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National Oil Spill Contingency Plan

Cabinet has approved a new plan to mitigate the effect of oil spills on land and in marine areas across Trinidad and Tobago. The National Oil Spill Contingency Plan (NOSCP) that was approved on January 31, 2013 is designed to mitigate the impact of all oil spills on the environment by setting specific standards for oil spill equipment stockpiles, establishing time frames for oil spill response and increasing collaboration among partner agencies. Several measures in the plan will take effect immediately with full implementation expected by the beginning of 2014.

The introduction of the NOSCP coincides with the award of two Blocks to bpTT offshore the East Coast of Trinidad in May 2012 and the future signings of contracts with BHP Billiton and their partners for another four deepwater blocks. It is felt that increased exploration and production activity warrants an increase in precautionary measures especially in light of the major oil spill incident in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010.

Under the plan, deepwater drilling operators will now be required to demonstrate accessibility to a containment cap system to arrest a sub-sea blow-out event, as well as the availability of an additional rig to drill a relief well to effectively seal the uncontained well. Operators would also require Remote Operated Vehicles (ROVs) in country, support vessels to transport and deploy this equipment and access to vessels for fire-fighting in the event of a fire/explosion event.

Measures under the NOSCP include the acquisition and deployment of surveillance and monitoring technologies to ascertain liability in the event of a spill. Training exercises recommended under the NOSCP also provide opportunities for more frequent interaction between first responder agencies such as the Environmental Management Authority (EMA), the Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA), the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard and Trinidad and Tobago Air Guard (TTAG).

The NOSCP was developed by the National Hydrocarbon and Chemical Spills Contingency Plan (NHCSCP) Committee which was led by the Ministry Of Energy and Energy Industries, consisted of eleven (11) Government Ministries and Agencies working alongside eight (8) major upstream and downstream Energy Companies.

Please click on the link below for the contingency plan:

[National Oil Spill Contingency Plan 2013 \(/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/62.pdf\)](/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/62.pdf)

