

Spain – National Organisation

17.1 INTRODUCTION

17.1.1 Background

- Around 400 notifications are reported to the Spanish Authorities every year concerning acute oil and chemical discharges.
- Main sources for discharges are the petroleum industry ports, operations on ships and industry on land.
- The total length of the Spanish coastline (including islands) is about 8.000 km.
- Environmentally sensitive areas have been declared such as bird-nesting areas, marine reserves and natural parks in the coastline.
- High traffic density areas such as Finisterre and Tarifa Strait, and areas close to navigation lanes, pose great challenges for the national pollution contingency.
- The population of Spain is approximately 47 million.
- The area of mainland Spain is about 505.000 square kilometres.
- Spain provides pollution detection surveillance over an area of about 1.5 million km².

17.1.2 General description of national organisation and legislation

The national responsibility for dealing with acute pollution originating at sea rests at the Ministry of Development (Fomento) through the General Directorate of the Merchant Marine. The Spanish Maritime Safety Agency SASEMAR deals with the response actions operationally in the framework of the national contingency plans under the direction of the Maritime Authority. The national responsibility for dealing with pollution originated on land is the Ministry of Environment. The National Contingency Plan for Oil Pollution Response is presently under revision.

17.2 NATIONAL ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

17.2.1 Decision making levels and information flow

When response is at sea the command system is represented by the following levels:

- The Director General of the Merchant Marine (Head of the Spanish Maritime Authority)
- The Local Head of the Maritime Authority in the area of operations (Capitán Marítimo)
- The Head of the SASEMAR Centre involved
- The officer on duty (24h).

17.2.2 National organisation and tasks

The National Response System is currently under revision.

National organisation is based on levels of response. These levels are defined according to the lines given in the OPRC Convention.

Each level of response is organised under a Contingency Plan and the conditions for activation of each plan are defined in the National Response System.

The National Response System comprises two scenarios: maritime and coastline. Each of them has the contingency plans organised in levels. The levels are: National, Territorial and Local. In the National Response System there are provisions for the coordination between the different level contingency plans in each scenario.

17.2.3 Strategy for combating at sea

In general, mechanical recovery of oil pollution is the preferred option for oil pollution response at sea in Spanish waters. Chemical response (dispersants) can be considered on a case-by-case basis provided an environmental benefit analysis (NEBA) has identified dispersants as the best response option. However the decision to apply dispersants has to be issued specifically in response to the emergency by the high level authority in accordance with the contingency plan.

17.2.4 Strategy for combating on-shore

The strategy for selecting on-shore response methods are the environmental analysis and the impact of the response actions. Removal of the pollution should be exercised taking into account the possible negative effect of the cleaning method. Due to the great variety of environment types along the Spanish coastline and interests to be protected there is no general strategy for response. Each case should be treated on an individual basis and specific analyses and balances should be made in order to ascertain that the response actions are the best possible options on a case-by-case basis.

17.2.5 National resources

The main response capability is under the Spanish Maritime Safety Agency:

- 14 000 metres of harbour booms.
- 23 000 metres of coastal booms.
- 21 000 metres of ocean booms.
- 45 oil recovery devices.
- 7 multipurpose vessels with high bollard pull, on-board oil recovery equipment and storage.
- 6 strategic store bases, two of them with underwater operations response capability.
- 3 Remote Operating Vehicles for underwater operations. The maximum operating depth is 1000 metres.

In order to comply with the OPRC Convention, Ports and Terminals are being equipped with limited primary resources for first response level.