



NOPSEMA

AT A GLANCE

OIL SPILL RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS

July 2018

Preventing an offshore oil spill is a fundamental objective for all companies conducting petroleum activities and for the Australian Government.

A major oil spill arising from a petroleum activity in Australian Commonwealth waters will never be acceptable, but in the event of an oil spill occurring, environmental consequences can be reduced through a coordinated and well-planned oil spill response.

The National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA) is the expert regulator for offshore petroleum activities in Commonwealth waters, and provides the government oversight for any spill that may arise from such activities. NOPSEMA is an active participant in the Australian Government Crisis Management Framework and Australia's preparedness and response arrangements under the National Plan for Maritime Environmental Emergencies. NOPSEMA also administers legislation that gives effect, in part, to the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation 1990 (OPRC). The OPRC convention establishes measures for dealing with marine oil pollution incidents, including those relevant to offshore petroleum activities in Commonwealth waters.

Through NOPSEMA's assessment of environment plans and oil pollution emergency plans (OPEP), NOPSEMA's team of oil spill risk specialists determine if a petroleum company has undertaken the appropriate planning, established suitable arrangements and has the capability to respond to an oil spill. The petroleum company may be supported by third party organisations who can supply additional resources including equipment, personnel and specialist expertise. These sorts of arrangements with other organisations are documented in the OPEP.

NOPSEMA then inspects the petroleum company's arrangements and capability to test if they are being maintained, and determine whether they continue to match the specific oil spill risks of the petroleum activity being undertaken.

In the event of an oil spill, NOPSEMA requires the responsible petroleum company to execute arrangements as described in the agreed OPEP to minimise the impact of the spill to the marine environment and communities. If necessary, NOPSEMA will apply its regulatory powers to ensure the optimal response is executed and will direct the petroleum company to take action if they are failing to meet the agreed response outcomes.

Petroleum companies are also required to pay the full cost of carrying out an oil spill response and must maintain sufficient financial capability to ensure the response is implemented appropriately.



For more information

For further information see the Oil pollution risks page at nopsema.gov.au or email communications@nopsema.gov.au.