
2025 INTERSPILL Conference

Submission Topic: Recruiting and retaining the next generation of responders

Type: Paper submitted for conference

Abstract:

Through the global energy transition, the environmental, economic and social impacts of a liquid hydrocarbon spill remain present and will continue to require emergency response organisations with specialist equipment and trained response personnel.

So, how do you sell the profession of an oil spill responder to retain those who hold decades of technical knowledge and operational experience and to recruit the next generation for continuity of capability and capacity?

This paper will examine the following:

- Changing energy environment and the need for ongoing marine pollution response
- Current vs future need for Industry & Government oil spill response personnel capacity
- What makes an oil spill responder – required and transferrable knowledge, skills and experience
- How should we be hiring? Recent examples of successful and unsuccessful recruitment
- Capability building pathway – building and maintaining competency, currency and credibility
- Opportunities for global collaboration, secondments and shared resourcing
- Company culture that attracts and retains the best.

An all-rounded oil spill responder requires technical acumen, operational experience, health and safety discipline and effective communication skills. Oil spill response knowledge and skills can be taught, however there are many attributes of a responder that are transferrable across Industries and relevant fields. We need to re-define what the responders of the future look like and look further to find suitable candidates.

As leaders in the field, we have a responsibility to develop individual capability that remains fit for purpose, collaborate through partnerships to provide surge capacity and create empowering workplace cultures that attract and retain the best responders.

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