

# OSHA<sup>®</sup> FactSheet

## Deepwater Horizon/Mississippi Canyon 252 Oil Spill

OSHA's top priority is to ensure that oil spill response and cleanup operations are done as safely, effectively and efficiently as possible. This fact sheet provides basic information about common operations, hazards, training and worker protection. If you are unsure or think your work is unsafe, STOP and ASK your supervisor. You can call OSHA at one of its gulf coast Area Offices during normal working hours or at 1-800-321-OSHA (6742) or TTY 1-877-889-5627 for further information.

<b>OSHA - Florida</b> Ft. Lauderdale 954-424-0242 Jacksonville 904-232-2895 Tampa 813-626-1177	<b>OSHA - Louisiana</b> Baton Rouge 225-298-5458 <b>OSHA - Mississippi</b> Jackson 601-965-4606 <b>OSHA - Alabama</b> Mobile 251-441-6131	<b>OSHA - Texas</b> Corpus Christi 361-888-3420 Houston North 281-591-2438 Houston South 281-286-0583	<b>BP Hotlines</b> Volunteers: 866-448-5816 Vessels of Opportunity Program (skimming operations): 281-366-5511
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### What Are the Operations and Hazards During Shoreline and Vessel Operations?

If you are involved in response and cleanup of weathered oil, you might be:

- Placing or recovering booms
- Skimming and pumping oil (inshore)
- Loading and unloading booms, supplies and people
- Pressure washing boats
- Picking up oil-covered debris
- Conducting other shoreline cleanup operations
- Launching and/or landing boats

Hazards from these operations can include:

- Heat stress – can range from heat exhaustion (headaches, dizziness, weakness, fainting) to heat stroke (hot, dry skin; no longer sweating; confusion). Heat stroke is an emergency and requires immediate medical care.
- Sunburn and sun poisoning
- Skin and eye irritation or rashes (dermatitis) from contact with “weathered” oil
- Cuts, sprains and other injuries
- Drowning
- Being hit by earthmoving or other equipment
- Traffic hazards and car accidents
- Bites from snakes, fire ants and mosquitoes, rodents and alligators
- Lightning and severe weather
- Back injury from lifting and carrying
- Noise
- Exhaustion and fatigue from long hours and demanding work

Exposure to any of these hazards depends on what you are actually doing and where you are working. For example, heat stress is a real concern for all outdoor activities because the weather is hot and humid. If you are pulling in oil-covered booms, then contact with weathered oil, drowning, and back injuries are also concerns.

Volunteers should be protected as well. For information, call the BP Hotline at 866-448-5816.

### What Is Your Employer Required to Do?

**1. Train you** on the hazards of your job in a language that you understand. You must be trained before you begin oil spill response and cleanup work. Your employer must determine the type and length of training you will need. Training is based on your job duties and the job’s hazards.

If you are:	You must receive:
Doing work that does NOT involve materials contaminated by the spill	1½ hour training [Module 2 – Contractor Expectations (includes Basic Health & Safety Orientation)]
Doing work cleaning up oil-contaminated shoreline or vessel operations involving “weathered” oil recovery	4 hours of training [Module 3 – Post-Emergency Spilled Oil Cleanup (includes Basic Health & Safety Orientation and Contractor Expectations)] NOTE: These workers will be supervised by people with at least 40 hours of hazardous operations training.

OSHA is monitoring BP to make sure that their site training meets OSHA requirements. To work on the spill cleanup, you must receive training from an instructor approved to provide training for this event. The training is provided for **free**. After you successfully complete the class, you will receive an identification card as proof of your training.

**2. Establish safe work practices and give you the personal protective equipment you need** to do the job safely. Work practices and protective equipment requirements depend on the hazards of each job.

Examples of safe work practices that your employer should use to protect you include:

- Providing rest breaks throughout a work shift to help control heat stress. Providing break and rest areas in the shade. Providing you with water to drink throughout the shift. Providing sunscreen to protect you from sunburn and sun poisoning.
- Training you how to lift loads safely and ensuring that you have the right equipment or enough people to lift heavier loads.
- Having buckets, brushes, water and soap available and providing you with instructions about how to clean oily protective equipment before removing it.

Most jobs will require some type of personal protective equipment. In general, your employer needs to provide protective equipment and must train you on how to use it. Examples of jobs and personal protective equipment include:

- For jobs that do not involve contact with oil, like picking up clean debris along the shoreline, employers need to give you **work gloves**.
- For jobs involving oil-contaminated debris and those involving contact with oil or other chemicals, employers need to provide additional protective equipment such as **oil- or chemical-resistant gloves, boots and coveralls**.
- For jobs involving work on vessels, docks or other areas with potential drowning hazards, employers need to provide **life jackets (personal floatation devices)**.

Your employer must determine the safe work practices and protective equipment that are appropriate for each job. This information must be provided to you during training. More information is available in the OSHA/National Institute for Environmental Health Science (NIEHS) Safety and Health Awareness for Oil Spill Cleanup Workers ([https://www.osha.gov/Publications/Oil\\_Spill\\_Booklet\\_05.11\\_v4.pdf](https://www.osha.gov/Publications/Oil_Spill_Booklet_05.11_v4.pdf)) and on OSHA's Oil Spill webpage at <https://www.osha.gov/oilspills/index.html>.

**3. Develop a health and safety site plan and share it with you.** The plan must contain information about the job and work site hazards, and spell out the requirements for safe work practices, personal protective equipment, training and emergencies.

### What Other Worker Safety Requirements Apply to Oil Spill Response and Cleanup?

Your employer must follow the other requirements in OSHA's Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) standard and the OSHA standards for other hazards, equipment, or operations that might be present at your work site (for example **noise, personal protective equipment and powered industrial trucks**). You can find more information about these requirements in other OSHA fact sheets and on OSHA's website at [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov).

#### Worker Rights

**You have the right to a safe workplace.** The *Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970* (OSH Act) was passed to prevent workers from being killed or seriously harmed at work. The law requires that employers provide their employees with working conditions that are free of known dangers. OSHA sets and enforces protective workplace safety and health standards. OSHA also provides information, training and assistance to workers and employers. Workers may file a complaint to have OSHA inspect their workplace if they believe that their employer is not following OSHA standards or there are serious hazards. Contact OSHA at 1-800-321-OSHA (6742) if you have questions or want to file a complaint. We will keep your information confidential. We are here to help you.

This is one in a series of informational fact sheets highlighting OSHA programs, policies or standards. It does not impose any new compliance requirements. For a comprehensive list of compliance requirements of OSHA standards or regulations, refer to Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations. This information will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. The voice phone is (202) 693-1999; teletypewriter (TTY) number: (877) 889-5627.

For more complete information:



**Occupational Safety  
and Health Administration**  
U.S. Department of Labor

[www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)  
(800) 321-OSHA