



About OSPR



The **Office of Spill Prevention and Response** (OSPR), within the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), is the lead State agency for marine and off-highway inland oil spill prevention and response in California.

The **Lempert-Keene-Seastrand Oil Spill Prevention and Response Act of 1990** (Act) established the OSPR and provides the OSPR Administrator, who is appointed by the Governor, with substantial authority to direct spill response, cleanup, natural resource damage assessment and restoration.

OSPR's mission is to provide the best achievable protection of California's natural resources by preventing, preparing for, and responding to spills of oil and other deleterious materials, and by restoring and enhancing natural resources affected by spills.

As **both a prevention and response** organization, the OSPR has the DFG's public trustee and custodial responsibilities for protecting, managing and restoring the State's fish, wildlife, and plants. It is one of the few State agencies in the nation that has both major pollution response authority and public trustee authority for wildlife and habitat. This ensures that prevention, preparedness, response and restoration will provide the best protection for California's natural resources.

California's Oil Spill Contingency Plan, prepared by the OSPR, describes spill response roles and outlines the OSPR's relationship to other agencies.

Responsibility for prevention is shared with agencies represented on the State Interagency Oil Spill Committee (SIOSC). The OSPR Administrator chairs SIOSC and keeps 22 other State agencies informed through that committee.

MARINE SAFETY BRANCH (MSB)

Part of OSPR's comprehensive program is the requirement that all marine facilities, vessels carrying petroleum as cargo, and all vessels over 300 tons have oil spill contingency plans. The MSB developed the State oil spill contingency plan and reviews and approves all other spill response plans.

The MSB works closely with the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) to develop Area Plans, pursuant to the Federal Oil Pollution Act of 1990. MSB staff co-chair federal committees for all six USCG planning areas of the State. The OSPR supports a strong working relationship between state, federal, and local contingency planners to maintain plan compatibility and spill preparedness throughout California.

The MSB and USCG analyze vessel traffic routing and other safety measures to reduce marine casualties and pollution incidents off California's coast. OSPR brought on-line and funds a Vessel Traffic Information Service system for Los Angeles and Long Beach Harbors. This monitoring and communications system now includes vessels in Santa Monica Bay.

To increase spill prevention measures, the OSPR has created and funded Harbor Safety Committees for the State's five busiest ports. OSPR assists these committees in developing and refining harbor safety plans to reduce the risk of accidents near major harbor facilities. Jointly with other OSPR units, MSB staff completed a statewide Coastal Protection Review, which identified especially sensitive sites and refined response strategies for all coastal locations.

The MSB staff consists mainly of Oil Spill Prevention Specialists (OSPS). These professionals possess technical backgrounds essential to the OSPR's prevention and response work, such as monitoring oil transfers, advising Harbor Safety Committees, and supporting the Small Craft Refueling Dock Program. At spills they provide technical assistance with regard to initial site safety issues, determination of cause, procedures to slow and stop additional releases, and product recovery, quantification, and disposal.

The drills and exercises program tracks and evaluates drills required by the contingency planning regulations. MSB staff design and evaluate all types of announced and unannounced drills with facility and vessel owner/operators and oil spill response organizations, in coordination with the USCG. They also participate in drills as players or controllers.

REGULATIONS UNIT

The OSPR Regulations Unit writes spill prevention regulations, tug escort requirements, and oil spill contingency requirements. The Regulations staff also review and comment on federal oil spill legislation and regulations, and deal with admiralty issues. Once written, State regulations are submitted to the Office of Administrative Law for approval. The OSPR Regulations Unit holds public hearings, works with the SIOSC and Technical Advisory Committee, and provides a representative for the Pacific States/British Columbia Oil Spill Task Force. Regulations and MSB staff serve as Liaison Officers during oil spill response, keeping public officials informed of the situation and related activities.

SCIENTIFIC BRANCH

OSPR's Scientific Branch directs and studies the scientific aspects of oil spill prevention, response, and restoration. This responsibility includes natural resource assessment, environmental sensitivity mapping, protecting and minimizing injuries to natural, cultural, and economic resources; cleanup methods and technologies, assessment of spill impact on natural resources, veterinary expertise, research, and wildlife care; and identification of the sources of spilled oil for enforcement actions. These activities are carried out by the Resource Assessment, Response Technology Development, Field Services and Veterinary Services Units, and five analytical support laboratories.

The five laboratories are: the Petroleum Chemistry Lab (PCL), the Fish and Wildlife Water Pollution Control Lab, Moss Landing Marine Lab, Granite Canyon Pollution Lab, and the Pesticide Investigation Unit and Aquatic Toxicology Laboratory.

OSPR's PCL is a state-of-the-art facility where chemists can identify the type and origin of oil spill samples. This is a key component of the investigation and prosecution of pollution incidents. The Water Pollution Control Lab, Pesticide Investigations Unit and Aquatic Toxicology Lab, and Marine Pollution Studies Lab also support the OSPR mission.

The Geographic Information System (GIS) laboratory staff protects biological, cultural, and socio-economic resources of the marine environment by collecting, compiling, analyzing, maintaining, and displaying marine resource data.

The Scientific field staff has identified over 400 ecologically sensitive sites along the coast, and — with industry and the USCG — develop oil spill response strategies to protect them. The Field Services units also provide essential staff for the ICS Planning Section during spill response, providing early natural resource injury data and recommendations for response and cleanup.

Natural Resource Damage Assessments are conducted by a team that includes a toxicologist, a natural resource economist, legal counsel, and environmental scientists. Following a spill, the Resource Assessment team evaluates the injury to natural resources, identifies appropriate restoration projects, monitors results, and sees that injured resources and uses are fully restored. With other natural resource trustee agencies, they solicit public input on restoration projects through the Internet, news media, and public meetings.

The OSPR and UC Santa Cruz operate the nation's first permanent marine wildlife rescue center specifically designed to protect California's endangered sea otter population, and marine birds and mammals injured in oil spills. The Marine Wildlife Veterinary Care and Research Center is one of twelve facilities that may be used by the Oiled Wildlife Care Network, a statewide network of facilities for the care and treatment of oiled wildlife. The OWCN is funded by OSPR and managed by UC Davis.

Working through the Oiled Wildlife Care Network, the OSPR has established a competitive grants program that supports focused research into the effects of oil on wildlife; improvements in the cleaning and care of oiled wildlife; telemetry, follow-up studies, survey methods and preventive procedures. A request for proposals is put out internationally, each year, and proposals are judged on merit by an independent scientific advisory committee.

LEGAL UNIT

The OSPR legal staff provides confidential advice to the Administrator regarding regulatory issues, Natural Resource Damage Assessments, statutory interpretation, litigation, and administrative civil penalties. Most specialize in environmental or maritime law. They coordinate with the State Attorney General's Office and County District Attorneys to enforce civil and criminal statutes contained in the OSPR Act and Fish and Game Code, and serve on Natural Resource Trustee Councils following oil spill settlements.

ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM

OSPR enforces laws that prevent oil spills, dispatches personnel, and investigates both marine and inland spills. While most of our work is with oil spills, we also respond to spills of other toxic or hazardous materials that threaten wildlife and habitat.

Fish and Game Wardens are sworn peace officers with the authority to enforce both criminal and civil statutes. Wardens conduct spill investigations, and gather and prepare evidence that is essential to any court case. They follow a strict chain-of-control protocol to collect spill samples and transport them to the Petroleum Chemistry Laboratory for fingerprinting. The cases they build against polluters are given to OSPR attorneys, who use that material either in settlement talks with the responsible party or to court.

During spill response, the State On-Scene Coordinator (SOSC or Incident Commander) is usually an OSPR Warden. S/he represents the State of California in the Unified Command, and all State spill responders answer to the SOSC. The OSPR Enforcement Branch received more than 6,400 spill reports in 2003.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Financial Responsibility Unit ensures that vessel and facility owners/operators are able to pay for the cleanup and damage costs of an oil spill that could occur from their vessel or facility.

Tankers and barges that transport oil in bulk, and non-tank vessels over 300 gross tons that transit State marine waters, as well as marine terminals, marine fuel docks, offshore facilities, pipelines and mobile transfer units must obtain a Certificate of Financial Responsibility (COFR) to operate in California.

Tankers and large Marine barges (150,000 barrels or more capacity) must demonstrate financial responsibility in the amount of \$1 billion.

Facilities and non-tank vessels must demonstrate coverage of up to \$300 million, and small barges are assessed at 30 percent of the maximum cargo capacity.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Health and Safety Unit ensures a safe and healthful work environment for all OSPR employees. This unit's program conforms to all applicable occupational health and safety standards required by State and federal laws. Staffed by Industrial Hygienists, the unit conducts air monitoring and assesses biological, chemical and physical hazards in the office, field, and laboratory work environments. They often serve as the Unified Command's Safety Officer at oil spills.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS / EDUCATION OUTREACH

Small craft refueling docks are exempt from many of the Act's requirements, but they are still liable for any spills. Fuel dock operators must register with OSPR every two years, and may have their facilities and operations reviewed by an Oil Spill Prevention Specialist, if they wish to learn how they could decrease their spill risks.

The Education Outreach Program (in the Public Affairs unit) registers small craft refueling docks and provides them with information about proper refueling operations, regulations, reporting procedures and spill clean-up.

The Education-Outreach Coordinator serves on the California Clean Boating Network, Pacific Oil Spill Prevention Education Team, and Coastal Commission's Boating Clean & Green campaign Advisory Board. S/he also provides outreach support to all five Harbor Safety Committees, as needed.

The Public Affairs unit writes, designs and publishes informational brochures and *The OSPR News*. At spills, they work in the Joint Information Center, providing incident details to the news media.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The OSPR Volunteer Program allows concerned citizens to assist in certain aspects of oil spill response and clean-up. This program has established protocols for the recruitment and training of a corps of volunteers that can respond immediately to oil spills along California's coast.

For more information, visit the OSPR pages of the
Department of Fish and Game web-site: www.dfg.ca.gov/ospr

California Department of Fish & Game

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