

Office of Response and Restoration

NRPT- MS/AL
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Emergency Response Division

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OPA 90 CASE STUDY

Background

Early morning of September 1, 2011, there was a release of an estimated 5,000 barrels of oil from a facility on Blakely Island into their on-site containment. An estimated 500-1,000 barrels of oil escaped containment and entered Mobile River.

Initially believed to have occurred from a tank failure but was later discovered to have resulted from overfilling during a tank-to-tank transfer. The E winds at the time of the incident caused surface oil to drift to the W side of the river and port area. Oil in the river was quickly contained by boom but a number of deep draft vessels, as well as smaller vessels, barges, and a dredge were oiled and required decontamination.



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Initial Actions - RP

RP initiates their response plan- notifies National Response Center and mobilizes their Oil Spill Response Organization. OSRO and RP work to secure the source, contain the spill, and mobilize cleanup crews.

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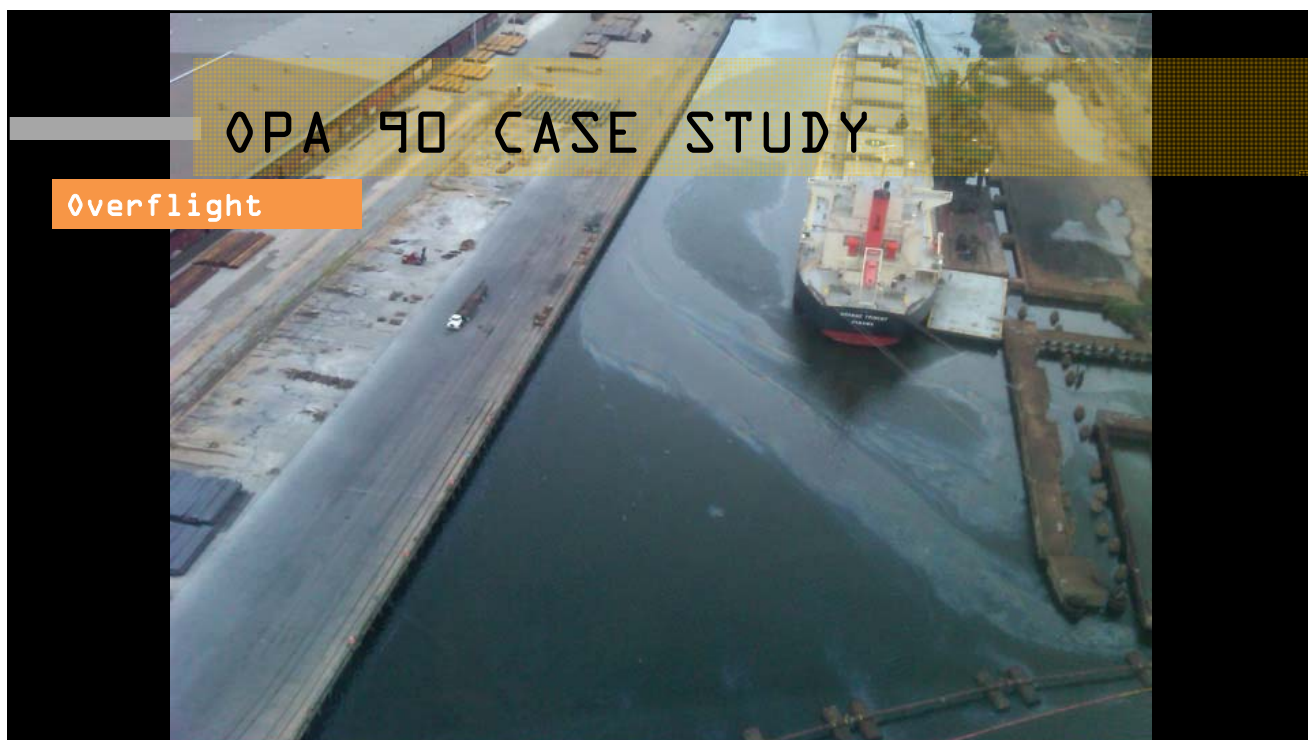
Containment



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Initial Actions- USCG

USCG receives notice from NRC. Contacts RP, orders overflight for assessment, mobilizes to incident to stand up Unified Command. Begins larger assessment of impacts and resources at risk (RAR).



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Complications

- Initial confusion as to the product type (crude vs. refined) and potential fate consequences
- Severe weather hindered operations on day 1, increased oiled debris (costs).
- Third party claims for oiled vessels
- River closure for several days

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Funding

- RP funded response under OPA/CWA- limits of liability
- USCG accessed Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund (OSLTF) with reimbursement from RP
- Third party claims by vessels, lost revenue due to river closure, etc.

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What if?

A more severe storm inundating this area would complicate things:

- Discovery likely to be delayed
- Response time would be increased, challenge getting OSROs to site and out on water if flooding, dangerous winds, etc.
- Greater area of impact, large amount of floating debris would be oiled
- if there were potential multiple facilities involved how do you sort out source, RP etc.?

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Worth mentioning

- Our priorities are life and safety first- We are not going to risk lives to clean up oil. If there was a more severe storm- What are the facility plans to evacuate or shelter in place and monitor?
- Evacuation may limit ability to know if release occurs, resources available to respond, etc.
- What about response agencies such as USCG- are their resources conducting SAR and water way management, etc.
- What if a lot of debris gets only marginally oiled or there is mixed waste (some non-OPA) Drums, haz waste, containers, etc.?