

# How to Report Fuel & Bilge Oil Spills

**C**OMMERCIAL FISHING AND RECREATIONAL VESSELS are required to report most fuel and bilge oil spills that occur in navigable waterways.

## WHEN IS A REPORT REQUIRED?

Regulations require that a report be made as soon as the person in charge of the vessel, off-shore or on-shore facility is aware of the spill. The report must be made to the National Response Center (NRC), which is manned 24 hours a day by U.S Coast Guard personnel, and the Louisiana Emergency Hazardous Materials Hotline. The law requires reports be made if any of the following occur:


- The discharge causes a sheen or discoloration on the surface of the water body.
- The discharge causes a sludge or emulsion (water/oil mix) beneath the surface of the water or on the shoreline.
- If a spill happens while you are refueling your own boat, call it in anyway. By doing so, you will avoid or minimize any actions taken by the Coast Guard.
- Not reporting your spill could substantially increase the charges and fines after the Coast Guard investigates.

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A REPORT IS SUBMITTED?

The NRC will require several things from the person reporting the spill including: name, contact information, responsible party, quantity of discharge, location of the incident, weather conditions, as well as other information.

The NRC will then notify the Environmental Protection Agency or U.S. Coast Guard On Scene Coordinator (OSC). After receiving the report, the OSC will evaluate the situation and decide if a federal emergency response is necessary.



 United States Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Emergency Management (5104A) EPA-550-F-06-006, December 2006, [www.epa.gov/emergencies](http://www.epa.gov/emergencies)



## Soak it, don't soap it!

Never use detergents to 'clean up' the oil, as they harm sea life and could cost you hefty fines. Use oil absorbent sheets or pads instead to remove oil safely. For more information on how to handle an accidental spill, visit Gulf Sea Grant's Oil Spill Outreach: <https://masgc.org/oilscience/oil-spill-science-boaters-guide.pdf>

## HOW TO REPORT A SPILL?

To the NRC:  
Call (800) 424-8802  
The TDD number is (202) 267-4477

To the state hotline:  
Call (877) 925-6595

