



LATVIA

COUNTRY PROFILES

A Summary of Oil Spill Response Arrangements
& Resources Worldwide

SPILL NOTIFICATION POINT

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COMPETENT NATIONAL AUTHORITY

State Environmental Service Ministry of Environment Valsts Vides dienests Rupniecibas iela 23 Riga LV 1045	Tel: +371 67084200 Fax: +371 67084212 E-Mail: vvd@vvd.gov.lv
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RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS

The Latvian Coast Guard Service, under the authority of the Ministry of Defence, has national responsibility for dealing with spills of oil in Latvian marine waters. The State Environmental Service under the Ministry of Environment is the coordinating authority for implementation of the National Oil and HNS Contingency Plan.

The Latvian Coast Guard Service has response stations in the 3 largest Latvian ports – Riga, Liepaja and Ventspils. MRCC Riga, under the Latvian Coast Guard Service, maintains a 24 hour command centre. Operational command for smaller oil spills is initially taken by the MRCC Riga Duty officer and afterwards by the Response Commander. For larger spills the MRCC Committee is convened and the head of the MRCC Committee would take over operational command.

The State Fire Fighting and Rescue Service, under the Ministry of Interior in co-operation with local municipalities, is responsible for shoreline and beach clean-up. Port authorities are responsible for response operations in port areas. Land and sea activities are jointly carried by the Latvian Coast Guard Service and the State Fire Fighting and Rescue Service.

The National Contingency Plan has been in force since 2004. Within the framework of the contingency plan, GIS sensitive area maps and accident risk assessment calculations are used. Oil spill drift and weather forecast modelling is in place.

RESPONSE POLICY

Mechanical recovery is the primary response technique. The use of dispersants may be considered as a last resort when mechanical recovery is impossible and sensitive resources are at risk. Dispersant use is decided on a case-by-case basis by the State Environmental Service.



EQUIPMENT

Government & Private

The Latvian Coast Guard Service has no any specifically-designed oil spill response vessel. In the event of a spill, operations would be carried out by coast guard cutters equipped with booms, skimmers and floating rubber bags. Latvia possesses one dispersant spray unit for a vessel of opportunity and limited dispersant stockpiles. No aircraft dispersant application capability is available. A 100 m³ non-propelled barge would be used for primary storage. For aerial surveillance, small aircraft would be used with no remote sensing equipment. It is foreseen that agreements will be made with port authorities to involve private vessels in response operations.

PREVIOUS SPILL EXPERIENCE

There have been no major oil spills in Latvian waters. Regular exercises are carried out to maintain response readiness and knowledge.

HAZARDOUS & NOXIOUS SUBSTANCES

The Latvian Coast Guard and the State Environmental Service would be responsible for HNS incidents. Latvia is in the process of ratifying the OPRC-HNS Protocol and has started preparations to build up the necessary capabilities, but no special chemical expertise exists at this time and Latvia would depend on the same resources as for oil spill response. Latvia has made a risk assessment which includes marine transport of HNS. In 2004 a specific national contingency plan for HNS incidents was prepared and it is expected that this will be amalgamated with the existing plan for oil. Latvia has experienced one HNS spill, GOLDEN SKY (2007, muriate of potash) (Information from EMSA, 2008).

CONVENTIONS

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

* not yet in force



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REGIONAL AND BILATERAL AGREEMENTS

Helsinki Convention (with countries bordering the Baltic Sea).

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