



About

Dispersants are chemical agents used to break up oil into smaller droplets throughout the water column. Dispersants are applied to surface oil floating on water, or below the surface closer to an uncontrolled release of crude oil from a well blowout source. This series of fact sheets details monitoring requirements and how to apply the collected data to inform the use of dispersants under **Subpart J of the National Contingency Plan (NCP)**.

Description of the Requirement

The responsible party must document the dispersant product used, the reasons for the dispersant product choice, the results of any efficacy or toxicity tests for the dispersant product specific to area or site conditions, and the recommended dispersant-to-oil ratio. Refer to the regulatory requirement in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR): **40 CFR 300.913(a)(3)**.

Dispersant Product Information

Dispersants that are listed in the National Contingency Plan (NCP) Product Schedule are not equally suited for use in all situations. Dispersants vary in their effectiveness, depending on different types of oil and environments. Because the conditions of each oil spill situation are unique, it is important for the On-Scene Coordinator to have as much information as possible when considering whether to authorize the use of a specific dispersant product for use. The selected dispersant should be a good match for the local conditions, including the type (e.g., light crude) and conditions (e.g., weathering state) of the oil to which it is applied.

Using Dispersant Product Information

On-Scene Coordinators can consider several parameters when reviewing dispersant choice to ensure it is appropriate for the response:

- Is it a good match for the type of oil that is being dispersed (e.g., weathering, viscosity)?
- Is it recommended for local environmental conditions (e.g., weather, turbidity)?
- Are there concerns about its toxicity to local species?
- Is the recommended dispersant-to-oil ratio feasible?

The NCP Product Schedule and Technical Notebook (linked on next page) are useful product information resources.

▶ Decision Points for Responders

The On-Scene Coordinator should consider all available data and information relevant to the response and consult with subject matter experts. Based on the above questions or on the monitoring data and information collected, if the dispersant is not a good match for the oil type or local conditions, the On-Scene Coordinator should consider exploring other dispersant products or other non-dispersant options with the responsible party.

Additional Resources

NCP Product Schedule

Lists dispersant products and data submitted to EPA as required by Subpart J of the NCP.

NCP Product Schedule Technical Notebook

A compilation of product bulletins summarizing data requirements and test results for dispersant products listed in EPA's NCP Product Schedule. The Technical Notebook includes information on dispersant application methods, toxicity and effectiveness data, and physical properties.

Oil Spill Emergency Response – Monitoring the Use of Dispersants Fact Sheets

- Characterization of Ecological Receptors – Habitats
- Turbidity

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