

## **FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY – NATIONAL ORGANISATION**

### **12. INFORMATION ON NATIONAL STRATEGIES, LEGISLATION, ORGANISATION, SHIPS, AIRCRAFT AND EQUIPMENT**

#### **12.1 INTRODUCTION**

The Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) has established a governmental system to deal with accidental marine disasters and pollution control. In accordance with the German constitution marine emergencies and grave marine pollution have to be managed by both the Federal Government and the five Federal Coastal States.

Thus, close co-operation was agreed between these parties to build up and improve the needed national capacity for marine pollution preparedness and response. Since 2003 the Central Command for Maritime Emergencies (CCME) staffed by federal and coastal states officers and headed by a federal chief of staff centralises the management of maritime accidents by planning, initiating and commanding all response activities.

#### **12.1.1 BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBATING OF SPILLS OF OIL AND HARMFUL SUBSTANCES**

The large Wadden Sea area off the German coastline with highly sensitive regions in the North Sea and the shallow waters regions (called “Bodden Sea”) in the Baltic are key factors for a wide-ranging contingency planning dealing with marine pollution. Therefore German authorities have launched a comprehensive procurement programme to complete and improve the national ability to respond effectively against marine pollution at sea and along the shoreline. It started in 1977 with *oil* spill response equipment and included:

- prevention measures;
- recovery and clean-up techniques;
- remediation of contaminated sensitive coastal areas.

Taking into account the results of a comprehensive research and development programme of the Federal Minister for Research and Technology, more than 200 million Euro have been spent for specialised recovery vessels and equipment, surveillance airplane, studies, etc. to improve the national capabilities to respond to pollution at sea and within the coastline.

#### **12.1.2 GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF NATIONAL ORGANISATION AND LEGISLATION**

According to the provisions of an administrative agreement 2003, counter pollution measures are a matter of joint responsibility of the Federal Government and of the five Federal Coastal States bordering the North Sea and the Baltic Sea. Counter pollution measures are conducted within above described responsibilities of the CCME representing the Federal Government and the Federal Coastal States concerned or threatened by the pollution.

The Federal Ministry of Transport has established a Maritime Emergency Reporting and Assessment Centre (MLZ) at Cuxhaven for information, verification, assessment and notification of especially severe marine accidents and spillages. The MLZ is empowered to initiate investigations on the nature and extent of notified pollution, e.g. by aerial reconnaissance.

The reporting centre informs the on-duty-officers of the CCME and the information centers of the threatened Federal Coastal States concerned, in case further preparatory activities as response to the incident are deemed necessary. If there is a risk of a considerable spillage or, if one of the representatives of the coastal states requests CCME to take over the command in a response operation, the CCME must convene and take over the overall management and control of sea *and* land based clean-up activities.

## 12.2 RESPONSIBILITIES

The aforementioned administrative agreement between the Federal Government represented by the Federal Ministry of Transport and the five Federal Coastal States forms the basis for the Marine Spill and Casualty Response Organisation in Germany and for the responsibilities of the individual parties.

The Central Command for Maritime Emergencies has to update the German response strategy and to maintain the best possible preparedness for pollution response within and outside of the territorial waters. The section of the Federal Government is especially competent for oil spill control on the high sea; the section of the five Coastal States is responsible within the coastal area, the Wadden Sea and also for beach cleaning.

### 12.2.1 DECISION MAKING LEVELS AND INFORMATION FLOW

The staff organisation of the Central Command for Maritime Emergencies must be immediately established in case of major accidents to initiate counter pollution measures. This team has to:

- set priorities for the general strategy;
- select vessels and equipment;
- advise the respective local authorities to minimise the pollution; and
- co-ordinate all measures taken.

The staff of the CCME should co-operate with the polluter, the insurance companies and/or P&I-Clubs about the measures taken in order to avoid refusal of claims for unreasonable clean-up costs.

### 12.2.2 EXECUTION OF RESPONSE ACTIONS

The individual recovery operations on site will be performed either by the locally responsible Federal Waterway and Shipping Board and/or by those local boards of the five Coastal States, which are responsible for water quality, beach cleaning, etc. in the respective area.

Other organisations (navy, salvage companies, tank ship owners etc.) will be asked for assistance, if necessary. Agreements on details of technical support between the Federal waterway and shipping administration and the aforementioned institutions have been made as part of the wide-ranging national contingency planning.

### 12.2.3 STRATEGY FOR COMBATING MARINE POLLUTIONS AT SEA

At sea priority is given to *mechanical* recovery. The use of chemical dispersants could be considered if this method is to be applied outside of the shallow coastal regions and this response should be regarded as the last resort, if no other counter-actions succeed. The attitude to dispersants remains very restrictive. Their use, therefore, is limited to exceptional situations. In the Baltic Sea dispersant spraying is almost prohibited. As a general rule the use of dispersants is not recommended within isobath - 20 m. Recommendations for the use of these products comprise the following general principles:

- no dispersants in shallow waters (Wadden Sea) or in locations with limited water exchange (Baltic Sea);
- elsewhere, in order to minimise damage risk, the use of dispersants may be justified when the consequences of chemical treatment are considered less serious than the consequences of leaving the oil untreated.

An annual exercise and education programme includes all response vessels and their crews. Ten exercise days are scheduled for all response vessels, in order to keep the national preparedness on a high level. Bilateral marine pollution plans have been agreed with the neighbouring countries Denmark and The Netherlands. Similar arrangements exist in the Baltic Sea with Sweden.

### 12.2.4 STRATEGY FOR COMBATING SHORELINE POLLUTION AND RESTORATION

The national contingency plan contains provisions for all parties involved in a major spill disaster. It includes the procedures and measures of co-ordination and co-operation between the Federal Government/Federal Coastal States, their authorities and the private sector involved in counter pollution activities. Special plans -

including sensitivity maps for protection and response in sensitive zones (mainly the Wadden Sea) - facilitate response decisions to be taken by the CCME.

Computerised models of pollutant movements/spreading cover the North Sea, the German Bight (operational numerical model), the Wadden Sea and the Baltic. They are used for preparation of defence lines at the shoreline but also for the identification of potential polluters (track back mode).

### **12.2.5 RESOURCES FOR DEALING WITH OIL AND CHEMICAL POLLUTION**

Thirty response vessels (21 recovery vessels and 9 support units) can be mobilised within two hours after alert. The national clean-up capacity should be sufficient to cope with a spontaneous outflow of 15.000 m<sup>3</sup> crude oil within 24-48 hours off the German coastline, provided that the meteorological and local conditions do not prevent mechanical recovery. Four major response vessels - 1 hopper dredger and 4 buoy-tender vessels - are permanently on patrol at sea, in order to minimise spreading in the initial spill phase. In addition, two aircraft equipped with advanced electronic sensor devices are used for regular aerial surveillance and the positioning of response units to achieve a higher efficiency of oil recovery.

### **12.2.6 OTHER INFORMATION**

**Notification** in case of marine pollution should be sent to:

Maritimes Lagezentrum Cuxhaven (MLZ)  
Am Alten Hafen 2  
D-27472 Cuxhaven  
GERMANY

Tel: +49 4721 567 485 / 567 392

Fax: +49 4721 554 744 / 745

Email: mlz@havariekommando.de

which is on duty 24 hours per day.

#### **National contact point – Inquiries**

Name: Havariekommando – Gemeinsame Einrichtung des Bundes und der Küstenländer  
Central Command for Maritime Emergencies (CCME)  
Section 2 Maritime and Marine Pollution Emergencies

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Name: Havariekommando – Gemeinsame Einrichtung des Bundes und der Küstenländer  
Central Command for Maritime Emergencies  
Section 3 Marine Pollution Response Coastal

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Section 2 is responsible for response operations at sea and Section 3 is responsible for clean up activities close to the shoreline and on beaches, in salt marshes etc.