



Pinellas County EM
FACT SHEET
NEW INFORMATION IN BOLD PRINT

Fact Sheet #:	7	Event: Deep Water Horizon	Date/Time: 6/18/2010, 4:30 pm
---------------	---	---------------------------	-------------------------------

- Deepwater Horizon is a “National Contingency Plan” event, where the responsible party is obligated to bear the burden of response costs. That being said, this is an unprecedented event and operational and funding processes are being developed as it evolves. Pinellas County Emergency Management, Environmental Management, Communications, Volunteer Services, Parks Dept, Convention & Visitors Bureau, Economic Development, Health Department, Management & Budget, and Solid Waste are working together and with the State and the USCG to monitor and plan for possible operations within our County, as well as review other possible options based on northern county operations. This includes daily State Conference Calls, weekly conference calls with the USCG Sector St. Petersburg, and various other conference calls and meetings. State conference call notes are being shared daily with City EM Coordinators.

SITUATION

- The Florida Peninsula Command Post was activated June 10th in Miami to provide a command and control structure to plan and deliver oil spill preparedness and response activities across the Florida Peninsula should they be needed. The Joint Information Center for the Incident Command Post in Miami has established a dedicated media phone line relating to the Deepwater Horizon/BP oil spill. The toll-free number is (888) 693-3003. The Sector St. Pete location is now serving as a Branch of the new Unified Command in Miami, and currently consists of a 4 person Joint Info Center. If Sector St. Pete’s Area of Operation is under direct threat the St. Pete Branch will reactivate as a local incident command post.
- Reconnaissance flights are being conducted daily, weather permitting, to monitor Florida’s shoreline for impact, investigate any reported sightings, etc. **The latest flight on June 17th found no sheen in the flight area.**
- On June 9, the Gulf Oil Spill Economic Recovery Task Force held its first meeting in Tallahassee to facilitate efforts by Florida businesses and industries in recovering from lost business and revenues due to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.
- The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services has implemented a new toll-free hotline to provide consumers with current information about the status of Florida’s open and closed fishing harvest areas, the availability of seafood varieties, and general pricing information. The number is 1-800-357-4273.
- Governor Crist has authorized additional proactive measures be taken to ensure the quick and timely discovery of oil from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Reconnaissance missions are being coordinated daily from the State Emergency Operations Center in Tallahassee using air, land, and sea assets from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the Florida Civil Air Patrol, and the Florida National Guard.
- The Top Hat operation is proving to be successful. A lot of capacity is coming out of the well head and they are taking out a lot more than originally expected. BP reports operations are progressing as planned; increasing the flow of oil and gas to the surface and reducing the amount entering the Gulf of Mexico.
- Keep in mind – what is being shown on the news from Louisiana and the other northern Gulf region is not what we would see in Pinellas County should any oil reach our area. NOAA: Weathering reduces oil volume by 30-50%. Remaining oil would be composed of long strips of emulsified oil and mostly as “tar balls”.
- There are reports of a scam involving individuals falsely representing themselves as BP employees and

offering applicants training and promising job placement for a fee. BP does not charge to train and hire applicants. If you or someone you know has been charged for training, please contact law enforcement. All training offered by BP is free. There are no fees for classes or registration.

- The current spill projections, available at (<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon>), continue to show the oil remaining off shore from Pinellas County.
- There are no plans to use dispersants in Florida. If they are ever considered in state waters, the determination to use the chemical would be evaluated by DEP with input from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Florida Research Institute and EPA.

IMPACTS & STRATEGY:

- The possible impact to our area, if any, would be tar balls and tar patties, which present possible issues with wildlife, and if they arrive on the beach will require clean up.
- Booming strategies with Pinellas and other area counties have been completed by Environmental Management and SeaGrant staff, as well as State Dept of Environmental Protection to be sure all environmentally sensitive areas have been identified.
- The booming strategy focuses on environmentally sensitive areas – as identified and recently updated in the USCG Area Contingency Plan (ACP). Those critically sensitive areas in the plan will be protected via BP contractors. The sites can be viewed at <http://ocean.floridamarine.org/ACP/STPACP/MAPS.html>
- Estuaries and inlets are at the top of the list, not the beach areas. This is to protect sensitive habitat that support wildlife and fish.
- Strategy for beaches is that, if impacted, they will be cleaned by BP Contractors. The reason for this is that booming is ineffective in open water areas of beaches due to the winds and currents over one knot.
- The USCG has notified us that the 'decision point' for moving from planning mode to operations will be reached when the NOAA 72 hr line of uncertainty infringes within 94 miles of the shoreline. Unified Command will use the best available data (trajectories, product type, projected shoreline impact, etc) to determine if resources should be staged and/or deployed. It does not mean that unified command will automatically go operational. Prior forecast infringements have turned out to be unfounded after observation flights indicated that the light transparent sheen was well off shore. Additionally, these sheens have been entrained in the loop eddy moving south and then west while dissipating. It should be noted that unified command is looking at six days or more from 'decision point' if the oil was moving due east at a rapid rate. The best science still indicates that the threat to the west coast of Florida remains low.
- It should be noted that ANY protective or response operations undertaken without coordination and approval from the State and/or BP will not be considered for reimbursement. All proposed work is submitted to the State & USCG through the County Emergency Management office, in coordination with County Environmental Management.
- Perspective: In 2008 and 2009 there were 667 and 681 reports respectively of oil and petroleum incidents along Florida's waterways and beaches so these types of occurrences are not as unusual as one might think. Specifically in the Florida Keys (Monroe County), there were 53 incidents in 2008 and 72 incidents in 2009 of oil and petroleum products being reported in their coastal waters.
- SCAT (Shoreline Cleanup Assessment Technique): The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) SW District office is developing a plan for oil cleanup for this district. This response plan is designed to respond to the unique level of oiling and characteristics of any affected wetlands. NOAA developed the SCAT with those concepts in mind. Steps in the SCAT process include; conduct a shoreline

survey, divide the shoreline into segments and assign teams to develop cleanup guidelines and endpoints, submit reports with sketches to the Planning Section, monitor the cleanup, post cleanup inspections and evaluate the clean up activities. SCAT teams are very active recovering tar balls in the northern Gulf waters for testing and evaluation.

- **STATE ACTIONS:**

Governor Crist announced another free fishing weekend. All Florida residents and visitors may fish statewide for saltwater species without a license this Father's Day weekend June 19 -20. (Source: Rollout of 6-17)

- **VOLUNTEERS:** Although there is no imminent threat of oil from the Deepwater Horizon spill making landfall in Pinellas County, volunteers are needed to register for a pre-oil beach cleanup, if necessary. There is no date or time for the event; it will be scheduled only if a notification is received from the U.S. Coast Guard that oil residue threatens the Pinellas County shoreline. To register for the Special Beach Cleanup, visit www.pinvol.org. Those who register will be notified by e-mail if oil landfall is expected within 48 hours. Citizens wishing to volunteer should contact the organization of their choice for Pinellas at the link; <http://www.pinellascounty.org/oilspill2010.htm>.

Anyone interested in doing actual cleaning of tar from beaches needs to contact the BP Community Line at 866-448-5816. Those who are interested will be trained by BP and will become BP 'employees'.

- **BP:** The BP Claims number (1-800-440-0858) is open 24 hrs a day for businesses/individuals to file claims. The normal business hours have the highest rate of activity so callers are encouraged to utilize off-hour times. Claims info can be found at the website: <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon/default.htm#update>
- **PUBLIC HEALTH:** Using state developed guidance the Local Department of Health (DOH) has provided the following process for beach closures/health advisories:
 - **If impact to Pinellas becomes imminent, or actually happens, the DOH, in conjunction with Emergency Mgmt and involved municipalities, will consider an advisory. Through the 'healthy beaches' program the DOH has phone numbers and email for each jurisdiction. If an advisory is to be issued DOH will advise the media for distribution to the public.**
 - At that time the jurisdiction can decide if they want to close the beach or not.
 - DOH is currently in a supportive role within the unified command center.
 - **General Health information and Tips to Avoid negative health impacts from an oiled shoreline and responder safety can be found at: <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon/health.htm>**
- **TOURISM:** At www.VISITFLORIDA.COM vacationers are able to view live Twitter feeds and read up to the minute information on the status of any city or region in Florida. Learn more at <http://www.visitflorida.com/traveladvisory> . **The letter CVB sent to Governor Charlie Crist on 6/02/10 requesting \$2.5 million of the \$25 million in emergency marketing funds was never replied to, and we have since learned that Visit Florida is now in charge of administering those funds. VSPC immediately sent a letter to Visit Florida making the same request.**
- **BUSINESSES:** **The State of Florida activated their Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan Program to provide emergency, short-term loans to established small businesses in the designated counties, including Pinellas. The loan application opened on June 14, 2010 and information can be at <http://www.floridaoilhelp.com/>.** Further information is available at <http://www.ffcfc.com> or by calling (850) 681-3601 or (850) 487-2568. This is in addition to the Small Business Administration (SBA) making Economic Injury loans available to businesses that are part of the Governor's Executive Order. More information can be found at Pinellas County Economic Development's website: http://www.pced.org/demographics_data/subpage.asp?coop or the SBA website at: www.sba.gov Loan

applications for economic injury can be filed until the close of business on February 14, 2011.

- **STATE EOC TOOL OF CHOICE: GATOR (Geospatial Assessment Tool for Operations and Response)** <http://map.floridadisaster.org/GATOR/> This is rapidly becoming the tool of choice out of the Florida EOC. It is very user friendly.
- **FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY WEBISTE: Florida CFO Alex Sink today launched a webpage allowing Floridians to track state expenditures in response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, and to provide transparency in how BP grant dollars are distributed to Florida counties to reimburse their costs in responding to the oil spill. The webpage is linked from CFO Sink's "Florida's Checkbook" webpage:** <http://www.myfloridacfo.com/transparency>.