FUEL SPILLS

Fuel spills occur when petroleum-based products, primarily fuel, are discharged into the environment. Discharging fuel into the environment is illegal, making spill prevention and response critical.

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FUEL SPILLS ARE AN ELEVATED RISK TO FLEET

The Clean Water Act, a primary federal statute, was created to protect navigable waters from pollutants such as fuel. Most fuel spills are preventable, however, failure to follow established procedures, inattentiveness during fuel operations, insufficient training and fatigued or distracted personnel increase the likelihood of spills.

FUEL SPILL RISK & PREVENTION

- The Navy moves nearly 1 billion gallons of fuel annually. Sailors can help prevent fuel spills through proper training, attentiveness and adherence to procedures.
- Operator error is the most common cause of fuel spills, stemming from factors like equipment or system lineup failures, failure to follow procedures and inattentiveness during operations. Through proper training and careful execution of standard procedures, fuel spills can be virtually eliminated, except in cases of catastrophic equipment failure or attack.

RISK REDUCTION REQUIREMENTS

1. Proper Training: Ensure all personnel are properly trained on the equipment and systems they will operate and understand the procedures involved in fuel transfer operations.
2. Attentiveness and Readiness: Ensure personnel are well rested, attentive and deliberate in their actions when performing fuel transfers and handling operations.
3. Follow Procedures Rigorously: Always follow procedures step-by-step, ensuring each step is fully understood before moving on to the next.
4. Secure Equipment After Use: Once fuel operations are complete, ensure all equipment and systems are properly secured in accordance with the correct procedures to prevent accidental leakage.
5. In the Event of a Spill: Secure the Flow. The most critical action in response to a fuel spill is to immediately stop the flow of fuel.
6. Minimize Spill Duration: The longer fuel is in contact with the water, ground or deck, the more it can spread. Promptly securing the flow minimizes the amount of fuel spilled and reduces the environmental impact.
7. Ensuring proper training, following procedures diligently and quickly addressing spills, the Navy can significantly reduce the occurrence and impact of fuel spills.

AFLOAT SAFETY, NAVAL SAFETY COMMAND - Keeping our sea warriors informed and ready

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