiles;
- providing an overview of the response in terms of identifying possible problems and bottlenecks that might arise;
- liaison with those undertaking SAR, source control and shoreline response actions;
- facilitating the provision of adequate financial resources to underwrite the response;
- identification and mobilization of international support as needed; and
- keeping the Minister of Transport, Tourism and Sport and the NECG (if established) apprised of the incident.

details the desired outcome and key tasks for the management of the spill response and the measures that will be taken to achieve the outcome.

A template for an IAP is provided in *SOP 02-2020: Standard operating procedure for establishment and operation the Incident Command System (ICS)*. The Planning section is responsible for facilitating and coordinating the preparation of the IAP, supported by the other Sections as necessary. The incident command is responsible for its approval.

4.4.1 Planning cycle

The planning cycle shown in Figure 9 depicts movement through a progression of activities to proactively respond to the incident. It is designed as a process for the MRT, enabling them to take the overall incident objectives and break them down into tactical assignments for each operational period. Further information is provided in the *Standard operating procedure for the development of an Incident Action Plan*.

4.4 DEVELOPING AN INCIDENT ACTION PLAN (IAP)

Each response requires a specific incident action plan (IAP) tailored to the incident. The IAP

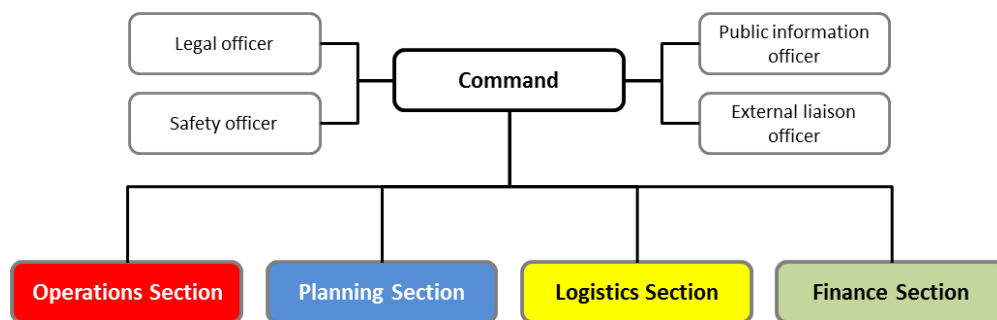


Figure 8: Basic organisation of the Maritime Response Team

4.5 CLEAN-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

Whilst the IRCG retains powers of oversight and direction for all marine pollution, the responsibility for coordinating and managing

response and clean-up operations falls to different entities, depending on the location and sources of the pollution. Table 2 describes how these responsibilities are allocated. The responsibilities are reflected in the requirements

for the development of oil/HNS pollution emergency plans, as described in section 2.3.

It is therefore expected that the relevant entity (operator or harbour/local authority) will make the initial response and establish a suitable coordination and management structure. The use of an incident management system akin to that used in this NCP will facilitate the integration of national capability, in case a tier 3 incident is initiated.

4.5.1 Shoreline response

When the threat of or actual pollution on the shoreline exceeds the capability of the most affected local authority, and IRCG will initiate a national (Tier 3) response, and the local authority

(or authorities) sets up a Shoreline Response Centre (SRC). Each local authority's own contingency plan should specify how to set up the SRC in the light of its own practices and organisation.

These plans should also contain the necessary authorizations by each local authority to enable the designated officer directing the SRC to take decisions on behalf of the other local authorities concerned.

Further information is contained in the SOP 04-2020: *Standard operating procedure on establishing a Shoreline Response Centre*.

Table 2: Clean-up responsibilities in relation to pollution location and source

Location of pollution			Clean-up responsibility
At sea	Outside port limits	Ship source	IRCG
		Offshore unit source	Operator
	Inside port limits	Ship source	Harbour Authority
		Oil or HNS handling facility source	Operator
Jetties, wharves etc... plus shoreline owned by Harbour Authority			Harbour Authority
All other shorelines			Local Authority

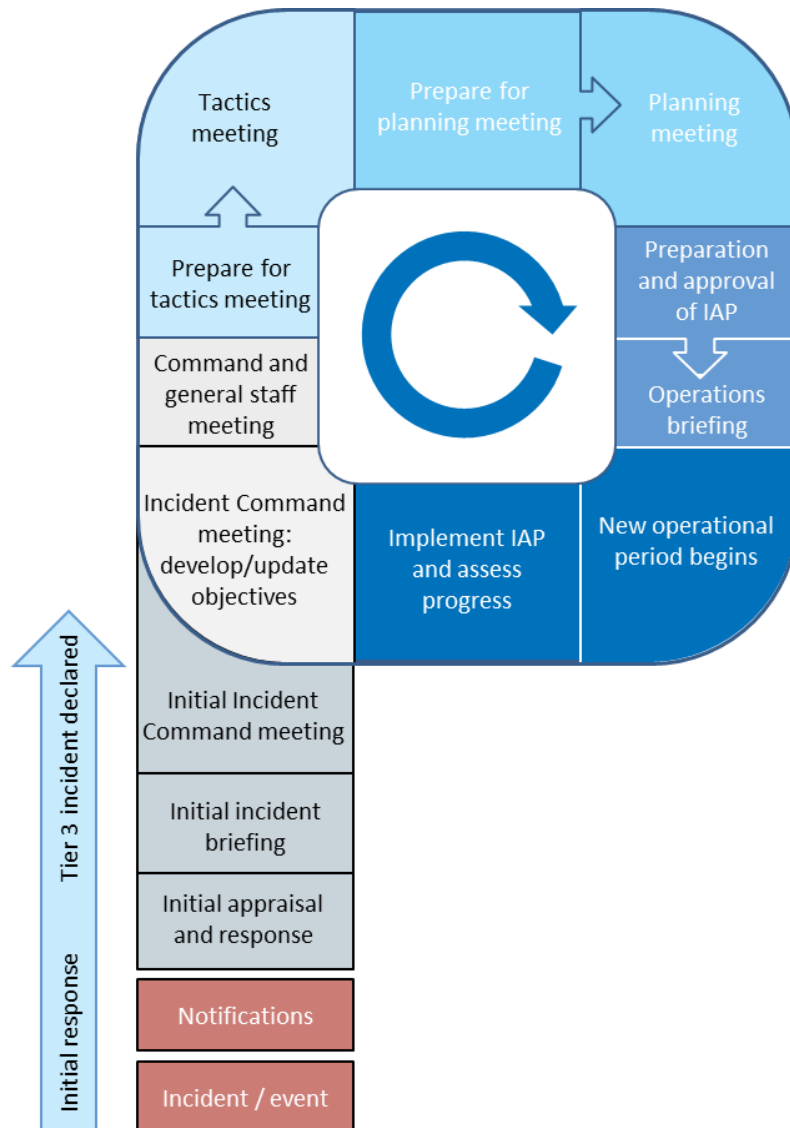


Figure 9: The planning cycle used for Tier 3 incidents

4.6 HEALTH AND SAFETY

The health and safety of people is paramount in responding to any marine pollution incident. The safety of responders and the public will supersede all other considerations.

All spill contingency plans are expected to address health and safety issues as their priority and ensure compliance with relevant legislation. In the case of a Tier 3 spill, health and safety procedures and protocols for the response will

be outlined in the Health and Safety Plan that is a component of the Incident Action Plan.

The IRCG will liaise with the Health Service Executive to mitigate and control risks to the local community or wider public during oil or HNS pollution incidents.

4.7 MEDIA RELATIONS

Good public communication is vital to the successful handling of any incident and should

be incorporated into all contingency planning. When a Tier 3 incident occurs, the key communication objective is to deliver accurate, clear and timely information and advice to the public.

In the case of a maritime casualty involving Tier 3 pollution and potentially other emergency elements, it is likely that the IRCG will front initial media enquiries, supported by the DTTAS media officers. However, depending on the circumstances, there may be a variety of other organisations also subjected to intense media interest and scrutiny:

- harbour authority;
- local authority;
- ship owner;
- offshore unit operator;
- oil/HNS handling facility operator; and
- other government departments, such as those with interests in environment, fisheries and waste management.

Interest will extend to international media outlets and garner worldwide coverage. Furthermore, social media can provide immediate global exposure, particularly where pollution is visible from the coast or stranded on shorelines. The reputation and perception of competence of the responding organisations, including government, can be positively influenced by open and effective public communication.

It is imperative that media communications are coordinated and aligned. This can be a significant challenge where multiple government bodies and other organisations are involved during an incident. This will require an expanded public information team to proactively release information and respond to enquiries.

The SEM framework provides access to broad governmental support and coordination through the NECG. The MEM Framework Guidance Document 5: A Guide to Working with the Media details common guidance to principal response agencies on the provision of information to the public and working with the media during Major Emergencies.

4.8 WILDLIFE RESPONSE

Oiled wildlife response can be a combination of activities that aim to minimise the impacts of an oil spill on wildlife (such as birds and mammals) by both prevention of oiling where possible and mitigating the effects on individuals when oiling has taken place. Response activities include the assessment of wildlife risks in time and space, real-time monitoring of the whereabouts of wildlife in relation to the oil, protection of nesting/haul-out sites, hazing and deterrence (scaring animals away from oil), pre-emptive capture and collection of un-oiled animals and their offspring/eggs, collection and analysis of corpses, euthanasia, rehabilitation of live oiled animals, their release to the wild and, finally, monitoring of post-release survival.

These activities are an integral part of the overall incident management and should be integrated within it. Spill contingency plans shall consider wildlife sensitivities and incorporate planning and procedures for mobilising wildlife expertise and the possible establishment of assessment, capture, cleaning and rehabilitation capability.

General principles include:

- ensuring health and safety of responders and general public are the priority of response;
- criteria and procedures for euthanasia and release, will be described in the national oiled wildlife response plan;
- activities always aim at meeting highest standards of animal welfare;
- euthanasia is used as a means of minimising animal suffering, in cases where rehabilitation does not apply; and
- in cases where rehabilitation is considered an option it should only be conducted if adequate set up can be provided, with reasonable expectation of minimised suffering and maximised post-release survival of treated animals.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) also has a key role in protection of wildlife and their habitats and in ensuring governmental engagement and endorsement of proposed actions related to this.

It is accepted that there may be many volunteers who wish to assist oiled wildlife; however, it is unsafe practice to have untrained personnel on or near a pollution impacted area or handling wildlife. Public communications should emphasise the risks and channel potential volunteers to official oiled wildlife operations. This will allow appropriate training and briefings or the allocation of roles involving non-hazardous supporting tasks.

The IRCG recognises the development of a European network of oiled wildlife response expertise⁴⁶ and acknowledges the potential expertise available through the volunteer Oiled Wildlife Response Network (OWRN) in Ireland.

4.9 WASTE MANAGEMENT

Pollution response and clean-up can result in a variety of waste streams, including hazardous material.

It can be challenging to minimise, segregate, store and dispose of waste from clean-up operations. In case of shoreline oiling, the volume of waste generated can be significant, even where good practices to minimise the collection of beach material are employed.

The priority should be placed on ensuring the identification of waste storage capacity, to allow continuation of clean-up operations that are generating the waste.

Harbour authority, operators of offshore units or oil/HNS handling facilities and coastal local authorities' spill contingency plans should address the potential waste management challenge and ensure the close involvement of the relevant local authority and the Environmental Protection Agency in planned storage and disposal routes. This will ensure compliance with the relevant waste management regulations.

4.10 TRAJECTORY MODELLING

Predicting the fate and trajectory of spilled oil or chemicals is an important part of assessing the

potential damage, the choice of combatting techniques, prioritising protection areas and the mobilization of response capability to suitable locations.

Licensed versions of the OILMAP and CHEMMAP models are available in the IRCG's MRCC and duty personnel are trained in their use.

OILMAP is an oil spill response and contingency planning tool that predicts the movement of spilled oil.

CHEMMAP is a chemical discharge modelling system that predicts the transport and fate of a wide variety of chemical substances in the marine environment and atmosphere.

4.11 SENSITIVITY MAPPING

Understanding sensitive ecological and socio-economic areas affected, or under threat, during a marine pollution incident is critical to response decision-making.

Various sources of mapped information are available to the IRCG, providing environmental sensitivity data:

- an Environmental Decision Support Tool Geographic Information System (GIS), covering ecological and socio-economic datasets available in the MRCC and MER;
- Ireland's Marine Atlas GIS, providing marine environmental data relevant to reporting under Ireland's Marine Strategy Framework Directive;
- A4-sized coastal oil spill sensitivity maps; available in hard copy in the Dublin MRCC; and
- operational booming plans for key sites around the coast, detailing the suggested equipment and deployments required for each site.

⁴⁶ See <http://www.oiledwildlife.eu/>

4.12 INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

A major maritime incident can exceed the capacity of national resources or require additional specialised equipment and expertise.

See section 2.2.5 for information on international support which may be available to Ireland. The IRCG has the authority to make requests for assistance from the international organisations listed.

4.13 INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Documentation is important for on-going incident management and for learning lessons to improve preparedness and to ensure efficient cost recovery from a polluter or their insurer.

During all incidents records must be kept of:

- all key communications (telephone conversations, emails, and file notes);
- all financial transactions and expenditure; and
- a chronological account of the incident.

Photographs and videos can also provide useful supporting information and their capture and filing are encouraged. This includes aerial surveillance and shoreline pollution/clean-up records.

IRCG may take samples to support investigations. Guidance on oil sampling and spill identification is provided in Chapter 32 of the Bonn Agreement Counter Pollution Manual⁴⁷.

4.14 VOLUNTEERS

It is acknowledged that in the case of a significant marine pollution incident, there may be volunteers offering to support the response effort.

In general, IRCG will not support the use of volunteers in direct clean-up operations. Oil and HNS pollution can present various hazards to personnel, as can working in the marine and shoreline environment. Volunteer use would raise serious challenges in relation to health and

safety, liabilities, provision of suitable personal protective equipment and training in clean-up activities.

It is recognized that volunteers may provide useful support to non-hazardous activities e.g. feeding stations or some aspects of oiled wildlife care. Their use in these roles will be considered on a case by case basis.

⁴⁷ Available at: www.bonnagreement.org/publications

5 RESPONSE TERMINATION AND DEMOBILISATION

5.1 RESPONSE TERMINATION DECISION

5.1.1 At sea

The MRT's Incident Commander, with the consent of the IRCG Director or Assistant Director, can terminate the IRCG's marine pollution response. This decision will be made after considering whether the objectives of the response have been achieved, based on expert, on-scene and environmental advice.

Before seeking the termination of the response, the Incident Command will hold a meeting of all MRT managers and senior response staff. The purpose of this meeting is to determine whether the incident action plan's objectives have been achieved and the incident response has been adequately completed.

5.1.2 On shorelines

In cases of shoreline pollution that triggered Tier 3 response, the IRCG will support local or harbour authorities in making their decision to terminate clean-up activities. The use of Shoreline Clean-up Assessment Technique (SCAT) is encouraged as a systematic approach to collecting data on pollution conditions to support decision-making, including suitable clean-up techniques and endpoints for each beach.

5.2 RESPONSE TERMINATION ACTIVITIES

Response termination involves the:

- recovery, cleaning, and maintenance of all equipment used during the clean-up;
- demobilisation of all personnel involved in the response; and

- collation and completion of all documentation associated with the spill response, including expenditure reports.

Before response personnel depart their stations, they should attend a debriefing meeting with their Section supervisor. Section supervisors will then attend debriefings with their managers and/or the Incident Command ("hot debrief").

As part of the termination process, all Section managers in the MRT must compile their detailed events log, which is passed to Finance and Administration Section. The Finance and Administration Section is responsible for:

- the event history being compiled;
- costs being recovered;
- enforcement procedures being undertaken (if warranted); and
- post-incident ("cold") debriefs being arranged and run.

5.3 DEBRIEFING

A debrief of senior response staff and managers, externally facilitated and chaired, will be held following termination of the response. This will enable a review of the contingency plans utilised during the incident and will highlight areas where the response (and planning) could be improved. The MRT Planning Section is responsible for:

- arranging the time and venue of the debriefing; and
- informing senior response staff and managers, including representatives of supporting organisations, of such arrangements.

These senior response staff and managers are expected to attend the debriefing. Costs associated with attending the debriefing or completing debrief reports are part of overall incident response costs.

6 POST-RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This section discusses the two main post-response activities: cost-recovery and post-response reviews.

6.2 COST RECOVERY

Each government Department is responsible for co-ordinating post-response financial requirements associated with their involvement in any Tier 3 pollution response, including assessment of expenditures, documentation of response costs to support cost recovery, and engaging with government and external parties as appropriate in any associated claims process.

During major shipping incidents, it is expected that the shipowner, their insurers and, in a case that the limit of liability of an oil tanker is exceeded, the International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds (IOPC Funds) will work together to set a claims office. This office will receive and handle claims for compensation, including from government Departments and others who may be affected by the pollution.

In the case of pollution from offshore units and oil/HNS handling facilities, an analogous process is anticipated on behalf of the operator/owner.

EMSA has published the Claims Management Guidelines: Claims Arising due to Maritime Pollution Incidents. These Guidelines seek to assist EU Member States with the processes necessary to achieve a successful claim or cost recovery.

Furthermore, the IOPC Funds have published, and periodically updates⁴⁸, a Claims Manual as a practical guide to presenting claims against the 1992 Fund⁴⁹.

Both the EMSA and IOPC Funds publications provide practical advice on what information is needed, how it should be documented and the claims presentation process.

6.3 POST-RESPONSE REVIEWS

The IRCG Director will review a response to any pollution incident with a view to improving such responses in the future. Post response reviews will usually be conducted for all Tier 3 responses.

If a review is called for after an incident, the Director will advise the Minister of Transport, Tourism and Sport of his or her desire to establish an independent review panel and the panel's intended membership and terms of reference. The terms of reference should cover at least:

- the role of the Command;
- the effectiveness of the response and its management;
- results from environmental assessment and remediation;
- any necessary or recommended improvements to the Tier 3 national response system; and
- any necessary or recommended improvements to this NCP.

As part of the review process, the Director shall consult with whomever he or she considers appropriate.

⁴⁸ See www.iopcfunds.org for current version

⁴⁹ Ireland has ratified the 1992 Fund Convention

7 STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOPS)

A variety of standard operating procedures support the implementation of this NCP.

They are:

SOP 01-2020: Assessment and notification of a pollution incident

SOP 02-2020: Establishment and operation of the Incident Command System (ICS)

SOP 03-2020: Oil spill control agents

SOP 04-2020: Establishing a Shoreline Response Centre

SOP 05-2020: Content and implementation of an oil/HNS spill contingency plan

SOP 06-2020: Places of Refuge Decision-Making

Controlled document: The National Maritime Oil/HNS Spill Contingency Plan is a controlled document. Approval of reviews and amendments is by the Preparedness, Response and Planning Section of the Irish Coast Guard.

Feedback: If you have feedback about this document, send it to IRCGDIVISION@dtas.gov.ie, so it can be considered at the next review of this plan.

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