

Commonwealth of Dominica**Office of the Maritime Administrator**

TO: ALL SHIPOWNERS, OPERATORS, MASTERS AND OFFICERS OF MERCHANT SHIPS, MODU's AND RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS

SUBJECT: Approval of Shipboard Oil Pollution Emergency Plans (SOPEP)

REFERENCE:

- (a) **Dominica International Maritime Safety Act, 2000**
- (b) **MARPOL, Annex I, Regulation 26**
- (c) **IMO Guidelines for the Preparation of SOPEPs**
- (d) **Appendix A to this Circular, Model SOPEP**

PURPOSE: This Circular provides guidance to vessel owners, operators and managers in the development of Shipboard Oil Spill Emergency Plans (SOPEP) meeting the requirements of reference (b).

APPLICABILITY: This Circular applies to all Dominica Registered oil tankers over 150 GT and every Dominica ship other than an oil tanker of 400 gross tons and above, including all MODU's.

REQUIREMENTS:**1.0 Introduction**

Dominica is Party to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978, generally known as MARPOL 73/78. Annex I of MARPOL 73/78 entered into force on October 2, 1983, and a number of amendments have been adopted since that date. All nations that are parties to MARPOL 73/78 are required to take the necessary steps to ensure that each ship entitled to fly their flag has on board a Shipboard Oil Pollution Emergency Plan (SOPEP), prepared in accordance with Regulation 26 of Annex I of MARPOL 73/78, and the International Maritime Organization Guidelines for the Development of the SOPEP.

- 1.1 **SOPEP** - Regulation 26 became effective on April 4, 1993 for oil tankers over 150 GT and all other ships over 400 GT delivered on or after April 4, 1993. For existing ships of the same description delivered before April 4, 1993, the requirements became effective on April 4, 1995. Regulation 26 requires that the plan be reviewed and approved by the Administration. In keeping with current policy, Dominica has authorized the IACS class societies recognized by the Administration to review and approve SOPEPs on its behalf.
- 1.2 **Vessel Response Plans** - Owners or operators of vessels intending to trade in the United States should note that the United States requires that tank vessels must have on board, in addition to a SOPEP, a U.S. Coast Guard approved Vessel Response Plan (VRP). These rules also apply equally to delivering and receiving vessels conducting bulk oil cargo lightering operations within the exclusive economic zone of the U.S. (where cargo is destined for a port or place in the U.S.). Tankers that do not have such a VRP may be denied entry into U.S. waters. Owners or operators should contact the U.S. Coast Guard, Marine Response Division (G-MOR), 2100 Second Street SW, Washington D.C. 20593-0001 for further information on VRPs. A copy of the USCG Navigation & Vessel Inspection Circular 8-92 on Vessel Response Plans can be obtained by calling the USCG in Washington DC, at 202-267-6714.

2.0 SOPEP Review and Approval

For this Administration (or a Class Society acting on behalf of the Administration) to approve a Plan, it must satisfy a review in accordance with Reg. 26 of MARPOL 73/78 and IMO Res. MEPC.54 (32). This document is available through IMO for a nominal fee. Included in that Guideline is IMO Resolution A.648 (16), General Principles for Ship Reporting Systems and Ship Reporting Requirements, including Guidelines for Reporting Incidents Involving Dangerous Goods, Harmful Substances and/or Marine Pollutants (IMO Publication 516 90.08.E). This IMO Resolution must be incorporated into the SOPEP and may be done so by reference, in which case, it must be available on board.

3.0 SOPEP General Notes

3.1 A SOPEP should:

- be specific to the ship for which it is prepared;
- be realistic, practical and easy to use;
- be understood by ship management personnel, both onboard and ashore; and
- be evaluated, reviewed and updated regularly.

- 3.2 A SOPEP is intended to be a simple document, and the use of checklists and flowcharts is encouraged. Inclusion of extensive background information on the ship, cargo, etc., should be avoided whenever possible and be restricted to annexes, if included.
- 3.3 A SOPEP should be submitted in English. Where English is not the working language of the ship's staff that will use the plan, it is the Owner's responsibility to ensure that a copy of the Plan translated into a common working language is available onboard.
- 3.4 Each SOPEP must identify the ship to which it applies, using the ship's name, call sign, port of registry and IMO number.

4.0 SOPEP Preparation

- 4.1 An owner may elect to prepare the SOPEP himself or have it prepared for him. Regardless, approval by or on behalf of the Administration must be obtained. A SOPEP model is provided as Appendix A to this Circular. It is intended to assist ship owners and operators in writing the Plan required by MARPOL 73/78, Annex I, Regulation 26. The model Plan should simplify the preparation of a SOPEP and may be structured as outlined here:

Introduction:	(may be copied as is);
Index	(may be copied as is);
Section 1:	Preamble (may be copied as is);
Section 2:	Reporting Requirements (all except Appendices may be copied as is);
Section 3:	A table has been started and is to be completed with more detail by the Plan writer;
Section 4:	Please complete by providing the necessary data; and
Section 5:	Owner's are encouraged to supply additional data.

- 4.2 It is envisioned that a notebook or small binder be used for this Plan as the numerous Appendices should be arranged for easy use by shipboard personnel and to ease updating. Appendices shall include at least:

- IMO Resolution A.648 (16)
- Listing of Coastal State Agencies or Officials*
- Listing of Regional or Port Authorities *
- Listing of Ship Interest Contacts
- Listing of Shore-based Spill Response Contractors *
- Listing of Shore-based Technical Advisors *

* This applies to all coastal areas and countries in the vessel's trading pattern or routes; it is possible that all regions of the world may have to be covered if the vessel trades worldwide.

- 4.3 The data contained in the Appendices shall be routinely reviewed and updated as necessary. Updates to the Appendices may be done without the specific approval of the Office of the Deputy Maritime Administrator.

5.0 Fees for SOPEP Review and Approval

The fee for review and approval of this Plan by the Office of the Deputy Maritime Administrator is USD \$500.00 for the first vessel's Plan submitted by an owner. For each additional ship's Plan based on the original approved Plan, the fee is USD \$200.00. In addition, there is a USD \$50.00 fee to replace lost or missing SOPEP approval letters and certificates. Fees are payable upon receipt of the plan approval certificate. An approved Plan is required prior to obtaining a MARPOL IOPP Certificate issued by class on behalf of the Administration. Fees and charges by class societies for their review and approval of these Plans on behalf of the Office of the Deputy Maritime Administrator are set by the class societies.

Questions regarding this Circular, relevant MARPOL standards, or the United States requirements may be referred to Office of the Deputy Maritime Administrator, 32 Washington Street, Fairhaven, MA 02719; Telephone 508-992-7170; Fax 508-992-7120; e-mail registration@dominica-registry.com.

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APPENDIX A

MODEL SOPEP

INTRODUCTION

1. This Plan is written in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 26 of Annex I of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978 relating thereto.
2. The purpose of this Plan is to provide guidance to the master and officers on board this ship with respect to the steps to be taken when a pollution incident has occurred or is likely to occur.
3. This Plan contains all information and operational instructions required by the guidelines. The appendices contain names, telephone, telex numbers, etc., of all contacts referenced in this Plan, as well as other reference material.
4. This Plan has been approved by the Administration and, except as provided below, no alteration or revision shall be made to any part of it without the prior approval of the Office of the Deputy Maritime Administrator.
5. Changes to Section 5 and the appendices will not be required to be approved by the Office of the Deputy Maritime Administrator. The owners, operators and managers, however, should maintain the appendices, up to date.

SHIPBOARD OIL POLLUTION EMERGENCY PLAN

FOR THE

(NAME OF SHIP and OFFICIAL NUMBER)

INDEX OF SECTIONS

<u>Section</u>	<u>Title</u>
1	Preamble
2	Reporting Requirements 2.1 When to Report 2.2 Definitions 2.3 Controlling Factors 2.4 Additional Notifications 2.5 Follow-up Reports 2.6 Message Formats 2.7 Information Required 2.8 Who to Contact
3	Steps to Control Discharge 3.1 Operational Spills 3.2 Spills Resulting from Casualties 3.3 Priorities 3.4 Communications 3.5 Duty to Assist
4	National and Local Co-Ordination
5	Additional Information (non-mandatory)

Appendices

Revised:

Section 1: Preamble

This Plan is available to assist shipboard personnel in dealing with an unexpected discharge of oil. Its primary purpose is to set in motion the necessary actions to stop or minimize the discharge and to mitigate its effects. Effective planning ensures that the necessary actions are taken in a structured, logical and timely manner.

The need for a predetermined and properly structured Plan is clear when one considers the pressures and multiple tasks facing personnel confronted with an emergency situation. In the heat of the moment, lack of planning will often result in confusion, mistakes, and failure to advise key people. Delays will be incurred and time will be wasted, time during which the situation may well worsen. As a consequence, the ship and its personnel may be exposed to increasing hazards and greater environmental damage may occur.

This plan has been developed to address such situations. It is intended to be a realistic practical document, easy to use, and understood by the Master, ship's officers and shore side management. This Plan is in the working language of the Master and officers; contains procedures to be followed by the master or other person in charge in reporting an oil pollution incident; includes a description of the actions that should be taken immediately by persons on board to reduce or control the discharge; and includes procedures for coordinating shipboard activities with coastal, national, and port authorities' response activities.

Detailed information regarding the ship or the cargo shall be readily accessible on board but is not required to be maintained as part of this Plan. This Plan shall be maintained on board and made available for inspection by flag State and port State authorities on demand.

Section 2: Reporting Requirements

The requirements for reporting actual and/or probable oil pollution incidents under MARPOL 73/78, Annex I, Regulation 26, are as follows.

2.1 A report is required whenever there is:

- .1 an actual discharge of oil resulting from damage to the ship or its equipment, or for the purpose of securing the safety of a ship or saving life at sea; or
- .2 an actual discharge of oil during the operation of the ship in excess of the quantity or instantaneous rate permitted under the present Convention; or
- .3 a probability of discharge of oil.

- 2.2 While it is impracticable to provide precise definitions of all types of situations involving the probability of an oil discharge, the general guideline for making a report includes cases of:
- .1 damage, failure or breakdown which affects the safety of ships; examples of such situations are collision, grounding, fire, explosion, structural failure, flooding, cargo shifting; and
 - .2 failure or breakdown of machinery or equipment which results in impairment of the safety of navigation; examples of such incidents are failure or breakdown of steering gear, propulsion, electrical generating system, essential ship borne navigational aids.
- 2.3 The Master, in deciding on the need to report, shall consider at least the following factors:
- .1 the nature of the damage, failure or breakdown of ship, machinery or equipment;
 - .2 ship location and proximity to land or other navigational hazards;
 - .3 weather, tide, current and sea state; and
 - .4 traffic density.
- 2.4 If additional Coastal State(s), regional or port area authorities are known to the Master or vessel owner, additional notifications via appropriate and timely means are encouraged.
- 2.5 Supplementary or follow-up reports shall be made using this same procedure. Once an initial report is made, at least one follow-up report will be needed so as to conclude any further activity regarding the reported matter.
- 2.6 Should it be deemed appropriate, notification of the Coastal State(s) shall be by the most expeditious means available and follow the guidelines of IMO Resolution A.648 (16), General Principles for Ship Reporting Systems and Ship Reporting Requirements, including Guidelines for Reporting Incidents Involving Dangerous Goods, Harmful Substances and/or Marine Pollutants (adopted October 19, 1989). Included in this Plan's Appendices are copies of the message format to be used and Resolution A.684 (16) including its Annex, to assist in making this report.
- 2.7 Information required includes:
- Ship Name, Call Sign, Flag
 - Date, Time of Event (UTC)
 - Position
 - True Course
 - Speed

- Intended Track
- Radio stations/frequencies guarded
- Time of Next Report
- Type and Quantity of Cargo & Bunkers on board
- Defect, Deficiencies or Damage Report
- Pollution Details (type and amount lost)
- Weather & Sea Conditions
- Ship's Representative or Owner
- Ship size and type
- Other Data: Incident details, need for assistance, action being taken, size of crew, injury or fatality report, and so on.

2.8 Who to Contact:

- .1 Coastal States: for ships at sea, a listing of authorities to be notified as requested through IMO follows in the Appendices.
- .2 Port Contacts: for ships in port, see the appropriate Appendix for a listing of authorities within the Port where the incident is occurring. Local agent, coast guard or port authorities should be considered.
- .3 Ship Interest Contacts: as directed by the owner, agent, Administration, P & I clubs, and so forth. Provide a precedent order and complete identification/fax/phone/e-mail information. The Decision-Maker must be among those kept informed, as that individual will be the primary liaison with the Office of the Deputy Maritime Administrator.

Section 3: Steps to Control Discharge

Timely effort must be made to attempt to stop the discharge of oil. The following tables outline the needed action and responsible person for various Oil Pollution Emergencies.

3.1 For operational spills related to cargo operations or bunkering:

<u>Spill Cause</u>	<u>Action to be Taken</u>	<u>Responsible Person</u>
Pipe Leak (on board)	Stop Product Flow.	Cargo Watch Officer or Chief Officer
Pipe Joint Leak (on board)	Contain Spill on Deck.	
Hose Rupture/Connection Leak (on deck)	By-Pass, replace or repair failed complement (in cooperation with coastal state, class society representatives, flag administration).	

<u>Spill Cause</u>	<u>Action to be Taken</u>	<u>Responsible Person</u>
Hose or Pipe Leak (Facility or other vessel's)	Stop Product Flow. Contain spill (in charge or assist, depending on Pre-Transfer Agreement). Coordinate with facility or other vessel.	Cargo Watch Officer or Chief Officer
Tank Overflow (on board)	Stop product flow. Contain spill on deck. Safely transfer cargo until tank level is satisfactory.	Cargo Watch Officer or Chief Officer.
Hull Leakage - above waterline	Stop Product Flow. Contain spill, determine source, safely transfer cargo until tank level is satisfactory. Repair tank in cooperation with coastal state, class society & flag administration.	Cargo Watch Officer or Chief Officer
Hull Leakage - at or below waterline	Stop Product Flow. Contain spill, determine source, safely transfer cargo until tank level is satisfactory. Repair tank in cooperation with coastal state, class society & flag administration.	Cargo Watch Officer or Chief Officer

3.2 For spills resulting from casualties:

<u>Spill Cause</u>	<u>Action to be Taken</u>	<u>Responsible Person</u>
Grounding	Stabilize ship. Determine position, if safe attempt to re-float. If not, engage salvage resources. Contain spill.	Master assess damage.
Fire/Explosion	Contain area of damage. Stabilize ship If needed, obtain salvage resources. Contain spill.	Master assess damage.
Collision	Contain area of damage. Stabilize ship If needed, obtain salvage resources. Contain spill.	Master assess damage.
Excessive List	Determine cause of list. Stabilize ship. If safe, correct list. If needed, obtain salvage resources. Contain spill.	Master

3.3 Priorities

In all cases, the SAFETY OF SHIPBOARD PERSONNEL IS A PARAMOUNT. The second priority is to stabilize the ship, limit damages and other related response actions whose goal is to prevent the loss of the vessel. This could include technical data from the Class Society related to damage stability and hull stress calculations, use of on-board plans, cargo loading plans, lightering or other similar matters. Third, summon assistance from sources off the ship such as firefighting, damage control, towing and spill response.

3.4 Communications

Communication with all relevant interested bodies is understood to be an integral part of these processes. Authorities of relevant Coastal States or Port States, the Flag Administration, Class Society, the Owners and Operators, P & I Clubs, underwriters, charterers and any other person determined by the owner and Master shall be informed and updated as outlined elsewhere in this Plan and its Appendices.

3.5 Duty to Assist

Similarly, it remains the Master's responsibility to render assistance to other ships to save and protect lives at sea. Nothing in this Plan shall detract from this tradition among mariners.

Section 4: National and Local Co-Ordination

4.1 The Master shall initiate rapid and accurate reporting to appropriate Coastal State(s) authorities. It is imperative that the Master, or other designated person, be clearly identified as the official and only point of contact on board for all matters related to the response to the reported incident.

4.2 It is recognized that while the Master may be the best person for this task, an owner may wish to remove this onerous burden from the Master, particularly if the ship is underway, aground or on fire. This is acceptable so long as the individual is present and accessible to Coastal State(s) authorities, port authorities and the Office of the Deputy Maritime Administrator.

4.3 THE ON-BOARD CONTACT PERSON ON ALL MATTERS RELATED TO THIS
PLAN IS _____.

Telephone:

Fax:

Telex:

- 4.4 The names, address, phones, faxes, e-mail address of relevant Coastal State, regional and local authorities are in the appendices to this Plan. Consideration for the ship's trade route or pattern must be given. For example, if the vessel is not trading regularly in the USA, the national U.S. Coast Guard Hotline number is sufficient in the listings.
- 4.5 The National U.S. Coast Guard Hotline telephone number will be sufficient for initial notification. Local Coast Guard, regional or state government notifications should also be made.

AppendicesTable of Contents

1. Response Decision-Making Aid (Flow Chart)
2. Guidelines for When and How to Report -

IMO Resolution A.648 (16), Guidelines General Principles for Ship Reporting Systems and Ship Reporting Requirements, including Guidelines for Reporting Incidents Involving Dangerous Goods, Harmful Substances and/or Marine Pollutants (IMO Publication 516 90.08.E)
3. To Whom a Report is to be made -

Coastal State Authorities

Port or Regional Authorities

Ship Interest Contacts
4. Ship's Plans and Drawings -

Location and access
5. Vessel Loading and Hull Stress Calculation References -

Loading/Discharge Manuals

On-Board Technical Resources (Loadmaster, computer, etc.)

Shore-based Technical Support
6. Additional Materials