

IMPLEMENTATION OF EMERGENCY PLANS FOR SHIPS IN PORT

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ABSTRACT

Emergencies involving large quantities of dangerous goods are fortunately seldom encountered. Nevertheless, when they occur they provoke considerable social alarm as a response to a growing concern about the harmful consequences (both for persons and environment) that may result from these accidents.

Many political bodies and institutions will be concerned when an accident takes place whether at sea or in port facilities, and conflicts may start between the different departments that are responsible if procedures have not been previously agreed and implemented by well trained human teams. We must focus our efforts on communication initiatives with government and industry, research and development, contingency planning, equipment readiness and training to ensure skilled personnel are prepared to react quickly and thoroughly in the event of an accident.

For a global and efficient response to these problems, emergency plans should be designed and implemented. The following topics should be incorporated within the scope of such plans:

- A thorough risk analysis.
- An inventory of available equipment.
- A very detailed intervention plan, to be developed with the least ambiguity possible. Verify that procedures address all potential contingency and emergency situations.

This should lead to the implementation of training programmes that may be modified and adapted to meet knowledge and skill requirements of the employees, keeping people abreast of the latest developments in their fields and making Training a part of day-to-day activities. The procedures can be evaluated in a variety of ways. The essence of the training programme could be a listing of contingency scenarios and a detailed description of the human teams response to each scenario. Since some of these scenarios seldom occur, the most

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practical way to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan and the personnel skills in carrying out the planned responses is to observe security tests in which the personnel respond to simulated contingencies. The latter expresses a checking and contrasting action of intervention techniques in various emergency situations (e.g., a heavy oil spill at sea).

Highly skilled teams, the use of operationally proven techniques such as mechanical recovery and cleanup, deploying booms, spraying the coastline with dispersants¹, etc., will help us to perform more efficient and environmental friendly interventions, and carry out a proper assessment of the spill recovery.

The progressive improvement in operation of Control Centers will be heavily involved within the implementation of emergency plans, and will help the actual development of an integrated response infrastructure. An efficient maritime traffic control system is a vital tool that will help to improve safety and surveillance at sea, with a reduction of ship's spills and subsequent marine/coastal pollution. Furthermore, prevention and early detection of any incident will also allow for faster response of intervention teams to potentially dangerous situations.

¹ Only those dispersants that have passed appropriate tests should be used; furthermore, a determination should be made as to whether dispersant use would be safe and effective.