

## Environmental incident reporting

Issued December 2010

*EPA 922/10: This information sheet is part of a series on environmental management practices for vessel and facility management on marine and inland waters. This information is extracted from the code of practice published in 2008.*

### Introduction

Environmental harm can be minimised if environmental incidents are reported immediately so that action can be taken at the earliest opportunity. In some circumstances, reporting incidents to the EPA is also a legislative requirement.

### Who this applies to

- vessel operators
- slipway operators
- marina operators
- boat yard operators
- boat ramp operators
- boat and yacht club operators

### Operators must (required outcomes)

- 1 comply with section 83 (1) of *the Environment Protection Act 1993* which states: 'Where an incident occurs so that serious or material environmental harm from pollution is caused or threatened in the course of an activity undertaken by a person, the person must, as soon as reasonably practicable after becoming aware of an incident, notify the Environment Protection Authority of the incident, its nature, the circumstances in which it occurred and the action taken to deal with it'.

### Operators should (recommended practices)

- 2 prepare environmental incident records when there has been a release of solid, liquid or gas (or a combination thereof) during operations that is not ordinarily expected to occur despite the existence of a proper maintenance program and procedures due to the following:
  - plant or equipment breakdown or malfunction
  - power generation failure
  - pipe or pipeline breakage
  - storage container or vessel fracture
  - vandalism or sabotage
  - bund fracture, leakage or overflow
  - a physical or chemical reaction

- transportation vehicle breakdown, malfunction or accident
  - using plant or equipment for a purpose for which it was not designed
  - operating or maintaining plant, vehicles or equipment in an improper manner
  - failure to process, handle, move or store goods and/or materials in a proper manner.
- 3 retain environmental incident records for a period of two years from their creation
- 4 include in an environmental incident record:
- the location of the incident
  - the time and date of the incident
  - a description of the release (substance, estimated volume)
  - the source of the release (if known)
  - management strategies undertaken
  - the name and contact details of the recorder.

## Who to contact

In most cases, concerns about pollution should be referred to the source or person causing the problem in the first instance. The EPA's incident reporting (non-emergency) and complaints telephone number is **8204 2004**.

Emails to the EPA are acceptable <epainfo@epa.sa.gov.au> but must include:

- name, address and daytime telephone number of person reporting the incident
- incident details (please indicate if the incident is still occurring at the time this notification is lodged)
- date and time of incident
- details of source of pollution—business name, address, etc
- location of incident (not always the same as address).

**Note: The EPA may not be able to act on complaints lodged more than two business days (Monday to Friday) after the incident occurs.**

Caller's details are confidential to the EPA, but details may be given to the local council if the incident is within its jurisdiction.

The Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure is responsible for the management of the Marine Oil Spill Response program in South Australian waters. The 24-hour emergency contact number is **0401 124 170**.

## Record keeping

Although often neglected, record keeping is an increasingly essential tool for operations management in any industry. It can serve a number of purposes such as providing a better understanding of operations, a method of communicating between operators, evidence that legislative requirements have been met and information for evaluating efficiencies and/or deficiencies. All such outcomes have benefits for environment protection.

## References

EPA 2008, *Code of practice for vessel and facility management (marine and inland waters)*, [www.epa.sa.gov.au/xstd\\_files/Water/Code%20of%20practice/vessels.pdf](http://www.epa.sa.gov.au/xstd_files/Water/Code%20of%20practice/vessels.pdf).

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## Useful websites

EPA Vessel and facility management pages, [www.epa.sa.gov.au/vfm](http://www.epa.sa.gov.au/vfm).

## Disclaimer

This publication is a guide only and does not necessarily provide adequate information in relation to every situation. This publication seeks to explain your possible obligations in a helpful and accessible way. In doing so, however, some detail may not be captured. It is important, therefore, that you seek information from the EPA itself regarding your possible obligations and, where appropriate, that you seek your own legal advice.

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## Further information

### *Legislation*

Legislation may be viewed at: [www.legislation.sa.gov.au](http://www.legislation.sa.gov.au)

Copies of legislation are available for purchase from:

Service SA Government Legislation Outlet  
Adelaide Service SA Centre  
108 North Terrace  
Adelaide SA 5000

Telephone: 13 23 24  
Facsimile: (08) 8204 1909  
Website: <[shop.service.sa.gov.au](http://shop.service.sa.gov.au)>

### *For general information please contact:*

Environment Protection Authority  
GPO Box 2607  
Adelaide SA 5001

Telephone: (08) 8204 2004  
Facsimile: (08) 8124 4670  
Freecall (country): 1800 623 445  
Website: <[www.epa.sa.gov.au](http://www.epa.sa.gov.au)>  
Email: <[epainfo@epa.sa.gov.au](mailto:epainfo@epa.sa.gov.au)>

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