

ENERGY INSTITUTE

INLAND WATERS OIL SPILL RESPONSE

A GUIDANCE DOCUMENT INCORPORATING THE STRATEGIES  
AND TECHNIQUES FOR RESPONDING TO  
INLAND SURFACE WATER OIL SPILLS  
IN THE UNITED KINGDOM





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# INTRODUCTION

These guidelines are for those who are involved in the practical aspects of the clean-up of inland oil spills on surface waters. They do not address the complex aspects involved with soil remediation or clean-up of groundwater.

Oil spills on surface water can originate from a number of varied sources. These include industrial and domestic installations, pipelines, road vehicles, storage tanks and shipping incidents.

These guidelines summarise some of the strategies open to a response team under a range of different circumstances. Priorities are assigned to the various necessary actions, taking into account the Health and Safety aspects of the response. Consideration is also given to the threats to natural, industrial and amenity resources.

All parties involved in oil spill clean up should note that actions will always follow PEPR priorities:

- a) To protect and safeguard human health/people.
- b) To protect and safeguard all aspects of the natural environment.
- c) To protect and safeguard property, business and commercial interests.
- d) To protect and safeguard reputation.

These priorities will need to be carefully considered when responding to an incident, particularly when dealing with low and intermediate flashpoint products and their inherent flammability. Any response should focus primarily on safety of life, and the protection of the environment and property in this order.

The methods available for the containment and recovery of oil are summarised and their strengths and weaknesses listed. Emphasis is given to the need for good co-operation with local and national resource groups, in order that an integrated clean-up system is implemented, and the most effective use of equipment and manpower is made. The guidelines also include sections covering the temporary storage of recovered oil and oily debris, its disposal and the eventual restoration of the spill site.

The information is of a general nature and requires interpretation according to the situation encountered. The circumstances surrounding any given incident will be unique, but will exhibit enough common features to allow these guidelines to be of value to those involved in the response operation.

The guidelines take account of current United Kingdom, European and US technology but are primarily focussed on responses in the United Kingdom. Whilst the adoption of these guidelines will assist in dealing with and planning for inland oil spill incidents in an efficient manner, the Energy Institute cannot accept any responsibility for injury to persons or damage to or loss of property however arising out of, or in conjunction with, the application of these guidelines.