

# **OIL SPILL CONTINGENCY MANUAL**

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**SECTION  
8**

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS CHECKLIST**

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# Public Relations Checklist



**MANAGING MEDIA  
RELATIONS**

**8.1**

**MEDIA FACT SHEET**

**8.2**

**KEY MESSAGE  
SAMPLE/  
WORKSHEETS**

**8.3**

# MANAGING MEDIA RELATIONS

## 8.1

### Action

- Prepare to respond quickly to the media should they become involved in your spill.*

### Procedure

- Ensure that you are aware of company policy with respect to media inquiries and on-site media response.
- Pre-designate a media spokesperson (Public Information Officer).
- Utilize one official spokesperson only; ideally person will know the area well and have credibility in the area.
- Advise the Spill Response Team regarding who will be responsible for dealing with the media and the responsibility of each member should they be approached by media personnel.
- Ensure that the Public Information Officer is fully briefed at regular intervals with respect to the status of the spill and can answer the following questions:
  - Who does the spill affect or could it affect?
  - What happened?
  - When were you first made aware of the situation?
  - Where did it occur?
  - Why did it happen?
  - How is the problem being resolved?
- Prepare a plan for receiving media on-site (meeting location, parking arrangements, personal protective equipment, areas of spill that can be safely visited, news media fact sheet).
- Develop a documentation strategy (i.e.: record of who was on-site, contact numbers, questions and concerns, and follow-up items).

## Action

- Develop a spill preliminary statement (news media fact sheet).*

## Procedure

- Use W5 and 2 H's (who, what, when, where, why, how is the problem being resolved and housekeeping information for follow-up meetings, etc.) in the preliminary statement format (see Section 7.2).
- Avoid including the following issues in a preliminary statement:
  - names of fatalities or injured people
  - liability issues
  - anything that is not factual (i.e.: spill volumes, time required to clean-up, clean-up costs, etc.)

## Action

- Ensure other stakeholders are in the communications loop (ie: employees, investors, regulators, community neighbours, local business)

## Procedure

- Quickly design and implement a communications plan for all audiences.
- Establish a 1-800 number and corporate website link; advise all stakeholders of contact information.
- Post media releases.
- Schedule open houses.
- Provide updates at specific meetings.
- Respond to inquiries.
- Develop and distribute internal updates.
- Organize photo / video shoots.
- Provide statistics, maps, etc.
- Maintain complete documentation.
- Be flexible, transparent, accommodating and accessible at all times.

## Action

- Respond to media questions in an effective manner.*

## Procedure

- Ensure that first message that is delivered indicates a concern for people affected by the spill.
- Be honest (if you don't have the answers, respond "We don't know yet").
- Be available at reasonable request.
- Listen carefully to questions and don't answer more than asked.
- Politely disagree if questions contain false accusations and calmly set the record straight.
- Avoid hypothetical questions.
- Have the media representative clarify vague questions.
- Answer only one question at a time and keep answers short.
- Never say "no comment".
- Use positive statements whenever possible (i.e.: trained personnel, spill preparedness, equipment readiness, prevention programs, containment and recovery, contingency planning).
- Portray a positive, concerned, professional appearance.
- Give a brief and positive summary at the end of the question period.
- Develop a documentation strategy (ie: record of who was on-site, contact phone numbers, questions and concerns, and follow-up items).

### NOTE

**Rule of Thumb: If you don't want to see it in print, don't say it.**

# MEDIA FACT SHEET

8.2

<b>WHO</b>	Responsible Company, who discovered
<b>WHAT</b>	Spilled material, approximate volume (if known), effects of spilled material on people, property and
<b>WHEN</b>	When spill occurred, discovered
<b>WHERE</b>	Where spill originated, where has it migrated to, size of spill
<b>WHY</b>	Spill cause
<b>HOW</b>	Safety measures, containment and recovery operations, monitoring, clean-up and debris disposal
<b>HOUSEKEEPING</b>	Contact name and number of Public Information Officer, arrangements for media follow-up meetings,



# KEY MESSAGE SAMPLE / WORKSHEETS

## 8.3

### SAMPLE

Key Message 1	Key Message 2	Key Message 3
Unfortunately AB Oil has experienced a rupture and subsequent release of oil into Swallow Lake.	Our greatest concern at this time is the safety of the community and incident responders.	We are developing an Incident Action Plan and oil spill containment and recovery equipment is en-route to the site.
Supporting Fact 1.1	Supporting Fact 2.1	Supporting Fact 3.1
The line break occurred on Tuesday, July 5 <sup>th</sup> at approximately 10:00hrs. It is estimated that 30m <sup>3</sup> of sweet crude oil was released into Swallow Lake.	We are working with provincial regulators and the RCMP to notify recreational users and local residents.	Human resources have been assigned to the response following the Incident Command System (ICS).
Supporting Fact 1.2	Supporting Fact 2.2	Supporting Fact 3.2
The break-site has been located and the line was shut-in at 11:43hrs.	We have established a 1-800 number (1-800-663-4292) where we will post updates and respond to inquiries.	Equipment identified for the incident includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- WCSS spill response trailers (see <a href="http://www.wcss.ab.ca">www.wcss.ab.ca</a>)</li> <li>- Jet boats</li> <li>- Wildlife Response units</li> <li>- Specialized skimmers</li> </ul>
Supporting Fact 1.3	Supporting Fact 2.3	Supporting Fact 3.3
AB Oil Reported the spill to provincial regulators immediately upon discovery of the incident and activated our corporate emergency response plan.	We will begin a water sampling / analysis program immediately and will publish results on our corporate website ( <a href="http://www.ABOil.ca">www.ABOil.ca</a> )	The local WCSS Oil Spill Cooperative are assisting with logistics and initial response.



## Key Message Worksheet

<b>Key Message 1</b>	<b>Key Message 2</b>	<b>Key Message 3</b>
<b>Supporting Fact 1.1</b>	<b>Supporting Fact 2.1</b>	<b>Supporting Fact 3.1</b>
<b>Supporting Fact 1.2</b>	<b>Supporting Fact 2.2</b>	<b>Supporting Fact 3.2</b>
<b>Supporting Fact 1.3</b>	<b>Supporting Fact 2.3</b>	<b>Supporting Fact 3.3</b>



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<b>Supporting Fact 1.2</b>	<b>Supporting Fact 2.2</b>	<b>Supporting Fact 3.2</b>
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