



NATIONAL RESPONSE CORPORATION
October 17, 2003

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NATIONAL RESPONSE CORPORATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - National Response Corporation (NRC) announces that they have signed an agreement with Ocean Pollution Control (OPC) of Panama to jointly review market needs and operational requirements in preparation of meeting the mandatory Panama Canal Shipboard Oil Pollution Emergency Plan (PCSOPEP) requirements established by the Panama Canal Authority in August 2003.

The intent of this alliance is to provide plan holders a single source solution to meet their Tier S (TS), Tier 1 (T1), Tier 2 (T2) and Tier 3 (T3) Oil Spill Removal Organization (OSRO) requirements outlined in the new Panama Canal Authority PCSOPEP regulations. The regulations originally required a phase in period beginning on January 1, 2004. However, the Panama Canal Authority just announced a delay in the implementation dates for the OSRO and QI requirements. Vessel owners must still submit their plans 96 hours prior to their first visit to Canal Waters occurring on or after the original January 1, 2004 date. The appointment of a QI and OSRO for Tier 2 and 3 services has been delayed to July 1, 2004. The appointment of an OSRO to meet the complete requirements including Tiers S and 1 has been delayed to October 1, 2004. NRC and OPC intend for their service to be available no later than the regulatory requirement dates, but in all likelihood will have the complete OSRO requirements available as of January 1, 2004.

Details of this new service will be forthcoming upon clarification from the Panama Canal Authority of various open issues that were not made clear in the regulation.

National Response Corporation is the largest commercial oil spill response organization in the United States. NRC has offices in Great River, NY, New York, NY, Houston, TX, San Juan, PR, Memphis, TN, Saint Croix, USVI, Seattle, WA, and San Francisco, CA.

Ocean Pollution Control is a Panamanian OSRO with operational bases on both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of the Panama Canal. OPC has been providing OSRO services for the National Maritime Authority in Panama since 1997.

For more information on NRC's Panama Canal OSRO service contact Michael Reese, Vice President Vessel Services at 631 224-9141, extension 309.

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