

The UK Spill Contractors Accreditation Scheme

Guidance Notes

Before reading these guidance notes please view the Definitions page.

- **GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT ACCREDITATION**
- **COSTS OF ACCREDITATION**
- **AWARD OF ACCREDITATION**
- **REPORTS, APPEALS, AND COMPLAINTS**

This page describes the procedures followed within the Accreditation Scheme by both Applicants and Assessor. The procedure includes the completion by the applicant of the initial On Line Application Form and an example of the ACCREDITATION Assessment Matrix, which will be used by The Assessor to evaluate your capability, can be found by clicking here. This information is designed to supply the Scheme Assessor with sufficient information on the applicant's capability as an oil spill contractor for Accreditation purposes.

A visit will then be made by the Scheme Assessor to the applicant's premises, where the Matrix will be completed by the Assessor, and information submitted by the Contractor to complete the accreditation process. On payment of the annual fee, the new Accredited Contractor will be issued with a certificate valid for 12 months, and will be listed on the Spillonline website. Provided the Accredited Contractor remains in compliance with the conditions of the Scheme, which includes a spill inspections, and monthly reporting of spills, the listing of the Contractor will be maintained on the Spillonline website.

An Accredited Contractor will require a spill site inspection, or exercise, for each discipline within a 3 year period, and at the end of that 3 year period will need to be Re-Accredited.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Purpose

The purpose of this Accreditation Scheme is to maintain standards of Spill Response acceptable to the Regulators, and to give customers confidence that they will receive a high standard of professional and cost effective performance.

Scheme Supervision

The Scheme is supervised by the Accreditation Steering Group, which is chaired by a representative of the Regulators (EA, SEPA, EHS and MCA), and comprised of 5 representatives of the Contractors, the Scheme Manager, (UKSpill) and observers from Local Government, UK Harbour Masters Association and International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation.

SCHEME MANAGER

The Scheme is managed by UK Spill Association (UKSpill).

LISTING OF ACCREDITED COMPANIES

The Scheme is promoted principally on this website, www.spillonline.org where details of the Scheme can be found, and most importantly, a listing of the Accredited companies. This listing is kept up to date and sets out the current status of an Accredited Company, whether it complies, or is under review, or has been suspended. This website will be promoted by listing/links to the Regulators websites and through other media.

In addition, the Scheme will publish a hard copy listing of Accredited companies, as a reference document on a periodic basis. This will be widely distributed.

METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

In order to be considered for accreditation the contractor must fulfil all of the basic requirements of the Scheme, which includes acceptable Risk Assessment and Health & Safety at Work Policies, Insurances, and hold appropriate licences – all as set out in the Accreditation Assessment Matrix form.

If the Contractor complies with the standards of the Scheme, his level(s) and category(s) of accreditation are assessed on a base-by-base basis. This takes into account staff training and experience, equipment held and a general assessment of the contractor's capability of performing at the level(s) applied for.

COSTS OF ACCREDITATION

Annual Fees for Accredited Contractors are as follows. This fee includes one spill site visit per discipline within the 3 year period of Accreditation:

One base accredited in one discipline	£500 per annum
One base accredited in two disciplines	£700 per annum
One base accredited in three disciplines	£900 per annum

Contractors with additional base(s) pay an additional £100 per base per annum

Contractors requesting an Assessor to attend additional spill site visits - £250

All of the above charges are payable on receipt of invoice and may be subject to VAT. Failure by a Contractor to pay charges within 28 days of invoice date will lead to Accreditation status being suspended.

AWARD OF ACCREDITATION

On successful completion of the Accreditation process, and payment of an annual fee, the Contractor will be awarded with a certificate valid for 12 months, which will be renewed provided the Contractor remains in compliance through Spill visits, monthly Spill Reporting to the Scheme and payment of annual fee. The Contractor will then be listed on the Spillonline website.

After 3 years, from award of Accreditation certification, the Accredited Contractor will be required to go through a Re-accreditation process.

The listing of Accredited Contractors on the Spillonline site will be used by the Regulators in selecting and recommending contractors for spill response requirements.

Accredited Contractors will be issued with media to enable them to promote/advertise their Accreditation.

Upgrade Procedure

Contractors can ask at any time for their accreditation level to be reviewed. Similarly any of the Regulators can, at their own expense, carry out an inspection which may result in the accreditation level being lowered or removed. A spill site visit may also result in accreditation being lowered or removed. However, it should be noted that the object of the spill site visit is to help contractors maintain or improve their accreditation levels and assistance will be given as appropriate to achieve this by the Scheme Assessor.

The Regulators may carry out inspections of spills, and are not required to give any warning that an inspection is to be carried out, but they will provide the Contractor and the Scheme Assessor with a copy of any resulting request for accreditation levels to be amended.

A contractor wishing to increase his level of accreditation may apply to do so at any time but will be charged a fee of £250 irrespective of whether the upgrade application is successful.

Spill or Exercise Site Visits

In addition to the initial accreditation visit to the contractor's premises there is a requirement for spill site visits to be carried out during the three-year accreditation period. The current requirement is for one spill site visit per accredited discipline to be carried out during the three year accreditation period.

For ports and harbour spills, such spills do not take place on a regular basis and therefore a spill exercise may be substituted for an actual spill.

The contractor is required to notify the Assessor when a spill site visit can be made giving, if possible, at least 24 hours notice. The Scheme Assessor may be accompanied by an officer from the relevant Agency on any site visits made.

If the number of required spill site visits in the relevant discipline have not been carried out before Re-accreditation becomes due, Re-accreditation in that discipline cannot be considered until a spill site or exercise is visited/carried out, and Accreditation will be suspended. Further spill visits will then be needed to cover the requirements of Re-accreditation.

REPORTS, APPEALS, AND COMPLAINTS

Spill Site Reports

A copy of a spill visit or site report may be sent in confidence to the nominated representative of the relevant Regulator, if requested. Should the contractor disagree with any aspect of the report they may put their comments in writing, a copy of which will also be sent to the Regulator.

Appeal Procedure

If a Contractor fails to meet the Accreditation standard, they will have the opportunity to provide additional information/clarification and have their application reassessed.

Any issues that arise as a result of the contractor's premises inspection will be conveyed to the contractor in the form of a report outlining the changes that need to occur before accreditation can be considered.

Any disputes regarding the assessment of the contractor's suitability for a particular level of accreditation will be referred to an independent Assessor for review, and may be referred to the Regulators for comment.

Storage of data

Please note that any information received as a result of an accreditation application and any subsequent accreditation correspondence may be stored electronically on a database held by the Scheme.

Dealing with Complaints

All complaints about Accreditation are dealt with in the strictest confidence. The Scheme Assessor will not become involved with commercial aspects of any dispute but will review whether the Accredited Contractor is in compliance with his Accreditation. Following investigation, a contractor may have their accreditation levels re instated, reduced suspended or cancelled.

Complaints appeals procedure.

If a contractor is not satisfied with the results following a complaint, the contractor may appeal in writing to Scheme, who will refer this to the Steering Committee for a review.