



## Some volunteer organizations\* for your consideration:

- ✳ Oiled Wildlife Care Network, U.C. Davis
- ✳ California CoastKeeper
- ✳ Baykeeper Organizations
- ✳ Surfrider Foundation
- ✳ Sierra Club
- ✳ California Volunteers

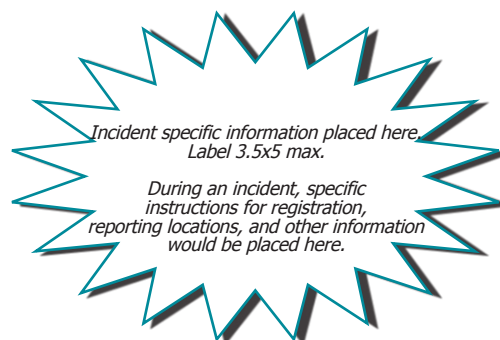
*\*This list of organizations is not inclusive nor does it represent an endorsement.*

## Office of Spill Prevention and Response Volunteer Hotline

**1-800-228-4544**  
**[www.dfg.ca.gov/ospr/](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/ospr/)**

*Alternate communication methods are available upon request. If reasonable accommodation is needed, contact the Dept. of Fish and Game - Office of Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR) Volunteer Hotline at 1-800-228-4544. The California Relay Service serves the deaf and hearing-impaired residents using TTY/TDD phones, and speech-impaired callers, at (800) 735-2929.*

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# Oil Spill Response Volunteers



**What you should know and how you can help**



## What is a volunteer?

A member of the general public who comes forward during an event to offer assistance. A volunteer may be:

- Pre-trained: Members of the Oiled Wildlife Care Network (OWCN) who have been trained to perform tasks and functions related to oiled wildlife, or
- Convergent: Citizens who come forward to help cleanup efforts after hearing of an oil spill.

Each spill response is unique, and the skills needed may be somewhat different each time.

## Volunteer requirements:

- Register before participating in a spill response (see rear panel for current volunteer information)
- Be at least 18 years old
- Be in good health
- Be able to lift 25-35 pounds

## What can a volunteer do?

- Be a field monitor
- Be a transporter
- Pre-impact beach cleanup
- Light construction
- Facility and site maintenance
- Donations management and more...

## Can we help with shoreline clean up?

Safety always comes first so volunteers may not be authorized to clean up contamination. The Unified Command (federal, state, responsible party) will evaluate the safety and need for using volunteers at each spill. Until they make a determination, volunteers will not be allowed to collect contaminated materials from shorelines.

## What is so dangerous about oil?

Oil is toxic! It is classified as a hazardous material. Some effects may include throat irritation, headache from toxic fumes, or skin irritation.

## What can I do if I don't get called to volunteer or decide not to volunteer?

Everyone plays a critical role in a spill response. The best support is to keep yourself, kids and pets away from contaminated areas to minimize scaring oiled wildlife and prevent tracking oil or other contaminants into otherwise clean areas.

## How does oil get cleaned up and how do responders know where to go first?

Initial response generally focuses on stopping the oil leak, then advances to on-water containment and recovery, and finally moves to shoreline cleanup. Getting oil off the water first minimizes oiling and re-oiling of shorelines.

Since 1990, California has strived to prevent and prepare for oil spills. Area Contingency Plans (ACP) identify environmentally sensitive sites and other areas of concern. All interested agencies and partners contribute to creating and maintaining ACPs, which are regional in nature but consistent statewide. These plans identify response resources, environmentally sensitive sites and priority response strategies.

Observers may not see response teams on every shoreline immediately because teams may be responding elsewhere to higher priorities. Responders move from site to site in descending priority.

## Who will collect the oiled wildlife?

The OWCN, coordinated through the U.C. Davis School of Veterinary Medicine, has trained professionals and veterinarians who will direct oiled wildlife search, collection, transport and rehabilitation activities.

During an oiled wildlife event, oiled wildlife need to get out of the water, rest quietly on the shore and be given a chance to warm up. As a caring person, your first instinct might be to pick them up, but this can do more harm than help. Animals can be further injured (wings broken, bills dislocated, etc.) or you can be injured yourself.

Animals do not understand good intentions; they see you as a predator and they defend themselves or run away. If oiled animals are scared back into the water by pets or people, their chances of survival decrease dramatically.

You can best assist by reporting oiled wildlife at 1-877-UCD-OWCN.

## Who is in charge of an oil spill response?

In California, the U.S. Coast Guard is the federal response agency for marine oil spills. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency responds to inland oil spills.

The Office of Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR) is the lead state agency for all oil spills in California. Other federal, state and local government agencies share information and contribute to decisions depending on the jurisdictions affected.

In a marine oil spill response, the Unified Command (UC) is made up of the USCG, OSPR and a representative of the responsible party (the spiller). By law, the responsible party participates in the UC, and helps to direct and pay for the spill response.

All functions in oil spill response, including volunteer management, fall under an Incident Command structure.

## How can you stay involved after the spill ends and receive more training?

Contact your local community volunteer center, non-profit environmental groups, local humane societies, service organizations, faith-based organizations, and government agency volunteer programs. Some of these organizations can train you to be a long-term environmental monitor, or train you in various types of disaster management.

