Introduction
Nationwide, the safe shipment of oil and adequate preparedness to respond to an oil spill are top priorities for both industry and government.

Some oil facts:
• The United States consumes over 700 million gallons of oil daily, and U.S. oil imports are projected to grow about 2.2% per year.
• Over half of the oil consumed in the U.S. is imported over sea or land.

The Oil Pollution Act of 1990
The Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90), enacted by Congress after the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989, greatly strengthened prevention, planning, response, and restoration efforts. Major provisions of OPA:
• Require vessel and facility owners that handle oil as cargo to develop detailed plans to immediately respond to an oil spill. These plans must: document agreements with oil spill cleanup organizations, be approved by the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) or U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and be tested regularly.
• Require new oil carrying tank barges and tank ships operating in U.S. waters to have double hulls, and requires existing takers to be phased out of this service over a 25 year period.
• Subject spilloers to unlimited liability for gross negligence, willful misconduct, violation of any federal operating or safety standard, failure to report a spill, or failure to participate in the cleanup.
• Established a $1 billion Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund. The fund ensures that legal or monetary issues do not impede timely spill response or reimbursement for damages. Spilloers are responsible for costs paid by the fund.

Spill Response
Black oil spewing from a large oil tanker is a powerful symbol of marine pollution and the human impact on the environment. During a spill, specific steps are taken to meet the challenges presented. For most spills the general goals are to:
• Protect the safety of the public and spill responder.
• Stabilize the source to stop the release of additional oil into the environment.
• Protect sensitive areas to limit the damage caused by the spilled oil.