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## **FLORIDA DEEPWATER HORIZON RESPONSE MAY 23, 2010**

**TALLAHASSEE** – Under the leadership of Governor Charlie Crist, the State Emergency Response Team and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) are actively coordinating and responding to the Deepwater Horizon incident.

The following is a summary of state and BP response actions to date, as well as tips for residents and visitors to take precautions both pre and post-landfall.

### **Landfall Predictions:**

- Winds/currents continue to keep the plume away from the Florida coast for at least the next 72 hours.
- Latest observations by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) indicate that a small portion of the oil slick has reached the Loop Current in the form of light sheens. NOAA oceanographers release updated trajectory maps showing the predicted trajectory of the oil slick. Learn more at the [NOAA website](#).
- Impacts to Florida's coastline could include [tar balls, oil sheen or tar mats](#). If oil is sighted on Florida's coastline report it to the State Warning Point at 1-877-2-SAVE-FL (1-877-272-8335) or by dialing #DEP from most cell phones. Learn more at [www.deepwaterhorizonflorida.com](http://www.deepwaterhorizonflorida.com).

### **On Site Actions:**

- Deepwater Horizon continues to discharge more than 5,000 barrels per day.
- BP continues to evaluate numerous options to contain the oil discharge and is continuing efforts to drill a relief well.
- On May 20, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) directed BP to identify and use a less toxic dispersant from the list of EPA authorized dispersants.
  - Dispersants are a chemical used to break up oil into small droplets so that they are more easily degraded. This chemical works best on fresh oil, and is most useful at the source of the discharge from Deepwater Horizon.
- At this time, there are no plans to use dispersants in Florida. If dispersants are ever considered in state waters, the determination of whether to use the chemical would be evaluated by DEP along with input from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Florida Wildlife Research Institute and EPA.

### **State Actions:**

- The State Emergency Operations Center remains activated at a Level 2 or Partial activation.
- Governor Charlie Crist has issued three [Executive Orders](#) since April 30, 2010 declaring a state of emergency in 26 coastal counties that may see impacts from the incident.
- On May 17, 2010, Governor Crist announced that BP will provide Florida \$25 million for a national tourism advertising campaign. These funds are in addition to the \$25 million Florida has already received for preparation efforts.
- On May 14, 2010, Governor Crist announced that the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) approved disaster loan funds for businesses along Florida's Gulf coast that have been impacted by the Deepwater Horizon incident. ([Press Release](#)) Learn more at: <http://www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance/>.
- On May 12, 2010, Governor Crist directed DEP to issue an [Emergency Final Order](#) to accelerate preparedness and restoration in the counties under the Governor's state-of-emergency Executive Orders.
- Eight BP claims offices are open in Florida. Visit the [BP Claims Page](#) to learn more.
- DEP conducted water and sediment sampling to use as a baseline and is monitoring air quality data. Statewide air quality monitoring is conducted in coordination with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Learn more at <http://www.airnow.gov/> or <http://www.epa.gov/bpspill/>.
  - Air quality reports for Saturday, May 22, revealed that air quality was considered good to moderate for ozone and particulate matter throughout the North Florida coastal area. "Good" means the air quality is satisfactory and air pollution poses little or no risk. "Moderate" means air quality is acceptable for most people.

### **Boom Placement:**

- To date, an estimated 259,950 feet of boom has been placed in Florida and an additional 30,650 is staged.
- Placement of boom is based where the oil is threatening, as well as each region's area contingency plan.
  - To view the Coast Guard Mobile Area Contingency Plan visit: <http://ocean.floridamarine.org/ACP/MOBACP/StartHere.html>.
  - To view the Coast Guard St. Petersburg Area Contingency Plan visit: [http://research.myfwc.com/features/view\\_article.asp?id=3482](http://research.myfwc.com/features/view_article.asp?id=3482)
- The Unified Command Operations Group is asking boaters to avoid damaging boom. Stolen or misplaced boom should be reported to local authorities.

### **Health Effects:**

- At this time, there are no indications of any health risks to Floridians due to the Deepwater Horizon incident. The Department of Health and DEP are closely monitoring health and environmental impacts to Florida's beaches and will notice an advisory if conditions become unsafe.
- For most people, an occasional brief contact with a small amount of oil, while not recommended, will do no harm. If contact occurs, wash the area with soap and

water. Learn more at:

[http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon/files/faq\\_doh\\_051010.pdf](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon/files/faq_doh_051010.pdf)

### **Fisheries & Seafood:**

- The fisheries, wildlife and seafood off of Florida's coast in state waters are safe and there are no alerts at this time. [Press Release Florida saltwater fishing regulations](#) remain in effect as usual. Learn more at [www.MyFWC.com/Fishing](http://www.MyFWC.com/Fishing).
- On May 21, 2010, NOAA modified and expanded the boundaries of the closed federal fishing area and extended the federal fishing restriction until further notice. More than 80 percent of the fishing area remains open. Learn more at: [http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/deepwater\\_horizon\\_oil\\_spill.htm](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/deepwater_horizon_oil_spill.htm)
- Fishermen who wish to contact BP about a claim should call 1-800-440-0858.
- FWC urges citizens to report oiled wildlife to the Wildlife Distress Hotline at 1-866-557-1401.
- For the safety of the public as well as the safety of animals, rescues should be conducted by trained responders. Learn more at: [http://www.myfwc.com/NEWSROOM/10/statewide/News\\_10\\_X\\_OilSpill2.htm](http://www.myfwc.com/NEWSROOM/10/statewide/News_10_X_OilSpill2.htm)

### **Tourism:**

- Currently, there are no impacts to Florida's more than 1,260 miles of coastline and 825 miles of sandy beaches.
- If planning a trip to Florida, VISIT FLORIDA, encourages visitors to check with local destinations in order to get the most up-to-date information.
- Through [www.VISITFLORIDA.com](http://www.VISITFLORIDA.com), vacationers are able to view live Twitter feeds and read up-to-the-minute information on the status of any city or region in Florida. Learn more at [http://www.visitflorida.com/florida\\_travel\\_advisory/](http://www.visitflorida.com/florida_travel_advisory/).
- The Florida State Parks website, <http://www.floridastateparks.org>, will be updated daily and will list any parks that may be impacted. Visitors with camping or cabin reservations will be notified if their stay will be impacted. Learn more by calling 1-850-245-2157.

### **Tips for Homeowners:**

- While the state appreciates the concern expressed by Floridians and the ingenuity of those seeking alternative measures to help protect the state's shoreline, the following tips are offered to ensure that these measures are helpful and not harmful to Florida's coasts, wildlife and water resources: [Tips for homeowners](#).

### **Tips for Businesses and Consumers:**

- Attorney General McCollum sent a letter to BP executives, asking the company to immediately acknowledge its liability for any damages Florida may sustain during the 2010 Atlantic Hurricane Season as a result of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. A copy of the letter is available online at: [http://myfloridalegal.com/webfiles.nsf/WF/CRUE-85MQHE/\\$file/bphurricane.pdf](http://myfloridalegal.com/webfiles.nsf/WF/CRUE-85MQHE/$file/bphurricane.pdf)
- The Attorney General's fraud hotline is open to receive any reports of fraud or price gouging. The hotline is 1-866-966-7226.

- The Florida Agriculture and Consumer Services Commissioner gas price-gouging hotline is also operational. The toll-free hotline number is 1-800-HELP-FLA (1-800-435-7352).
- Florida's coastal businesses should be prepared to make loss of earnings claims for damages incurred as a result of the oil spill. Affected businesses should file a claim with BP via the hotline number at 1-800-440-0858 or claims office. Learn more at <http://www.myfloridacfo.com/> or by calling 1-850-413-3089 or toll-free at 1-877-MY-FL-CFO (1-877-693-5236).

### **Volunteer Opportunities:**

- The Governor's Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service is encouraging Floridians and visitors to watch for oiled wildlife, vegetation, and beaches by becoming a Coast Watch volunteer. Learn more at [www.volunteerfloridadisaster.org](http://www.volunteerfloridadisaster.org).
- Report a change in Air Quality to <http://www.epa.gov/bpspill/>.
- For information on scheduled beach cleanups and other volunteer opportunities, visit <http://www.volunteerfloridadisaster.org/>.
- BP has established a volunteer program and set up a toll-free number for those interested in volunteering. Learn more by calling BP's community information line at 1-866-448-5816.

### **Learn More About Florida's Response:**

- DEP launched a Twitter account, [www.Twitter.com/FLDEPalert](http://www.Twitter.com/FLDEPalert), dedicated to providing updates on Florida's response to the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill.
- DEP in coordination with the state Emergency Operations Center established an email sign-up and a comprehensive website at [www.deepwaterhorizonflorida.com](http://www.deepwaterhorizonflorida.com).
- For a list of Unified Command, BP and Florida phone numbers, visit <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon/default.htm#numbers>
- The Oil Spill Information Line is available at 1-888-337-3569 from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. seven days a week. Additional phone numbers have also been established for persons with disabilities: (800) 955-8771 (TDD) or (800) 955-8770 (voice).

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