Ship-Sources Oil Spills Meeting Kit

WHAT’S AT STAKE

Ship-source oil spills refer to the release of oil into marine environments as a result of accidents, incidents, or deliberate actions involving ships or other vessels. These spills can occur during maritime transportation of oil, including crude oil, petroleum products, or other hazardous substances.

WHAT’S THE DANGER

HAZARDS AND DANGERS OF SHIP – SOURCE OIL SPILLS

On The Environment

- Wildlife Contamination: Oil coats the feathers, fur, or scales of marine animals, impairing their ability to move, fly, swim, or regulate body temperature.
- Habitat Destruction: Oil can contaminate coastal areas, mangroves, coral reefs, and other sensitive habitats, causing physical smothering, suffocation of plants and animals, and long-term damage to the ecosystem.
- Disruption of Food Chains: Oil spills can disrupt the intricate balance of marine food chains, affecting primary producers, such as phytoplankton, and subsequently impacting the entire marine food web.
- Toxicity and Pollution: Crude oil and its components contain toxic substances that can have acute and chronic effects on marine organisms, including fish, shellfish, and plankton.

On Human Health Hazards

- **Inhalation of Toxic Fumes:** Volatile components of oil can evaporate into the air and be inhaled, potentially causing respiratory problems, headaches, dizziness, nausea, and

other health issues.

- **Skin Contact:** Direct contact with oil can cause skin irritation, rashes, and chemical burns.
- **Contaminated Seafood:** If oil-contaminated marine organisms are consumed, they can pose health risks to individuals, particularly if they contain toxic substances or hydrocarbons.

On the Economy

- **Fishing Industry**: Contamination of fishery resources can lead to the closure of fisheries, loss of livelihoods for fishermen, and a decrease in seafood availability, causing economic hardship.
- **Tourism and Recreation:** Oil spills can harm coastal tourism, recreational activities, and beach-dependent businesses.
- **Property Damage:** Oil spills can damage coastal properties, infrastructure, and vessels.
- **Cleanup and Remediation Costs:** The expenses associated with oil spill response, is substantial.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

BEST PROTECTIVE STEPS IN DEALING WITH SHIP-SOURCE OIL SPILLS

- **Report and Assess:** The spill should be immediately reported to the appropriate authorities.
- **Activate Emergency Response:** Emergency response plans are activated to mobilize the necessary resources and personnel to address the spill. This includes coordinating response teams, equipment, and support from relevant agencies.
- **Containment and Recovery:** The first priority is to contain and minimize the spread of the spilled oil. Floating barriers called oil booms are deployed to create containment areas, preventing the oil from spreading further.
- **Shoreline Protection:** If the oil reaches coastlines, efforts are made to protect sensitive coastal habitats, such as deploying booms, using sorbent materials to absorb the oil, and implementing manual cleanup techniques.

- **Cleanup and Disposal:** Various techniques and technologies are employed to clean up the spilled oil. These include mechanical methods like skimming and vacuuming, as well as the use of sorbents, dispersants (chemicals that break down the oil), and bioremediation techniques.
- **Monitoring and Assessment:** Ongoing monitoring is conducted to assess the effectiveness of cleanup efforts and evaluate the long-term impacts of the spill on the environment and affected areas.
- **Legal and Financial Aspects:** Liability and compensation issues are addressed, with shipowners generally held responsible for the costs and damages resulting from the spill.
- **Lessons Learned and Prevention:** After the immediate response and cleanup, a thorough review is conducted to identify the causes of the spill and any deficiencies in response efforts.

MINIMIZE WORKER HEALTH RISKS WITH SAFETY PRECAUTIONS FROM SHIP-SOURCE OIL SPILLS

- Stay updated with the latest information and advisories provided by local authorities, environmental agencies, or emergency management organizations regarding the oil spill.
- If local authorities recommend evacuation or sheltering in place, follow their instructions promptly.
- Avoid direct contact with oil-contaminated water, shorelines, or any visible oil slicks. The oil may contain toxic substances that can harm your skin, eyes, or respiratory system. Do not swim, fish, or engage in water-related activities in affected areas.
- If you need to be in close proximity to the spill or involved in cleanup activities as part of authorized response efforts, use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) as recommended by the authorities.
- If you experience any symptoms such as skin irritation, respiratory issues, or other health problems after potential exposure to the oil spill, seek medical attention immediately. Inform healthcare professionals about your

potential exposure to ensure appropriate evaluation and treatment.

- Clean and wash any oil-contaminated items or surfaces promptly with appropriate detergents or soaps. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and clean water after being in or near affected areas.
- If the oil spill affects seafood or drinking water supplies, follow advisories or guidelines issued by relevant health authorities regarding the consumption of contaminated seafood or water.
- Avoid approaching or attempting to handle any oiled wildlife. Report any oiled wildlife sightings to the appropriate authorities or wildlife rescue organizations.
- Stay informed about the progress of cleanup efforts and the reopening of affected areas for recreational or commercial activities.

FINAL WORD

Ship-source oil spills requires a comprehensive approach involving prevention, preparedness, effective response, and ongoing efforts to promote sustainable shipping practices.