



SPILL NOTIFICATION POINT

US Coast Guard Sector San Juan 5 Calle La Puntilla San Juan, Puerto Rico 00901	Tel: +1 787 289 2041 Fax: +1 787 729 6706
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Spills must also be reported to the following:

Environmental Quality Board PO Box 11488 Pta de Tierra San Juan, Puerto Rico 00910	Tel: +1 787 767 8031 Fax: + 1 787 767 8118
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A spiller must also notify the US National Response Centre:

US Coast Guard Chief Office of Response Commandant (G-RPP) 2100 Second Street, SW Washington DC 20593 USA	Tel: +1 202 267 0518 Fax: +1 202 267 4085
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COMPETENT NATIONAL AUTHORITY

US Coast Guard Sector San Juan 5 Calle La Puntilla San Juan, Puerto Rico 00901	Tel: +1 787 289 2041 Fax: +1 787 729 6706 E-Mail: Kgabrielsen@gantsec.uscg.mil
US Coast Guard	Tel: +1 202 267 0518

RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS

The US Coast Guard (USCG) Sector San Juan is the lead federal agency for oil spills in Puerto Rico (PR). The lead local authority is the Environmental Quality Board (EQB). Other local agencies with an interest include the PR Department of Natural Resources and PR State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA). Within the boundaries of the ports, the PR Port Authority will also be involved. Depending on the severity and impacts of a spill, various federal, state and local agencies may respond and fulfil advisory or support roles within an incident command system.

The USCG and local authorities have developed an Area Contingency Plan for PR and the US Virgin Islands (USVI) (Updated 2005). The plan provides response guidance for various contingencies including oil and hazardous substance spills. Coastal sensitivity maps in the plan identify environmentally sensitive areas and define oil recovery and shoreline protection strategies for these areas. Puerto Rico is also covered by an IMO Caribbean Regional Response Plan, which sets out plans for the Caribbean States and cooperative arrangements between countries.

During an incident, a Federal On-Scene Coordinator (FOSC) would be appointed from the USCG Sector San Juan. The FOSC serves as the incident commander and may form a Unified Command with the Puerto Rico EQB. Depending on the severity of the incident, the Unified Command may involve numerous federal, state and local government authorities as well as the party responsible for the incident, organised under an Incident Command System. The Caribbean Regional Response Team (CRRT) and other specialised US national resources and expertise may also be used to support response efforts.



Responsibility for combating and cleaning oil spills rests with the polluter, who would be expected to provide resources or engage appropriate contractors. If the work is performed unsatisfactorily, the USCG is empowered to take over the cleanup and appoint their own contractors at the owner's expense.

RESPONSE POLICY

The main response strategy is to secure the source, contain the spilled oil and recover free-floating oil with skimmers and sorbents. The use of dispersants for certain areas within Puerto Rico has been pre-approved, however the use of such measures and in-situ burning may require final consultation and approval of the USCG, EQB and CRRT. Shoreline clean-up would be conducted via manual or mechanical recovery.

EQUIPMENT

Government

USCG Sector San Juan maintains a stockpile of containment and recovery equipment in San Juan including a deployable Vessel of Opportunity Skimming System (VOSS). A complete inventory of response equipment in PR is maintained in the Area Contingency Plan. In addition, Regional Strike Team(s) in the US mainland remain ready to assist as required with specialised equipment and expertise.

Private

There are several privately operated resources in PR. Crowley Environmental operates a stockpile of equipment at San Juan including boom, skimmers & pumps and has several tugs for deployment. Clear Ambient and Caribe Hydroblasting operate boom and skimmers and have several vacuum trucks and temporary storage tanks at their disposal.

Several refineries have stocks of equipment primarily for their own use. Several of these oil companies are members of Clean Caribbean & Americas (CCA) based in Florida and can call on their considerable resources if required. Equipment is also held by companies operating bunker barges.

The US Marine Spill Response Corporation (MSRC) has placed a small amount of equipment including boom, skimmers and storage barges at Ponce and San Juan. A larger stockpile is available from the US Virgin Islands.

PREVIOUS SPILL EXPERIENCE

Several major spills have occurred in PR waters. The OCEAN EAGLE (1968) spilt approximately 5000 tons of bunker fuel in San Juan Bay. The ZOE COLOCOTRONIS (1973) released a similar amount of crude oil after grounding on a reef close to Cabo Rojo and the ZANNIS (1974) spilt a similar amount of crude into Guayanilla Harbour. The barge MORRIS J BERMAN (1994) spilt approximately 2500 tons of heavy fuel oil after grounding at San Juan. Despite the deployment of considerable amounts of equipment, large areas of the coast were oiled and large scale operations were undertaken to recover sunken oil.



CONVENTIONS

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

* not yet in force

REGIONAL AND BILATERAL AGREEMENTS

Cartagena Convention (with states of the Wider Caribbean Region).

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