

## Focus on: Emergency Spill Response



Absorbent pads soak up biodiesel in the Columbia River at Wenatchee, Washington (March 2017).

### Contact

#### 24/7 SPILL RESPONSE

- **National Response Center**  
**800-424-8802**
- **Washington Emergency Management Division**  
**800-258-5990**

Spill Response Section Manager  
360-790-6899

Spill Prevention, Preparedness,  
and Response Program  
[ecology.wa.gov/SpillsProgram](https://ecology.wa.gov/SpillsProgram)

### Accommodations

To request ADA accommodation including materials in a format for the visually impaired, call Ecology at 360-407-6831 or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. People with impaired hearing may call Washington Relay Service at 711. People with speech disability may call TTY at 877-833-6341.

Department of Ecology spill responders are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week to respond to oil or hazardous material spills that pose an imminent threat to life, public health, or the environment.

### Emergency spill response in Washington

Ecology responds to emergency incidents involving releases and spills of oil and hazardous materials that have the potential to harm the natural environment and affect public health. Spill response teams based in Bellevue, Bellingham, Olympia, Spokane, Vancouver, and Yakima are a dedicated group of highly trained professionals providing year-round response service. In addition, Ecology is the state designated on-scene coordinator whenever oil is spilled to water.

Typical types of emergency incidents:

- Oil spills
- Hazardous material releases
- Clandestine drug labs
- Abandoned drums and cylinders
- Leaking storage tanks
- Fish kills

### How is an Ecology response initiated?

Under state law, Ecology must be notified when any amount of regulated waste or hazardous material that poses an imminent threat to life, health, or the environment is released to the air, land, or water, or whenever oil is spilled on land or to waters of the state. The spiller is always responsible for reporting a spill.

Failure to report a spill in a timely manner may result in enforcement actions. If you are not responsible for a spill, making the initial notification does not make you liable for the spill. However, consult with Ecology's response team before attempting any type of response or cleanup.

### How is spill notification made?

If oil or hazardous materials are spilled to state waters, the spiller must notify both federal and state spill response agencies. For federal notification, call the National Response Center at 1-800-424-8802. For state notification, call the Washington Emergency Management Division (EMD) at 1-800-258-5990 or the appropriate Ecology regional office for your county (see numbers on the next page). An Ecology spill responder will typically call the reporting party back to gather more information. The agency will then determine its response actions.

Ecology regional spill reporting numbers

**Northwest Regional Office  
206-594-0000**

Island, King, Kitsap, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish & Whatcom counties

**Southwest Regional Office  
360-407-6300**

Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, Pierce, Skamania, Thurston & Wahkiakum counties

**Central Regional Office  
509-575-2490**

Benton, Chelan, Douglas, Kittitas, Klickitat, Okanogan & Yakima counties

**Eastern Regional Office  
509-329-3400**

Adams, Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla & Whitman counties

Spill information you should provide

In an emergency situation, time can be critical. Detailed information about the incident may be unknown or unavailable. You can help Ecology make the best preliminary assessment of a spill report by providing:

- Name and phone number of reporting party
- Name and phone number of responsible party (who spilled?)
- Location of spill
- Type of material released
- Quantity spilled and the affected media (air, soil, and/or water)
- Concentration (if known)
- Cleanup status
- Resource damage information, such as dead fish or oiled birds

**Actions can you expect from Ecology’s spill response team**

Ecology deals with all reports of spills. The size, potential environmental impact, and existing or available on-site response supplies and equipment help determine the type of response action Ecology spill responders will take. For example, spill response staff could:

- Call the person back immediately to provide over-the-phone assistance.
- Take the report and pass the incident to another responsible state or local authority.
- Conduct a field response at the spill location to provide on-scene technical assistance and ensure compliance with state spill laws.
- Take the report and choose not to respond because the reported spill poses no imminent threat to the environment or public health, and cleanup will not be necessary.

**What happens when Ecology conducts a field response?**

When a field response is conducted, Ecology’s main function is to ensure the environment and public health is being protected and cleanup actions are conducted properly. Agency responders may conduct a field response if the spiller or other local, state, or federal authorities request Ecology’s on-scene assistance. Ecology may initiate a field response for any of the following reasons:

- To determine the source of a spill and identify the responsible party.
- To investigate and identify unknown spilled materials and determine an appropriate response.
- To conduct preliminary resource damage assessments.
- To oversee cleanup operations until the emergency phase of the spill incident is past.
- To provide technical assistance to the responsible party or other responders.
- When no responsible party has been identified, the state may conduct cleanup operations.

**Cleanup**

The spiller is responsible for cleanup and property damage and for meeting all appropriate local, state, and federal cleanup requirements. If an identified spiller does not properly respond to and mitigate the spill, Ecology may conduct the cleanup and pass all costs back to the spiller.



Operation Green Jade (Grays Harbor County, 2017) collected 1,000 containers of flammable, oxidizer, corrosive, and toxic waste.