

## DEQ Emergency Response Program

### Program mission

DEQ's Emergency Response Program supports the agency's strategic directions by preventing and reducing toxic chemical releases and by cleaning up and reducing risks from toxics in Oregon's environment.

### Measures for success

DEQ measures success in protection from toxic pollutants by effectively responding to toxic spills on land and in water and by cleaning up sites where releases of oil or hazardous materials have occurred.

### Environmental risks of spills

Large quantities of oil and hazardous materials pass through Oregon each year by ship, barge, pipeline, rail and roadway. In addition, many manufacturing facilities use large quantities of oil or hazardous materials for production. Accidents, equipment failure and human error can all lead to unintended and potentially disastrous consequences. Oil and chemical spills can threaten human health, valuable resources and sensitive ecosystems. Spills on land or water can kill or injure fish, birds, marine mammals and shellfish. Spills can contaminate land and water, threatening public health.

### Emergency Response Program

DEQ receives a majority of incident calls reported to all state agencies via the Oregon Emergency Response System (OERS). Each year, DEQ receives about 2,300 pollution reports. Program staff travel to sites of significant incidents and monitor other incidents through telephone contact with the responsible party and other responders.

Two primary elements guide Emergency Response Program functions: 1) response to hazardous material release incidents; and 2) planning and preparedness for the minimization of releases and the effective response to releases.

### Rules guiding the program

Oregon laws and administrative rules that authorize and guide the Emergency Response Program are:

1. Oregon Revised Statutes 466.605-466.680: Spill Response-Cleanup of Hazardous Materials

2. Oregon Revised Statutes 468B.300-468B.500 Oil or Hazardous Material Spillage
3. Oregon Administrative Rules
  - o Division 140 - Illegal Drug Lab Cleanup Assistance
  - o Division 141 - Oil Spill Contingency Planning and Fees
  - o Division 142 - Oil and Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Requirements

### Responding to emergencies

DEQ's Emergency Response Program consists of five full-time staff and 12 personnel from other programs who respond to calls from the OERS system 24 hours a day, including weekends. Two people are always on duty. An Emergency Response Coordination cell line provides backup and advice after hours as well.

Over the past several years DEQ has trained staff with specialized technical skills from other regional programs to provide additional capacity for larger emergencies. These people provide emergency response and specialized expertise when unique skills are required in an incident command setting. This system provides for a flexible, efficient use of DEQ's resources to protect human health and the environment during incident response.

Emergency response objectives:

- Respond to hazardous chemical and oil emergencies 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- Manage emergencies using the DEQ Emergency Operations Plan and other state and federal plans
- Provide state on-scene coordinators to direct state operations required to clean up hazardous chemicals and oil
- Support the DEQ Laboratory in identifying unknown chemicals (triage, packaging, transport)
- Conduct all operations under the National Incident Management System.



State of Oregon  
Department of  
Environmental  
Quality

### Land Quality Division Environmental Cleanup Emergency Response

811 SW 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Portland, OR 97204  
Phone: (503) 229-5696  
(800) 452-4011  
Fax: (503) 229-6762  
Contact:  
Michael Zollitsch  
(503) 229-6931  
[www.oregon.gov/DEQ](http://www.oregon.gov/DEQ)

*DEQ is a leader in restoring, maintaining and enhancing the quality of Oregon's air, land and water.*

## Oil spill planning and preparedness

DEQ's oil spill planning and preparedness program plans and prepares for oil spills in Oregon's waters. Such spills pose a major potential threat to Oregon's waters, air, land and wildlife. The risks are significant. If a spill were to occur in the Columbia River, for example, rapid currents and the tidal flux of Oregon's estuaries would cause oil to spread rapidly unless it was quickly contained. A wide variety of sensitive aquatic life, waterfowl and large areas of fragile habitat could be seriously damaged. Spill planning and preparedness elements include the following:

### Oil spill contingency plans

DEQ implements Oregon law and requires oil spill contingency plans from 18 facilities and eight companies representing "covered vessels." Covered vessels include commercial vessels more than 300 gross tons and all tank vessels that carry petroleum in bulk (including barges). Two plans are "umbrella" plans that cover commercial vessel traffic on the Columbia River and Coos Bay.

- Vessel Plans - Vessels traveling the Columbia and Willamette rivers must carry contingency plans that provide clear instructions for responding to an oil spill. DEQ reviews and approves the plans.
- Facility Plans - Certain facilities also must have contingency response plans that DEQ reviews and approves. Facilities that transfer oil over water and all liquid petroleum pipelines must also have approved oil spill contingency plans. These plans include a risk analysis and spill prevention overview.

For more detailed information on DEQ's Oil Spill Planning and Preparedness programs: <http://www.deq.state.or.us/lq/pubs/factsheets/cu/MarineOilSpillPrevention.pdf>

### Geographic Response Plans

Geographic Response Plans detail geographic information, equipment requirements and locations, plus preferred response strategies for sensitive areas and streamside environments along sections of the Willamette and Columbia rivers and Oregon coast. Government agencies, river users, response providers and local stakeholders work together to develop these plans.

Geographic Response Plans aim to help first responders avoid the initial confusion that generally accompanies any spill. They prioritize

resources to be protected and allow for immediate and proper action until an incident command system can be established. These plans are published separately but are an integral part of the Northwest Area Contingency Plan available at <http://www.rtt10nwac.com>.

### Drills and exercises

DEQ staff participates in drills and other training exercises to ensure rapid, effective response to spills. DEQ participates with regulated vessel and facility plan holders. Activities include:

- Equipment deployment exercises
- Tabletop exercises
- Worst-case exercises
- National Preparedness for Response Exercise Program, as defined under U.S. Coast Guard guidance

### Northwest Area Committee/Regional Response Team

DEQ is the designated state representative to the Region X Regional Response Team and is a member of the Northwest Area Committee. DEQ serves on the steering committee to the combined RRT/NWAC and associated work groups.

The Northwest Area Committee is responsible for the Northwest Area Contingency Plan that provides for a coordinated response between federal agencies and the states of Oregon, Washington and Idaho while recognizing unique differences in each state. In Oregon, this plan serves as the oil and hazardous substance contingency plan for the entire state and a guide for all response agencies. Oregon's representation on the Northwest Area Committee and associated workgroups includes staff from other state agencies to represent public health, fire/hazmat and natural resource concerns.

Together, the RRT/NWAC groups form the basis for response to large-scale incidents representing a significant risk to human health and the environment and greatly increases resources available to DEQ.

### States/British Columbia Oil Spill Task Force

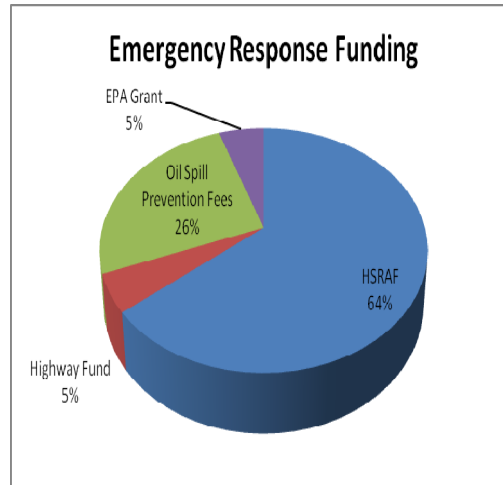
DEQ is a member of the States/British Columbia Oil Spill Task Force. This task force formed in 1989, after two West Coast spill incidents highlighted common concerns shared by West Coast states and British Columbia. These concerns focus on spill risks from the transport of large volumes of petroleum, the need for cooperation across shared borders and a shared commitment to protect marine resources in a consistent manner.



## Funding the Emergency Response Program

Four main funding sources provide operating monies for the Emergency Response Program:

- HSRAF: The state's Hazardous Substance Remedial Action Fund, which is funded through waste disposal fees and project cost recovery (nearly two thirds of funding sources)
- Oil Spill Planning Fees: Oil spill prevention fees from covered vessels and facilities
- State Highway Fund, which operates through petroleum load fees and project cost recovery
- A federal grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which provides federal funds used mostly for training



### Alternative formats

Alternative formats (Braille, large type) of this document can be made available. Contact DEQ's Office of Communications & Outreach, Portland, at 503-229-5696, or call toll-free in Oregon at 1-800-452-4011, ext. 5696. Hearing-impaired persons may call 711.