
SWEDEN – NATIONAL ORGANISATION

16.1 Legislation and areas of responsibility

16.1.1 The Civil Protection Act (2003) defines the different branches of society's rescue services and the responsibilities of each branch.

16.1.2 The Swedish Coast Guard has the responsibility for the maritime environmental protection, which includes the response to oil and other harmful substances in the territorial waters, the EEZ and in the larger lakes Vänern, Vättern and Mälaren.

16.1.3 The fire brigade of the respective municipality is responsible for response to oil and other harmful substances on beaches, in harbours and in inland waters. The municipalities are supervised and supported by the Swedish Rescue Services Agency.

16.1.4 The Civil Protection Act also states that for every response operation there shall be a Response Commander. This person is given extraordinary rights to take whatever measures may be necessary in order to save lives, property or the environment.

16.2 Response at sea - Swedish Coast Guard

Requirements and strategy

16.2.1 The requirements from the Government to the Coast Guard are that:

- measures to prevent the spreading of oil in an accident should be started within four hours of receiving notification of the accident;
- recovery operations should be started within eight hours;
- the Coast Guard should be capable of dealing with oil spills of up to 10 000 tons using national resources;
- response to chemical accident should be started within four hours;
- the Coast Guard should have sufficient capacity for international cooperation.

16.2.2 The response strategy and priorities are:

- as a first step, to stop the outflow of oil from the vessel;
- as a second step, to stop the spreading of oil on the water surface;
- as a third step, to recover the oil at sea before it has reached the coastal zone, the archipelago and the beaches.

Organisation

16.2.3 The Swedish Coast Guard is organised into a headquarters and four regional commands: North, East, South and West. There is also a separate flight command.

16.2.4 The headquarters is responsible for long-term planning, overall capacity and international cooperation (IMO, EU, HELCOM, the Bonn Agreement, the Copenhagen Agreement and EPPR/Arctic Council). The headquarters always has an officer on duty, for strategic decisions and for international cooperation.

16.2.5 Each of the four regions has a 24-hour command centre with officers on duty and a Response Commander immediately reachable. Each region has at least four units permanently at sea, of which one should be a specialised response unit.

16.2.6 In an operation, the Response Commander has overall responsibility for commanding for the entire response operation. The command at sea will be taken by an On-Scene Commander (OSC) and if chemicals other than oil are involved there will be an On Scene Commander/Emergency Responders (OSC/ER) appointed.

Resources

16.2.7 The Coast Guard has around 70 emergency responders, specially trained and equipped for diving, response to chemicals and fire-fighting on board.

16.2.8 The Coast Guard also has a special agreement with six municipal fire brigades along the coast in which each of the six brigades has agreed to assist the Coast Guard in an accident at sea with a team of six firemen. These firemen are specially trained for actions on board ships and for deployment from helicopter together with light equipment. Such a helicopter deployment should as soon as possible be assisted by a Coast Guard vessel with heavy equipment, such as hoses, foam, cooling capability and everything needed for a protracted operation.

16.2.9 The Coast Guard operates three surveillance aircrafts. For environmental surveillance and support in an oil spill situation, the aircraft are equipped with SLAR, IR/UV, FLIR, and camera equipment. They are also equipped with sampling buoys, which can be dropped in an oil spill in order to obtain a sample of the oil. The three aircraft have a total flying time of approximately 3500 hours per year (2004).

16.2.10 The main body of the resources for environmental response consists of twelve environmental response vessels, all equipped with built-in or cassette advancing systems (LORI/LAMOR). These vessels are also equipped with ordinary skimmers, pumps and containment booms, and have a storage capacity of up to 400 m³. The storage capacity can be extended with the help of rubber containers and barges.

16.2.11 For shallow water operations in the archipelago, there are twelve units equipped with brush-skimmers. These are designed for transportation by lorry or by aircraft/helicopter.

16.2.12 For rapid containment of oil, the Coast Guard has fifteen sea-trailers, each carrying 500 metres of booms, strategically allocated along the coastline. These sea-trailers are designed for lorry transportation to an appropriate port near the accident. The trailer can be launched into the water directly from the lorry and can be towed to the site at a speed of up to 30 knots.

16.2.13 The Coast Guard has approximately 16 000 metres of “Rolund high sea booms” and “Expandi” coastal booms”. The Coast Guard also has a number of skimmers, containers, and transfer pumps. For backup and assistance in an operation the Coast Guard has over thirty cutters and around sixty smaller workboats.

16.2.14 For chemical accidents, most of the response vessels have special air filters and an overpressure system which is used when operating in hazardous atmospheres, thus allowing the crew to work inside the ship without carrying gas masks etc.

16.3 Response on shore – Municipalities and Swedish Rescue Services Agency

The local fire brigades of the municipalities are required to have a certain capacity for beach cleaning and harbour spills. In the case of larger spills, the Swedish Rescue Services Agency has allocated two larger equipment stores at strategic locations. These stores support the local fire brigades with different types of beach protection and cleaning devices, such as light booms, tarpaulins, pumps, protective clothing, brushes and buckets.