
Oil Spill Contingency Planning and Initial Response Leadership Course

1 – 5 February 2027
Barcelona





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Programme Summary

Oil spill contingency planning and initial response leadership form the subject of this one-week training course for port, terminal, marine and HSE managers at intermediate level, culminating in a Tier 1 oil spill contingency plan for their own facility. Spills at berths and offshore installations often start small, yet slow notification and untested equipment turn them into costly incidents. The approach moves from spill risk to plan design, response options and command of the first hours. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme in oil spill contingency planning and initial response.

The Business Case

A facility that cannot act in the first hours of a release passes control of the incident, its cost and its reputation to others. A tested local plan, matched to credible spill risk and backed by suitable equipment and trained responders, keeps small spills small and allows orderly escalation.

- Spill Response Time: Falls as notification chains and first actions are defined and rehearsed.
- Clean-Up and Claims Exposure: Reduces as containment starts early and decisions are recorded.
- Exercise and Audit Findings: Decline as plans and stockpiles are kept current.

Principles and Evidence Base

- OPRC Convention: The International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation sets the duty to hold plans and report incidents, reviewed in Session 1.
- Tiered Preparedness and Response: The IPIECA-IOPC Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 model sizes local capability and escalation routes in Sessions 2 and 3.
- Spill Impact Mitigation Assessment SIMA: Weighing the net environmental benefit of each option guides technique choice in Session 4.
- Shoreline Clean-up Assessment Technique SCAT: Systematic shoreline survey directs clean-up priorities in Session 4.

Intended Participants

- Managers who own the spill plan for a port, terminal or offshore facility.
- Supervisors who would lead the facility's response team in the first hours of a spill.
- HSE leads who maintain spill risk assessments, drills and training records.
- Marine and operations managers who decide on equipment, stockpiles and service contracts.

The programme serves ports and harbours, oil and gas terminals, offshore production and shipping companies.



Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to evaluate a facility's oil spill risk using credible release scenarios.
2. Participants will be able to construct a Tier 1 oil spill contingency plan with roles, notification chains and escalation triggers.
3. Participants will be able to justify an equipment and stockpile specification against planning scenarios.
4. Participants will be able to prioritise containment, recovery and shoreline protection options using net environmental benefit reasoning.
5. Participants will be able to direct the first hours of a spill response safely.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Oil Spill Risk and Response Obligations

What can be spilled, where would it go and what must the facility do?

- OPRC Convention Duties and the Shipboard Oil Pollution Emergency Plan
- Release Scenarios at Berths, Pipelines and Offshore Installations
- Oil Fate: Spreading, Evaporation, Emulsification and Weathering
- Trajectory Estimation and Sensitive Resource Mapping
- Spill Risk Register and Planning Scenario Selection

Day 2: Tiered Preparedness and Local Capability

How much response capability should the facility hold itself?

- Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 Definitions and Escalation Triggers
- Boom, Skimmer and Temporary Storage Capacity Calculations
- Stockpile Location, Maintenance and Readiness Checks
- Mutual Aid and Response Contractor Agreements
- Responder Competence Matrix and Training Records

Day 3: Writing the Oil Spill Contingency Plan

What must the plan contain to work under pressure?

- Plan Architecture: Strategic, Operational and Data Sections
- Notification Chains, Call-Out Lists and Reporting Forms
- Incident Command System Roles for a Facility Team
- Initial Action Checklists for the First Hour
- Plan Alignment With Local and National Arrangements



Day 4: Response Options and Shoreline Protection

Which techniques fit the oil, the weather and the shoreline?

- Containment and Recovery: Boom Configurations and Skimmer Selection
- Dispersant and In-Situ Burning Approval Considerations
- SIMA Comparison of Response Options
- Shoreline Protection Booming and SCAT Survey Basics
- Oily Waste Segregation, Storage and Disposal Routes

Day 5: Leading the Initial Response

Is the facility ready to act from the first alarm?

- Responder Safety: Site Assessment, Gas Testing and Protective Equipment
- Running the Day 3 Checklists in a Spill Simulation
- Testing Day 2 Stockpiles Against the Day 1 Planning Scenarios
- Incident Log, Cost Records and Claims Documentation
- Tier 1 Oil Spill Contingency Plan Completion

Methodology

The programme relies on simulation. Participants work through a developing spill at a fictional terminal, deciding on notification, deployment and escalation as conditions change, then apply each step to their own facility using cases from ports and offshore production.

- Suggested activity: Sizing boom and skimmer capacity for a berth release scenario.
- Suggested activity: Running a tabletop exercise on a spill's first two hours.
- Suggested activity: Ranking response options for a sensitive shoreline using SIMA.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes a Tier 1 oil spill contingency plan for their facility. It sets out planning scenarios, sensitive resources, roles, notification chains, stockpile lists, first-hour checklists, escalation triggers and an exercise calendar, and is used to brief management on gaps.

Frequently Asked Questions

Does the oil spill contingency planning course suit managers without field response experience?

Yes. It is set at intermediate level and assumes familiarity with marine or terminal operations, not hands-on clean-up experience.



Which frameworks does oil spill contingency planning and initial response training rest on?

It rests on the OPRC Convention, the IPIECA-IOGP tiered model, SIMA and SCAT.

How is the plan from the oil spill contingency planning programme used at work?

You can use it to update your facility's spill plan, close equipment and training gaps and schedule the next exercise.

How does oil spill contingency planning and initial response differ from an on-scene command course?

On-scene command focuses on directing large, escalated incidents. This subject covers facility preparedness and the local response in the first hours.