

Focus on: Credit for Oil Recovery



Contact information

Recovered oil data form

<https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/othersupplements/ecy05049other.pdf>

Natural Resource Damage
Assessment Team
360-407-7455

Spills Program website
ecology.wa.gov/SpillsProgram

Special accommodations

To request ADA accommodation including materials in a format for the visually impaired, call Ecology at 360-407-7211 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.

Oil spills are costly to clean up and may have long term impacts to the environment. Although the risk of a catastrophic spill is slight, cumulatively spills of all sizes degrade the quality of state waters. Early action to remove oil from the water can reduce environmental impacts.

Washington State has responsibilities to assess damages when it's natural, cultural, and public recreational resources are impacted by oil spills to state water. The Oil Spill Natural Resource Damage Assessment process (WAC 173-183) uses a compensation schedule to calculate the monetary amount of damages a spiller must pay to the state for resource restoration following an oil spill. The process allows for the reduction of the monetary damage amount based on actions of the spiller. This is called Recovery Credit because the reduction (credit) is tied to the amount of oil recovered from the water.

Actions to reduce the damages owed

1. Quickly remove oil from the water
 - 24 hours for non-persistent oil
 - 48 hours for persistent oil
2. Effectively contain oil (using booms, berms, etc.)
3. Keep oil off shorelines

If item 1 is the only action taken, reduction is not as great as if all 3 are taken.

Documentation

Damages will only be reduced if the spiller properly documents their actions and provides data to the Ecology State On-Scene Coordinator.

The best way to do this is to use Ecology's form number [ECY-050-49a](#). This form has 5 blocks of information:

1. General Spill Information
2. Mechanical/Hand recovery Operations data
3. Oleophilic Sorbent Material data
4. Oil Debris data
5. Signature block

The spiller is responsible for filling out the form or otherwise providing the required information. The State On-Scene Coordinator will verify the accuracy of the data.

To receive recovery credit, the spiller must allow a representative from Ecology to observe all recovery volume operations, like storage, weighing, squeezing, and sampling.

Need for laboratory analysis

Some form of documentation is needed to get credit for the following:

- Persistent oil – Material Safety Data Sheet, manifest, or other laboratory data indicating a specific gravity of .80 or greater, or API Gravity of 45 or less. This allows the spiller 48 hours to recover product from the water for credit.
- Oil in the water fraction of skimmed material – minimum of 2 samples from the water fraction of the storage device, analyzed for Percent Oil.
- Oil removed from the water with collected debris – minimum of 2 samples of oiled debris from each collection area, analyzed for Percent Oil.

The spiller and Ecology must agree on the laboratory.

Other best management practices

1. Credit can only be given for sorbents and oiled debris recovered from the water – not from beach clean-up, vessel cleaning, roadway cleaning, etc.
2. Keep recovered sorbents and recovered oiled debris segregated from other clean-up wastes (like oiled Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), garbage, etc.)

3. Keep water content as low as possible by allowing surface water to drain off sorbent material before placing in bags.
4. Place oiled absorbent material in double plastic bags so recovered oil does not leak out or evaporate. Keep bags sealed from rain.
5. Keep track of the time. Material must be removed from the water within 24 hours (non-persistent oils) or 48 hours (persistent oils).
6. Weighing is the easiest and least expensive method for determining the volume of oil recovered in sorbent material. Keep an accurate record of the size and number of each type of sorbent used. The best practice is to have records of the weight and number of clean sorbent material prior to a spill.
7. Do not collect or store recovered oil in tanks or vacuum trucks containing oil from other sources.
8. Oil collected in tanks or vacuum trucks must be allowed to physically separate from any water. The recovered oil volume must be derived using volumetric methods (actually “sticking” the tank). If credit is desired for oil dissolved in the water fraction, 2 water samples must be taken from each tank and analyzed for percent oil by an agreed upon laboratory.

About resource damage assessment

In 1989, state lawmakers created the Resource Damage Assessment (RDA) Committee to oversee the protection and restoration of natural resources that are injured by oil spills.

Public involvement

The public is invited to attend and comment at RDA Committee meetings and pre-assessment screenings. In addition, the RDA Committee and the Coastal Protection Fund (CPF) Steering Committee welcome public comment and suggestions for restoration and enhancement projects.