

# An Industry Threatened... An Industry Prepared

## Spill Prevention Kit

Keep your waters clean & avoid fines

- Eliminate problem of oil drips and water in bilge.
- Keep absorbent pad in bilge to collect surface oil sheen.
- It is illegal and polluting to discharge deurgens and oil overboard.

### How to use Absorbent Bilge Pad

- Secure pad in bilge with line to prevent interference with bilge pump or equipment.
- Replace when saturated pad sits low in water.
- Dispose of pad in sealed plastic bag or incinerate.



Provided by Washington Sea Grant Program Oil Spill Prevention Education

An online information resource

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State and federal contingency plans address the threats to natural and cultural resources from large oil spills. Unfortunately, most of those plans do not adequately protect Washington's mussel, clam or oyster farms.

With this in mind, Eric Olsson, Washington Sea Grant Program's Oil Spill Prevention Education Specialist is helping to give shellfish farmers in Puget Sound, Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor the tools and training for protect their bivalves from spilled oil.

The idea for this project came from the farmers, who approached Olsson during last year's Sea Grant-sponsored 13<sup>th</sup> Conference for Shellfish Growers, and shared their concerns about their

industry's vulnerability to oil spills. Olsson offered to lend his expertise in training individuals and groups about oil spill preparedness, cleanup and prevention. He assisted the Pacific Shellfish Institute (PSI) in obtaining a grant from the Russell Family Foundation to launch such a program, specifically for shellfish farmers.

It's easy to imagine the harmful effects of a big oil spill," says Olsson. "When the oil slick from one of these catastrophic events reaches the shore, it can smother sea life, including farmed shellfish, with devastating effects."

For this reason, shellfish growers need to develop effective strategies for safeguarding their beds from oil spills. Furthermore, says Olsson, they must be prepared to implement these strategies well *before* any oil washes ashore.

"Shellfish growers need to know how to conduct beach cleanups, to selectively remove any debris that might complicate later efforts to keep shellfish beds

oil-free," explains Olsson.

Growers can also be informed about new technologies, including pom-pom oil snares — basketball-sized devices strung out along the waters' edge to scour the substrate and collect oil contaminants— to better protect their shellfish stocks.

While it's easy to understand how large oil spills can wreak havoc on shellfish beds, growers must also learn to deal with smaller-sized spills, which can taint the flesh of farmed oysters, mussels and clams. As filter feeders, these shellfish can ingest tiny droplets of oil from the waters around them.

"Even rumors of tainted shellfish can be harmful to individual farmer and to the entire industry," says Olsson. For this reason, he is helping PSI to teach shellfish growers how to eliminate any spills that might stem from everyday operations.

"Collectively the few drops of oil or gasoline spilled during fueling or boat repairs can have dire consequences," Olsson notes. "We'll be showing growers how to use protective measures such as oil-absorbent fueling collars to help clean up their acts."

A key component of this effort is the Spill Prevention Education Kit, devised by Olsson for Washington Sea Grant Program. Each kit contains leaflets with repair, maintenance and fueling safety tips and environmental information, along with a bilge pad — a pillow-shaped device for collecting surface oil sheen in the bilge compartment of a boat. On smaller boats, the bilge pad can also be placed under portable fuel containers to catch drips. After it is saturated, the pad can be removed and recycled, thus keeping any captured oil from escaping and re-contaminating the environment.

"The shellfish growers, working with WSGP and PSI, can make an enormous difference, by taking seemingly small measures" says Olsson.