

Marine Pollution Incident (MPI) Area XII and IV

MPERSS STATUS – UNITED STATES REPORT

1. Status

The United States is the Area Coordinator for Met Areas XII and IV. The current status is operational. The National Weather Service (NWS) works in close conjunction with the National Ocean Service Office of Response and Restoration to support the response of active and potential hazardous material (HAZMAT) events.

The NWS provides the following meteorological elements:

- wind speed and direction;
- wave parameters;
- visibility;
- weather parameters (fog and precipitation);
- overall weather conditions.

2. Marine Pollution Incidents

Support was provided in several incidents since the last meeting. For example, while en route from Panama to Los Angeles, on 31 October 2004, the US Flag tanker *Vigilance* lost power and became adrift approximately 120 nautical miles southwest of Manzanillo, Mexico. The *Vigilance* carried approximately 280,000 barrels of gasoline. The United States Coast Guard contacted the NOAA Office of Response and Restoration (HAZMAT) for support determining the trajectory of this vessel, in particular, where and when it would make landfall. On 2 November 2004, NOAA HAZMAT requested weather support from Ocean Prediction Center (OPC). Towing vessels were dispatched accordingly, and OPC provided 36 to 120 hour forecasts of winds, seas, air temperature, and visibility in support of the towing operation. The vessel was towed to safe harbour without further incident.

On 4 August 2006, a 654 foot carrier vessel began listing at 57 degrees from vertical as measured by Coast Guard. Twenty-three personnel were rescued by U.S. Coast Guard and Alaska National Guard helicopters. The vessel was transporting 4813 automobiles to Vancouver Canada. It had approximately 1,375,000 gallons of bunker fuel oil aboard, in addition to the oil and gasoline in the autos. There was a sheen two miles in length emanating from the vessel. The Ocean Prediction Center provided tailored spot 48-hr. forecasts with trends to Day 5 for the U.S. Coast Guard and NOAA HAZMAT until the vessel was towed to Alaska waters where it could be righted and further spilling stopped.

3. Supporting Services

The NWS is prepared to provide tailored marine forecasts world-wide to support the Office of Response and Restoration in case of a marine emergency.