

ESTABLISHMENT OF OIL SPILL RESPONSE CAPACITY IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Alexander Popov, OSR Consultant,
Russian Federation

The Russian Federation is one of the largest oil and oil products producers. Russia has the longest system for crude oil and oil products transporting. Oil companies operate the World longest systems of field pipelines.

It is essential to note, that until 1980, beginning of “Perestroyka”, oil production technology was very primitive; during oil production nearly all oil fields had open pits for oil sludge.

During “Perestroyka” period, time of lack of financing, oil price decline, privatization of major oil producing companies, default, absence of appropriate controlling bodies and uncertainties in their responsibilities, oil spills were missing a lot of appropriate attention.

It is necessary to note, that public available official statistics shows, there are more than 20 000 accidents annually resulting in oil spills at all pipelines (including field and trunk pipelines). It has entailed very serious environmental problems.

There are 3 ministries in Russia responsible for oil spill prevention and response: Ministry of Natural Resources (MPR), Ministry of Emergency Situations (EmerCom), Ministry of Transport (MinTrans).

Their functions are defined in ‘Provisions’ on Ministries and respective normative documents: Federal Laws and Governmental Decrees of the Russian Federation.

MPR executes **general supervision of environmental situation** and, in particular, in fuel and energy complex of Russia that is one of the major environment pollution sources. Its share in total emission into atmosphere is over 50%, and about 20% of waste water is dumped into surface and underground sources. Underground water and soil pollution is very considerable in places of fuel and energy sector facilities location. Very negative environmental impact have numerous damages of field pipelines, breaches of trunk pipelines, oil losses from reservoirs due to construction imperfection, that influences water and soil state above all.

By information of GosGorTechNadzor of Russia, the largest increasing of breakdown rate in 2003 occurred at trunk pipelines system, gas supply facilities, oil production units, chemical and petrochemical facilities, and refineries.

Supervision of “small” spills on Russian territory and internal waters is responsibility of MPR. The supervision is carried out by RosPrirodNadzor and RosTechNadzor directly, namely by their local (territorial) bodies. Size of “small” spill is determined by a respective Order of MPR.

General supervision and oil spill response for any other spills, which size exceeds the above indicated one, is responsibility of EmerCom. EmerCom has its territorial subdivisions – Main Regional Departments that carry out oil spill and emergency response caused by natural disasters or human activities. The Main Departments dispose of respective crews of rescuers (responders) and techniques.

In parallel with this structure a private business company (JSC “Center of Rescue and Ecological Operations” - CREO) operates on the Russian market. The company was associated by EmerCom and its mission is oil spill response for large Tier 2 and Tier 3 spills, development of Oil Spill Response Plans (OSRP), fire safety and fire fighting measures.

Presently CREO establishes regional centers that shall operate as CREO organization departments, or branches. The main company is taking a responsibility for necessary equipment supply, staff training and certification, centralized financing. Amount of the centers planned is determined by federal structure of the Russian Federation – each federal subject shall have its own branch center.

Off-shore oil spill response supervision is a responsibility of MinTrans of Russia.

Ministry of Transport has its own specialized structure “State Company at Ministry of Transport RF “State Marine Emergency and Rescue-Coordination Service of the Russian Federation” (GosMorSpasSluzba of Russia)”, established by the Order of Ministry of Transport RF No. 92 of 23.07.1998.

The GosMorSpasSluzba of MinTrans of Russia in cooperation with marine rescue-coordination centers and sub-centers, basin emergency-rescue offices and departments of ASPTR are forming a functional system of means and forces, which is included into a Unified State System for emergency situation prevention and response (RSChS).

Beside governmental and associated with them oil spill response structures, there are companies or specialized departments included into structure of large Russian oil companies. Regional oil production facilities have so called “workshops” for field pipeline systems maintenance. Such structures are indeed containing and recovering most part of oil spills, monitor accident-free oil transport operation. The structures are financed and supplied with necessary equipment at the expense of a budget the oil company they are belonging to. Chief engineer service and environmental department are usually responsible for operation of such services.

Furthermore, oil companies organize some daughter enterprises that are serving as oil spill responders and further site decontamination, as well as sludge and oil polluted soil reclamation. Usually, the parent oil company is one of co-founders for the enterprise.

Together with “daughter enterprises” indicated above, there are some independent profit-making organizations contracted by oil companies. As an example: “Priroda-Perm” (Parskaya Oblast), “Spas-Priroda” (Komi Republic), “Siberian Rescue Center” (Tomskaya Oblast), “Lesorb” (Bryanskaya Oblast), and some others.

From aforesaid oil spill response is supposed to be successfully operating. ***Why it is not so?***

Unfortunately, there are a lot of reasons for it. And apparently major of them is lack of coordination and clear allocation of authorities and responsibilities between above mentioned participants of the process.

After an Administrative reformation in governmental bodies, some of the authorities had lost some of their functions. In particular, MPR of Russia is not yet defined a department

that shall become an assignee for control of oil pollution issues. In some regions it is a responsibility of RosPrirodNadzor, in others – RosTechNadzor.

EmerCom and MinTrans have not yet defined responsibilities sharing in 12-miles zone. All off-shore rescue operations shall be carried out by departments subordinated to MinTrans of Russia and that are a part of the Unified State System for emergency situation prevention and response (RSChS), led by EmerCom of Russia. In the same time, EmerCom has its independent life-guard (rescue on water) departments that have at their disposal rescue-vessels (marine tugs equipped with appropriate techniques).

Regional offices (Main Regional Departments of EmerCom of Russia) in general have at their disposition neither specialized techniques for oil spill containing and recovery nor skilled specialists in the field.

Profit-making organizations do not have sufficient financial and technical capacity for establishment of well developed network of regional centers, their equipment with necessary techniques, communication systems and transport of special equipment.

The Service companies usually working for the companies they have concluded respective contract with.

To define very briefly possibilities to organize oil spill response in the Russian Federation basing on legislation and normative documents, it is possible to say that “each company that has oil or oil products turnover, has to have its own **certified** emergency-rescue department or contract a certified emergency-rescue organization operating in this region with capability to contain an oil spill within 4 hours on water and 6 hours on land”.

From an experience of such work organization and in accordance with normative documents, the optimum scheme realized by the oil companies is availability of own emergency-rescue crews on the territory for organization of primary oil spill containment and partial recovery of the oil pollution and possibility to attract additional means and forces for response in case of larger spill.

Today many foreign companies are successfully operation on territory of the Russian Federation like Exxon-Mobil, TNK-BP, Shell, Marathon, etc. The companies have long-term contracts for oil spill response both with Russian and international organizations. The contracts allow response for oil spills of Tiers 1-2 off-shore and Tire 1 on-shore. In case of larger spills, seemingly, it is necessary to think over and organize attraction of additional means and forces of the most experiences organizations. The most attention shall be focused on clear organization of additional staff and equipment transportation, as well as attraction of additional man-power.