

Africa Sun Oil receives Directive after vegetable oil spill

The Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) has issued the directors of Africa Sun Oil Refineries in Durban with a Directive in terms of section 30(6) of the National Environment Management Act.



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The Directive was issued due to a vegetable oil spill after the company's factory burned down and states, inter alia, that the responsible person is required to take the following measures:

a) Provide the DEA with a section 30(3) alert report with specific reference to:

- the nature of the incident, in particular the root cause of the incident, an immediate estimate of how much oil was spilled and an immediate estimate of how much oil has been recovered so far;
- any risks posed by the incident to public health, safety and property;
- the toxicity of substances or by-products released by the incident; and
- any steps that should be taken in order to avoid or minimise the effects of the incident on public health and the environment.

b) Take full responsibility for the containment, mitigation and management of the current emergency incident, and put maximum effort in ensuring that the sandbanks, in particular the central sandbank, the mangroves, the natural heritage site are protected.

c) Ensure that the placement of booms is applied in a staggered approach in order to control the seepage of oil under the booms that are currently in place. This includes the placement an extra boom in the bay in order to protect and ensure that the current leaked oil does not reach the above-mentioned areas.

d) Escalation of the skimming process and ensuring that adequate tankers are on site to assist in the timeous collection and transportation of skimmed oil off-site.

e) Undertaking of the following immediate monitoring measures in order to mitigate and manage the incident:

- Identification of multi points at which to monitor water quality in order to measure the hydrocarbons, toxicity, PH levels, oil and grease, and the total suspended solids;
- immediate testing of oxygen and temperature levels at the channels next to the sandbanks and next to the mangroves at half-a-meter above the bottom, in mid-water and half-a-meter below the surface;
- immediate testing of the sediment quality at three sites on the central sandbanks and at three sites on the mangroves. The above sampling should be followed up every second day afterwards and should be aligned with Transnet's sediment quality testing protocol.

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