

# ENVIRO NEWS

## WORST OIL SPILLS IN HISTORY

WITH EXERPTS FROM INTERNET ARTICLE "THE WORST MAJOR OIL SPILLS IN HISTORY"  
WWW.ASSOCIATEDCONTENT.COM BY WILL WRIGHT

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## DID YOU KNOW?

Approximately 7% of the oil pollution in the oceans is caused by oil tanker spills, 85% is caused by everyday water activities, such as recreational boating and land-based run-off. The rest is caused by natural seepage from the ocean floor.

Around the water cooler this week, we were discussing the most horrible oil spills in history, and hands down the one that immediately came to the forefront was the Exxon Valdeez. As devastating as the Valdeez spill was, it is comparatively one of the smaller spills in history. Based on pure volume, the notorious Exxon spill actually ranks 35th in the line of worst oil spills. The most horrific part of this story is that there are 34 spills that are worse. Here are the top 5 worst oil spills, based on volume:

### 5. Nowruz Oil Field Spill - February 10 to September 18, 1983

Location: Persian Gulf, Iran  
Oil Spilled: 80 million gallons  
This spill was the product of a tanker colliding with an oil platform. As a result of the collision, the platform tilted and had to be decommissioned. However, the weakened platform did collapse, sending oil spewing into the Persian Gulf. Hindrances in getting the leak capped were caused by the ongoing Iran-Iraq War.

### 4. Kolva River Oil Spill - September 8, 1994

Location: Kolva River, Russia  
Oil Spilled: 84 million gallons  
A pipeline rupture caused this

massive oil spill. A dike contained the leaking oil from the line for 8 months, but when the dike collapsed, it sent millions of gallons of oil into the Russian Arctic.

### 3. Atlantic Empress Oil Spill - July 19, 1979

Location: Off the coast of Trinidad and Tobago  
Oil Spilled: 90 million gallons  
The Greek oil tanker, *Atlantic Empress*, was caught in a tropical storm and collided with another ship, the *Aegean Captain*. The broken ship continued to lose oil before finally sinking on August 3, 1979.

### 2. Ixtoc 1 Oil Spill - June 3, 1979 - March 23, 1980

Location: Bay of Campeche off Ciudad del Carmen, Mexico  
Oil Spilled: 140 million gallons  
This spill involved an offshore oil well. Pemex, a state-owned Mexican petroleum company, was drilling an oil well when a blowout took place. The oil caught fire, triggering the drilling rig to collapse. Oil began gushing out of the well into the Gulf of Mexico at a rate of 10,000 to 30,000 barrels a day for almost an entire year before workers were finally able to cap the well and stop the leak.

### 1. Arabian Gulf/Kuwait - January 19, 1991

Location: Persian Gulf, Kuwait  
Oil Spilled: 380-520 million gallons  
Ironically, the worst oil spill in human history was not the result of an accident. During the Gulf War, Iraqi forces attempted to thwart a potential landing of US soldiers by opening the valves at an offshore oil terminal, dumping oil from several tankers. The uncontained oil created a 4-inch thick slick that covered 4000 square miles. To put it in perspective, that would cover the entire state of Rhode Island in one foot deep oil.

### BREAKTIME FUN: HOW MANY 'F'S?

This puzzle below has been fooling people for decades. It demonstrates how our mind sometimes plays tricks on what we believe.

#### How many 'fs?

FINE POINT

It is easy to miss the finer points in life. Folk are frequently guilty of falling into this trap.

The letter *f* appears eight times in the box. People commonly count seven, by failing to see the last *f*.

Did you?

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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER: AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

In this issue of our newsletter, we have focused on oil spills. I have always said that preparation and planning is essential in dealing with spills. The spill may be small, caused by a leak, drip or accident. The spill may be so large that we can hardly comprehend it. Since many of the regulations we work with today have evolved from the spill events of the past, I wanted to take a brief glance at the significant role oil has played in this evolution.

The first person to drill for oil in the United State was Samuel Kier. He drilled for oil in Pennsylvania in 1850. He refined the fuel into kerosene for lamp burning.

The first oil spill in North America may have taken place as early as 1818, before Samuel Kier drilled for oil. Surprisingly the spill was caused by two men mining for salt at the mouth of the Cumberland River in Kentucky. They drilled a hole about 5 inches wide and 536 feet deep. Oil began to gush from the hole and flow into the Cumberland River. A 35 mile section of the river became an oil slick and caught fire. The fire burned the trees along the river and destroyed the men's mining facilities.

The first petroleum shipment by water took place in 1861. The *Elizabeth Watts* carried 1,329 barrels of oil from Philadelphia to London. In the nine-

teenth century, oil was actually held in barrels that contained around 40 gallons of crude oil. Since the introduction of oil tankers crude has not been transported in barrels. The world still uses the standard 42 gallon oil barrel that was established between the Americans and the British.

Our reliance upon oil has changed significantly since the 1800's and many huge spills have defined the laws and standards that are now a part of doing business today.

**FAST FACTS ABOUT THE EXXON VALDEZ SPILL**

**Date of Spill:** March 24, 1989

**Amount of Spill:** 267,000 barrels  
(11 million gallons)

**Cost of Cleanup:** \$2.2 billion

**Death Toll Estimates:**

- 250,000 seabirds
- 2,800 sea otters
- 300 harbor seals
- 250 bald eagles
- 22 killer whales
- 400 loons
- countless fish

The Exxon Valdez oil spill of 1989 only ranks 35th in terms of quantity of oil spilled, but the catastrophe to the pristine Prince William Sound created a new urgency for change in the industry to prevent new disasters like this from

happening again.

One of the problems that became apparent when the



*EnviroMet President: Roni Sasaki started the company in 1995.*

Exxon Valdez crashed into the sharp rocks on Bligh Reef was the lack of preparation and readiness to deal with a spill of this magnitude. It took 13 hours for clean up equipment to arrive. The devastation of this spill was heart-breaking to our entire country, but especially the community where it took place.

We must all learn from the past and avoid mistakes that cost us dearly. We can evaluate our own work place and minimize potential spills and prepare for problems that may happen. We may not drill for oil (or salt) in the river or operate tankers capable of dumping millions of gallons of oil, but we can each assess our own risks and take the necessary steps to prevent and handle any spill that may contaminate our environment or create a hazard for our workers.

References

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Streissguth, Tom. (2003). *Disaster: The Exxon Valdez*. Mankato, MN: Capstone High-Interest Books.

Rozens, Aleksandrs. (1994). *Environmental Destruction*. New York: Twenty First Century Books.

**NOW AVAILABLE**

**Economy pads in Universal Gray Sonic Bonded!**

SpillTech has added a gray Universal Sonic-Bonded bale of pads to its line of new ECONOMY pads. The Oil-Only Melt Blown pads have been widely received by users like you, and now we can also offer an affordable solution for a universal pads. Each bale weighs 8.9 pounds and is made up of 100 pads that measure 15"x18". There is no perforation or lamination on these new pads. They are a perfect alternative for those who need universal pads, but also need to keep the price per bale as low as possible. Call today for pricing or to receive a sample pad.

## ASK THE EXPERT

### ?What are the laws that apply to spill kits?

We are often asked what the laws are regarding spill kits. Although a single spill kit may not provide enough clean up materials for every spill situation, it certainly can provide the tools necessary for "immediate action to protect human health and the environment." We highly recommend

having spill kits located wherever spills are likely to occur or wherever hazardous materials are present. Following is a quick list of some of the laws concerning spills.

**40 CFR 263.30(a)** In the event of a spill, transporters must, "take appropriate immediate action to protect human health and the environment."

**40 CFR 112.7(c)(1)(vii)** Spill Prevention Control and Countermea-

sures (SPCC) plans require facilities that have the potential to pollute waterways to have, "appropriate containment and/or diversionary structures or equipment to prevent discharge oil from reaching a navigable water course."

**29 CFR 1910.120(j)(1)(vii)** Under an OSHA requirement, "DOT specified salvage drums or containers and suitable quantities of proper absorbents shall be kept available and used in areas where spills, leaks, or ruptures may occur."

**40 CFR 122.26** When applying for a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, facilities must have a plan in place that describes actions, procedures, control techniques, management practices and equipment available to prevent illegal discharge of pollutants into waterways.

**49 CFR 173.3(3)(1)** If a container of hazardous waste is damaged or leaking, it can be placed in a compatible salvage drum that meets UN criteria for shipping.

## PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT—ZIMMERLITE

Zimmerlite is a one-stop-shop absorbent—absorbing water, oil, corrosives, acids (except hydrofluoric acid) and even paint. It is a natural mineral mined in Redmond, Oregon, and is safe



for humans, plants and animals when used properly. Zimmerlite keeps floors clean, dry

and safe. Small, sand-like granules provide traction for people and machinery on slick, wet and icy surfaces. It will not break down and create a muddy surface like some granular absorbents.

Zimmerlite works like a sponge, pulling liquid from the pores of rough or smooth surfaces. This superior wicking action allows it to work quickly and efficiently, absorbing 150% - 200% of its own weight. Because of its small size, you get more surface absorption capac-

ity, using 100% of the product. Many other absorbents get coated on the outside while the inside remains dry.

Zimmerlite is used by transportation departments in several states to keep the roads safe after an accident or spill. Now is a good time to stock up before the rain and ice settle in for the winter. Zimmerlite is available in 50 pound bags and 2000 pound jumbo totes.

**Part # ZI265**—Zimmerlite 50# Bag

**Part #ZI270**—Zimmerlite 2000# Tote

## NEW PRODUCT ALERT

### Part #ST-48725 CHEMOTHERAPY SPILL KIT

EnviroMet has expanded our spill kit line to include a complete series of specialty spill kits from Safe-Tek. The Chemotherapy Spill Kit is designed for the clean up of spills involving cytotoxic drugs. This kit should be accessible within cancer centers, clinics, and hospitals where these drugs are administered. The kit features an absorbent called Green Z™, which solidifies and controls hazardous chemical spills for quick and easy clean up and disposal, with minimal unwanted exposure. The kit contains:

Green Z™ Solidifier	Large Wiper Pad
12"x12" Barrier Zorb™ Sheet	Open Backed Gown
2 Pr. Nitrile Gloves	Safety Shield
Sharps Disposal Container	



### Part #ST-17517 EZ CPR PROTECTOR PACK

This EZ CPR Protector Pack allows for the use of normal CPR techniques without fear of cross-contamination. The nylon pouch is small and can be easily attached to a belt loop or backpack strap. These should be kept throughout your facility and within access to all employees trained in proper CPR technique.

The kit contains:

p.a.w.s.™ Antimicrobial Hand Wipe  
Biohazard Red Bag  
Vinyl Gloves  
PTP II CPR Mask



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**TO:**

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**PRODUCTS FOR A BETTER FUTURE**

**PRICE INCREASE MANIA**

This past summer marks a new record in the history of EnviroMet. We received more price increase letters from our suppliers and manufacturers in three months than we normally get in a year. Thanks to technology, these have reached us by mail, fax and e-mail. We have been forced to raise our prices accordingly as many of you have had to do in your own companies for the very same reasons.

Price increases are frustrating— more because of the administration costs than the actual cost of the increase. We figure each major price increase takes about two weeks of clerical work to implement. By the time we send out letters of notice, refigure the actual price list, enter the new figures

into our computer system, update the website, reprint new price lists for distribution and send them out, we've lost quite a bit of time that could be spent being productive elsewhere.

I've heard of other companies that are not issuing price lists right now because of the volatility of the market place. It's hard to blame them when you look at all the effort involved.

All this is to say, at EnviroMet we don't like price increases any more than you do. If we never had to increase our prices it would be great. Since this is obviously unrealistic, especially right now, we will work hard to make any price increases as painless as possible by providing 30 day notice and issuing new price lists as soon as they

are available. We also strive to work with our customers whenever you have an open bid or contract. This past year we've introduced many new products that can be substituted for higher priced items. We will continue to work for you—our customer—to make sure we bring you the best possible quality and value available in today's market.

**VOTE**

**Don't forget the election  
coming up on  
November 4th.  
Everybody's vote counts!**