



SPILL NOTIFICATION POINT

Centre Operationel du Taaone - COT Papeete Tahiti	Tel: +689-426501 ext. 2432(24hrs) Fax: +689-423915
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COMPETENT NATIONAL AUTHORITY

Contact details are as for the Spill Notification Point.

RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS

The Republic of France is represented in French Polynesia by a High Commissioner, stationed in Papeete, Tahiti, who is also the designated head of the pollution response organisation. The organisation involves three principal agencies, the Civil Protection Agency (Proteccion Civil), the Navy (Marine Nationale), and the Port Authority (Port Autonome de Papeete).

The Civil Protection Agency maintains a National Emergency Organisation known by the acronym ORSEC (Organisation de Secours), which incorporates the specific oil pollution response plans (PLAN POLMAR-MER-PAC & PLAN POLMAR-PORT). Oil spill response measures in territorial waters are executed by the Navy, whilst such responsibilities within the port limits fall to the Port Authority. The organisation for oil spill response is set out in the PLAN POLMAR-MER-PAC under the authority of the French Pacific Maritime Forces.

The Naval Chief of Staff will investigate pollution reports and deploy or place resources on stand-by, as appropriate. A modestly sized incident will be handled by the Navy from beginning to end. In more serious cases, the PLAN POLMAR-MER-PAC will be implemented by the High Commissioner, and a committee formed with representatives of the Navy, the Civil Protection Agency, and the Maritime Affairs Department.

As a dependency of France, in the event of a major incident, further assistance would be sought from the French government and from CEDRE.

RESPONSE POLICY

Since 1986, the stated spill response policy is to contain and recover spilled oil, rather than to use dispersants. Sorbent materials may be used but not in loose form, due to the difficulty of recovering loose sorbent. Notwithstanding this policy, both the Navy and the Port Authority hold substantial stocks of dispersants as well as loose sorbent materials.

It is recognised that little can be done to combat oil pollution within shallow lagoon areas. Any shoreline clean-up will primarily involve manual recovery techniques.

Outside Tahiti there are no specialised resources for oil spill response. On most inhabited islands a manual shoreline clean-up capability would be organised if necessary.

The capacity for disposing of collected oiled material in French Polynesia is severely limited. In Tahiti small volumes of oil/water mixtures can be handled by a waste oil collection service. On most islands there are facilities for disposing of domestic waste, which could be utilised for small quantities of oiled sand and shoreline debris.

EQUIPMENT

Government

The joint aim of the oil industry and Papeete Port Authority is to develop and maintain a local capability for dealing with an oil spill of 500 tonnes. As part of an on-going programme to improve oil spill response arrangements in the port, equipment stocks are being gradually upgraded. The Port Authority's equipment includes boom, several skimmers, dispersant and pumps. In addition, the Navy holds limited stocks of dispersant and sorbent and operate floating storage.

The military authorities can provide helicopters suitable for aerial reconnaissance.

Private

Oil spill response equipment operated by the oil industry, is jointly owned by the oil companies and operated by a management company, STDH (Société Tahitienne des Hydrocarbures). STDH will provide an emergency response to incidents occurring in connection with STDH oil handling activities

PREVIOUS SPILL EXPERIENCE

There have been no significant oil spills in French Polynesia. A small diesel spill occurred on Tetiaroa Island in 1988.

CONVENTIONS

Prevention & Safety					Oil Spill Response	Compensation					
MARPOL 73/78		Annexes III IV V VI*			OPRC '90	CLC '69 '76 '92			Fund '71 '76 '92		
✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓			✓

* not yet in force



REGIONAL AND BILATERAL ARRANGEMENTS

Noumea Convention (with states of the South Pacific Region).

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