

Guidance for Marine Debris Recovery in Alaska



SPILL PREVENTION AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROGRAM

ADEC notification numbers

Southeast Region (south of
Yakutat) 907-465-5340

Central Region (Yakutat to
Norton Sound) 907-269-3063

Northern Region (north of
Norton Sound) 907-451-2121

Outside normal business hours
1-907-428-7200

**United States Coast Guard
National Response Center**
Statewide 1-800-424-8802

For Additional Information:

<http://www.dec.state.ak.us/spar/perp/MarineDebris/index.htm>

Marine Debris recovery efforts on Alaskan shorelines can pose a threat to cleanup crews. One risk to people involved in the removal of marine debris is the potential for exposure to hazardous materials (Hazmat).

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) recommends that shoreline cleanup crews have the capability to identify and properly handle substances that may pose a threat. A HAZWOPER trained person is recommended for each crew.



Hazmat found on Alaskan shorelines has many sources, including tsunami debris from the Japanese earthquake in 2011, passing marine traffic and shoreline erosion. Hazmat from these sources can take many forms; the most common would be classified as “household hazardous waste”

Household Hazardous Waste

These products are commonly found in homes and small businesses and can pose a risk to the environment if not properly disposed of. While the risk to cleanup workers is limited due to the small volumes, it must be considered when undertaking cleanup activities. Household hazardous waste should be handled carefully and disposed of in a proper manner.



Pesticide Canisters

Aluminum canisters about 10 inches tall are frequently found on beaches and shorelines. These are discarded from cargo ships, where they are used to distribute aluminum phosphide, a pesticide also known as zinc phosphide, phostoxin, or rat poison. This is a hazardous product which can only be used by persons who are certified pesticide applicators. When phosphide tablets or pellets are exposed to moisture in the air, they generate phosphide gas, which is a human health risk and is flammable. Please see ADEC guidance document for pesticide canisters, which is available on the website, for additional information.



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Commercial and Industrial Waste

Another form of hazmat that may be encountered is commercial products that are generally found in containers that are 5 gallons or larger in size. These substances are typically used in business or industrial settings. They consist of cleaners, degreasers, solvents, caustics, petroleum products, pesticides, and other compounds and chemicals that are used by trained workers familiar with the product, and often wearing proper personal protection equipment (PPE) to address exposure concerns. The threat to cleanup workers is moderate with these components; direct contact with the skin is the most common risk. Respiratory threats are limited in the open environment, but should not be discounted.



Industrial Chemicals also may be found in the smaller “Intermediate Bulk Containers” (IBC) these containers are most common in three hundred gallon range that are approximately 4 ft x 4 ft x 4 ft. These containers are also, in most cases, too large for the cleanup crews to handle and should not be opened.

Industrial chemicals are generally packaged in larger containers, 55 gallon drums or larger “International Standards Organization” (ISO) tanks. These tanks are measured in thousands of gallons and are normally too large (truck size) for shoreline cleanup crews to handle. Crews should not attempt to open the container or to attempt to determine the contents.



ISO, IBC, tanks or drums of suspected industrial products, **should not be opened or handled** and the location should be identified and any markings or labeling should be recorded and photographed. Any damage to the containers should be noted, such as holes in the container that would have allowed the discharge of the original contents. The location and condition of these containers should be reported to the United States Coast Guard and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.



Explosive
Hazard—MK25 Smoke float
found on Perry Island in Prince William Sound.

Special Wastes

Shoreline cleanup crews may encounter other hazardous materials such as munitions, compressed gas cylinders, or other hazards that have a potential to burn or explode. These types of hazardous materials should not be touched or handled. Identify the location and notify USCG and ADEC.