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**HELCOM Manual on Co-operation in Response to Marine Pollution  
within the framework of the Convention on the Protection of  
the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area,  
(Helsinki Convention)**

**Volume 1**

**PREFACE**

**The Manual**

The HELCOM Manual on Co-operation in Response to Marine Pollution (in the following the Manual) is applied by the Baltic Sea States in operational co-operation, surveillance activities and combatting exercises since 1983. The present Manual consists of two Volumes; Volume 1 dealing generally with co-operation in combatting marine pollution and Volume 2 dealing specifically with such co-operation in case of spillages of chemicals.

The Manual is recommended to be used as guidance when two or more Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention participate in a joint action in responding to spillages of oil and other harmful substances, i.e. chemicals.

The Manual should be regarded as practical implementation of the OPRC Convention.

**Volume 1**

Chapters 1-6 are of operational character containing information of use during a combatting operation. This includes information about Contact Points to Contracting Parties, which assistance and under what conditions this can be obtained from other Contracting Parties, information about delimitation of response regions between Contracting Parties, formats for how to exchange information between combatting authorities about a pollution incident/threat hereof, a description of the actual operational co-operation, including command and communication structures as well as guidelines for oil sampling.

Chapters 7 -12 are of administrative character. They contain information about co-operation on aerial surveillance, organizational and financial aspects in case of operational co-operation, information on types of combatting exercises, relevant extracts from the Helsinki Convention as well as relevant HELCOM Recommendations and Guidelines.

**Volume 2**

Volume 2 deals only with spillages of chemicals. This volume is intended for use by On-Scene-Commanders.

**Detection of illegal discharges**

Matters related to co-operation in investigations of anti-pollution regulations are dealt with by the Helsinki Commission. Although not constituting a part of the co-operation in combatting marine pollution the conduction of aerial surveillance does as one of its main aims have the detection of illegal discharges and the collection of evidence in order to prosecute suspected offenders. More information regarding this issue can be found in the "Guidelines on Ensuring Successful Convictions of Offenders of Anti-pollution Regulations at Sea" (Baltic Sea Environment Proceedings No. 78, 2000).

## **Updating of the Manual**

The Manual is saved in a word processing format and distributed to the users in loose-sheet folders and on diskettes. Furthermore, parts of Volume 1 and Volume 2 of the Manual are available in the HELCOM web-site (<http://www.helcom.fi>).

The updating of the Manual is the responsibility of the Secretariat of the Helsinki Commission in accordance with information received from the Contracting Parties concerning changes in the organization of their combatting authorities and/or improvement of their national abilities to combat marine pollution, or in accordance with instructions given by the Sea-based Pollution Group (as far as they do not concern fundamental revision) or decisions of the Helsinki Commission. The Contracting Parties shall submit their amendments to the meetings of HELCOM SEA. The amendments will be disseminated by the Secretariat in two months. Whenever any chapter of the Manual is revised the revised text will be circulated to the addressees accompanied by a revised Table of Contents showing the current reference of each chapter. However, a Contracting Party is requested to immediately inform other Contracting Parties and the Secretariat on substantial changes in their national organization and Contact Points which have an influence on providing and requesting assistance and exchange of information.

In accordance with Regulation 11 of Annex VII of the 1992 Helsinki Convention the Contracting Parties agree to apply, as far as practicable, the principles and rules indicated in the Manual.

The Manual was adopted by the Helsinki Commission at its 17th meeting in March 1996 according to HELCOM Recommendation 17/13. A revised version of Volume 1 was approved by HELCOM SEA 3/2001 in May 2001 and a new version of Volume 2 was approved by HELCOM RESPONSE 1/2002 in October 2002.