

# Detailed guide: Clean an oil spill at sea and get oil spill treatments approved

*Updated:* New form added

## **Oil spills at sea**

You have 2 main options when dealing with an oil spill at sea.

### **Do nothing**

You can let natural processes disperse, evaporate and degrade the spill for you – this is probably the best option when:

- the quantities of oil are small
- the oil is a type that tends to disperse or evaporate readily without intervention
- no marine resources are threatened by the spill

### **Use an oil spill treatment product**

You can intervene if an oil spill represents a safety risk, or poses a significant threat to commercial, environmental or amenity interests. You must consider the effects of any intervention. [Some techniques](#) are poorly-suited to marine conditions around the coast of UK. Unless the oil can be physically recovered, the choice is often between leaving the oil alone or using an oil spill treatment product.

## **Request approval to use an oil spill treatment product**

You need approval from the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) before you use a product to treat oil.

MMO will respond within 1 hour approving or rejecting your request to use an [approved product](#) in English or Welsh waters.

The product must be approved by MMO and be used in line with the conditions of its approval.

Read MMO's

[Approval to use oil spill treatment products flowchart](#)  
(PDF, 357KB, 7 pages)

# Report a marine pollution incident

In a marine pollution incident MMO consults several organisations to ensure that specific scientific, environmental and fisheries advice is taken into account for every decision.

To report a marine pollution incident call:

- 0300 200 2024 within office hours
- 07770 977 825 outside office hours
- 0345 051 8486 or 0845 051 8486 at all times if other numbers out of order

You can use [approved oil spill treatment products](#) where there is a genuine risk to human life or to the safety of an installation or vessel without consulting with MMO.

MMO and the relevant statutory nature conservation agencies – Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, Scottish Natural Heritage, and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee – should be informed after the incident.

MMO approves use in English and Welsh waters. Marine Scotland and Northern Ireland Environment Agency approve use in their waters.

MMO acts on behalf of the UK for testing and approving oil treatment products intended for use in UK waters.

## Standing approvals

A standing approval is an agreement between MMO and a port or harbour authority, that specific oil spill treatment products may be used under certain conditions and in specific areas, without approval. This means a faster response to oil spills. Standing approvals may also be given to operators of oil and gas installations in coastal waters, or fixed locations such as terminals.

Port or harbour authorities must report to MMO that they have used a standing approval at the earliest possible opportunity.

Standing approvals for England and Wales exist at the locations below. You can view the extent of each standing approval on the [Coastal and Marine Resource Atlas](#) interactive map, by selecting the standing approvals layer on the list of layers.

- Bristol Port
- Fawley Oil Refinery, Southampton
- Felixstowe Port
- Fishguard Harbour, Goodwick (Stenaline)
- Fleetwood Enclosed Docks
- Harwich Haven Authority
- Humber Associated British Port
- Tetney Monobuoy at the Humber

- Immingham Associated Petroleum Terminal
- Ipswich Associated British Port
- Lowestoft Associated British Port
- Ramsgate Port
- Sheerness/Chatham Port
- Teddington Sea Reach Buoy 1
- Workington Prince of Wales Dock

Standing approvals are issued by MMO and you must contact MMO as soon as possible during an incident, and report back to them on the extent and success of product use once it is over. A typical report will include the following information:

- name of organisation
- incident number
- date
- nature of spill
- location
- remedial action taken
- product used (including volume)
- date of manufacture of the product used
- when the product's ability to produce the intended result (efficacy) was last tested (if applicable)
- comments on efficacy relating to incident
- other comments
- date of report
- time of report
- name of person making report

Standing approvals are for 5 years. You must submit another application before the expiry date.

## Get an oil spill treatment approved

You must apply to MMO if you want to market a new or rebranded oil spill treatment product for use in UK waters.

All products not previously approved will need to be tested for [toxicity](#). Dispersants, bioremediation products and some other types of oil spill treatment product will also have to be tested for their [efficacy](#).

Your approval must be renewed after 5 years, or sooner if specified, and you must notify MMO of any change in the company's name, address or the product's composition.

Send your completed [application form](#) and [payment](#) to MMO. You will need to provide evidence to support your application.

Renewing or rebranding an existing approved product will normally be considered on the basis that the product's composition is not significantly changed.

# What you need to include in your application

## Test results

If you have tested the product in a laboratory not commissioned by MMO, include the test results when you send your applications form. MMO will make sure the test data conforms to standard protocols – there will be a [fee](#) for this.

If you are using a laboratory commissioned by MMO, send a sample of the product separately from your application form to the laboratory – there will be a [testing fee](#).

The size of the sample will depend on the types of tests required. Full details are given on the application form or can be requested from MMO.

## Label

The proposed product label must be approved by MMO and must contain:

- product name
- name, address and daytime or out of office hours telephone number of manufacturer, importer or rebrander
- list of ingredients
- oil spill treatment product type – dispersant type, sorbent, bioremediant or other
- a warning against mixing the product with any other products
- date of manufacture, batch number and expiry date (subject to extension)
- recommended storage instructions
- risk symbol and description
- instructions on use including a statement that the product should not be used in sea depths of fewer than 20 metres or within 1 nautical mile of such depths
- basic safety instructions or caution and any suitable chemical hazard signs

The label should also meet the requirements of the Classification, Labelling, and Packaging (CLP) Regulations

## Approval

MMO will:

- consider the application
- examine the proposed labelling
- carry out toxicity and Efficacy testing as appropriate

The product may be marketed for use in English and Welsh waters as soon as MMO issues the formal approval notice. Details of the product and the name and address of the approval holder will be registered and this information will be made publicly available on the [approved oil spill treatment products](#)

[list.](#)

The product should not be used in Scottish or Northern Irish waters until Marine Scotland or the Northern Ireland Environment Agency confirm the approval.

## **Further information**

[How to use oil spill treatment products and equipment](#)

[Approved oil spill treatment products](#)

[Get an oil spill treatment product approved: fees](#)

[Get an oil spill treatment product approved: application form](#)

[Marine Pollution Contingency Plan](#)

## **Contact information**

**Marine Conservation and Enforcement Team**

0300 123 1032

[dispersants@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:dispersants@marinemanagement.org.uk)

---

# **Statutory guidance: Marine Pollution Contingency Plan**

*Updated:* Plan updated

The plan is under constant review to ensure the best possible response and includes details on:

- how to get approval to use an oil spill treatment product in English and Welsh waters
- environment groups
- MMO's out of hours arrangements
- resources
- legal information
- other contingency plans
- other marine emergencies
- forms and templates for use during and after an incident
- approved products
- list and details of standing approvals to use treatment products

## Further information

[Report a marine pollution incident](#)

[Clean an oil spill at sea and get oil spill treatments approved](#)

[Approved oil spill treatment products](#)

[How to use oil spill treatment products and equipment](#)

## Contact information

**Marine Conservation and Enforcement Team**

0191 376 2511

[dispersants@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:dispersants@marinemanagement.org.uk)

---

# Statutory guidance: Approved oil spill treatment products

*Updated:* Seacare Ecosperse 52 removed

This is quick reference list. Product manufacturer details are available in the [Marine Pollution Contingency Plan](#).

## Further information

[How to clean an oil spill at sea](#)

[How to use oil spill treatment products and equipment](#)

[Report and respond to a marine pollution incident](#)

[Marine Pollution Contingency Plan](#)

[Get an oil spill treatment product approved](#)

## Contact information

**Marine Conservation and Enforcement Team**

0300 123 1032

[dispersants@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:dispersants@marinemanagement.org.uk)

---

## Statutory guidance: Fishing vessel licence variations

*Updated:* Variations effective from 00:01 hours, Sunday 21 October 2018 added

Variations occur to reflect changes in quota limits and closures or openings of sea areas.

### **Check your licence**

It is your responsibility to check your [licence documents](#) before going to sea as [licences](#) can be changed at any time. The most up to date licences can be accessed on the [understand your fishing vessel licence](#) page.

Current licensing documents are published on the [understand your fishing vessel licence](#). If more than one variation to a specific licence document is published within a 30 day period only the latest document will be retained. For any historical documents please email [fishingvessellicensing@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:fishingvessellicensing@marinemanagement.org.uk) with details of your request.

---

## Detailed guide: Manage and lease fishing quota

*Updated:* Details on page updated

### **Quota allocations**

MMO divides up England's fishing quotas across the 3 fishing industry groups:

- sector – fish producer organisations that manage quota for their members
- 10-metres-and-under pool – vessels 10 metres or under that are not members of a producer organisation
- non-sector – vessels over 10 metres that are not members of a producer organisations

The number of fixed quota allocation (FQA) units held by the individual vessels in each group, or by a group collectively, establishes what [proportion of the EU quota is allocated to each group](#).

The quota assigned to the non-sector and 10-metre-and-under pools may be adjusted in line with underpinning arrangements – this is where there are guaranteed minimum levels of allocated quota. The minimum level for each stock will be a percentage of the UK quota equal to the average percentage share of initial allocations made to the 10-metres-and-under fleet from 1991 to 1993.

For vessels over 10 metres, FQA units are associated with the licence of the vessel. For vessels 10 metres and under, FQA units are held centrally by MMO.

## FQA units

It is important that you are clear about your own FQA units and those associated with any licence or licence entitlement you buy. Statements of the FQA units associated with individual licences are issued to licence holders each year, usually in May.

As the holder of a licence you can request details of the FQA units associated with your licence at any time from MMO.

You can:

- transfer FQA units from a licence entitlement
- apply for a replacement FQA holding statement

Read more about [FQA units and get the application forms](#).

## Quota swaps

Producer organisations can swap quota with other groups within the UK and MMO approves these swaps. The PO submits the [Domestic Quota Swap Form](#) to [quotaswap.dqs@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:quotaswap.dqs@marinemanagement.org.uk).

MMO negotiates quota swaps with other EU member states.

## Leasing extra quota

You can apply to lease extra quota from a producer organisation (PO), to supplement your catch limits or to keep fishing a stock where the 10-metres-and-under or non-sector pool allocation has been used.

If quota allocations have not been confirmed it is still possible to lease quota from a PO. Each PO should submit a leasing request to the MMO using the supplied letter template.



## [Leasing scheme letter](#)

PDF, 241KB, 2 pages

You should follow the following steps once quota allocations have been issued.

## Step 1

Contact the MMO fisheries management team to find out if the extra quota you need can be made available by an increase in the catch limit for the stock in question. Telephone 0300 123 1032 or email [quotaswap.dqs@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:quotaswap.dqs@marinemanagement.org.uk)

## Step 2

If the MMO is unable to meet your requested catch limit increase, contact a PO directly to agree a lease.

## Step 3

The PO that you are leasing quota must complete a [Domestic Quota Swap Form](#) that includes your:

- vessel's name
- Registry of Shipping and Seamen (RSS) number
- port letters and numbers (PLN)
- name and contact details
- amount of quota requested for lease

The PO must submit the form to [quotaswap.dqs@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:quotaswap.dqs@marinemanagement.org.uk).

A group application must detail the proportion of the leased quota for each vessel.

## Step 4

MMO considers applications to lease quota on a case-by-case basis. MMO checks the licence and vessel details and considers the catch limits, amount of stock being leased and the overall UK uptake position for the stock.

MMO take up to 10 days to process the application.

## Step 5

If the application is approved, MMO will send:

- an approved form back to the donor PO
- a permit letter confirming leased quota details to you naming the boat it applies to – the letter becomes part of your vessel's fishing vessel licence and will be sent to you by email or post if no email address is available
- a copy of the leasing letter to the vessel's administration port

## Step 6

You can start fishing against the leased quota as soon as you receive the

leasing letter either by email or post. You must comply with the leasing scheme requirements.

## **Scheme requirements**

You must be the owner of a vessel that is:

- 10-metres-or-under or non-sector
- fishing against the English pool allocation for any stocks
- fishing in English waters in the current year

Quota can be leased by individuals or a group:

- in year only
- for a minimum of 100kg
- in multiples of 100kg
- only for the purpose of fishing against the leased quota

Unused leased quota will be carried forward into the next month and the licence holder will be permitted to fish the leased in quota, in addition to the monthly catch limit.

This applies from the date of the letter until such time as:

- the additional leased-in quota is exhausted
- the fishery is closed at UK level
- the fishery is closed by the 31 December

If you do not fish the quota by 31 December, the MMO may use unused quota to benefit the whole fishing industry including under 10 and non-sector pools or to swap with other countries.

Unfished leased quota may be returned to the producer organisation from which it was leased (if the producer organisation agrees) up to the year end, but not beyond 31 December.

You may not:

- fish against leased quota if the fishery is subject to a UK closure (all Fish Producer Organisations and non sector licences).
- transfer leased quota except by agreeing to return it to the PO it came from
- use leased quota to increase FQA units

You must complete and submit full European Union logbooks and landing declarations within 48 hours of landing to your [local MMO office](#) for all stocks that you retain on board, discard and land. If you don't, you may be prosecuted.

Your catch is counted against the pool allocation first and your leased quota once the pool allocation is used. For example, if a monthly pool catch limit for a stock is 1 tonne and you lease in an extra 2 tonnes, your first tonne of a 2-tonne catch will be recorded against the pool and the second tonne

against your leased quota.

You must make sure your vessel does not exceed the total quota available to you. If you catch more than your limit, you may be prosecuted.

## **How we manage fisheries quota**

European Union laws limit the amount of fish that may be landed each year – the total allowable catch (TAC) – to preserve fish stocks. Each member state, including the UK, receives an agreed share of the TAC as its quota.

The UK quota is divided between England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. If the UK fishing fleet exceeds its quota, the quota may be reduced and there could be large fines.

All UK vessels are subject to detailed quota management rules, which are updated each year.

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is responsible for managing England's fishing quotas and publishes specific English quota management rules for English vessels.

MMO monitors landings of quota stocks and compares the amount caught and landed against total quota allocation. This is used to inform decisions about quota swaps, changes to catch limits and closing fisheries.