

MARCH 2017

Clear Brief

Leading Systems for Oil Spill Response in Ports: Implications for Canada

Clear Seas requested a study of governance systems and practices for oil spill response in leading ports of other countries to identify possible options for improvement of the regimes in Canadian ports.

Led by Dr. Trevor Heaver, Professor Emeritus at the University of British Columbia Centre for Transportation Studies, this research examines spill response policies and practices in seven ports in five countries including Seattle, Los Angeles and Houston in the U.S., and Southampton, Antwerp, Rotterdam and Hamburg in Europe.

The examination of international oil spill response systems provides insights into what should be considered as Canada continues to pursue improvements to the spill response system. Although this report draws primarily on recent Pacific coast experience, the issues that it highlights are relevant to all Canadian ports, recognizing that local conditions require tailored solutions – a point which is highlighted repeatedly herein.

It should be underscored that this report identifies issues that ought to be considered in an effort to improve Canada's readiness to respond effectively to spills. It does not propose definitive solutions, but rather, it identifies possible areas for improvement and suggests potential solutions.

The "implications" contained in the report offer avenues for consideration which require more detailed development and analysis in order to support policy decisions. Finally, it is recognized that several of the implications are already in the process of being implemented by the Canadian Coast Guard and other entities.

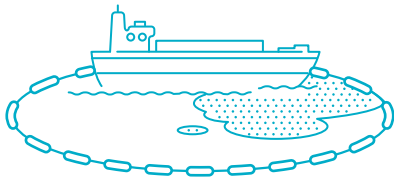
KEY THEMES

The fifteen implications discussed in the report, drawn from conditions in the seven ports studied, are considered in the context of the following six themes:

- ① The Importance of National Policy
- ② The Holistic Nature and Goals of Oil Spill Prevention and Oil Spill Response
- ③ An Integrated Response to Spills in Ports
- ④ Achieving Preparedness for Spill Response
- ⑤ Achieving Scalability in Spill Response
- ⑥ The Need for Continuous Improvement

CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHANGE

The implications in this report encompass four considerations for change not made in prior studies.



Clarify the training and education roles of response organizations

Clearly define the role of response organizations in training and education in addition to technical capacity, while emphasizing that they are not the lead organization responsible for the effectiveness of a spill response.



Transfer some responsibilities from Coast Guard to port authorities

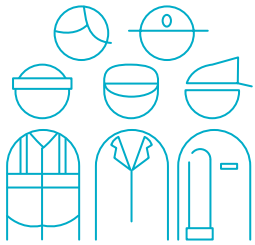
Consider shifting responsibility for spill response planning and management in federal ports from the Canadian Coast Guard to port authorities.





Make information available to the public

Mandate public availability and transparency of spill incident data and response plans of agencies and corporations under federal jurisdiction and encourage the same by other levels of government.



Establish relationships with local experts

Ensure the availability and integration of local Indigenous and science-based knowledge to spill response teams.



Clear Seas is an independent, not-for-profit research centre that provides impartial and fact-based information about marine shipping in Canada.



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