

Oil Pollution Response Plan to be tested in East Lothian

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OIL POLLUTION RESPONSE PLAN TO BE TESTED IN EAST LOTHIAN

An emergency response safety exercise, which simulates an oil spill in the Firth of Forth, will take place next week on Tuesday 4th October in the vicinity of Gullane Beach in East Lothian.

Clearwater Forth - the emergency pollution control safety plan - is tested annually by Forth Ports, the statutory river authority for the Firth of Forth, and requires the close involvement of local agencies and river users. East Lothian Council will partner with Forth Ports for the exercise this year. It is likely that the exercise will result in some activity around the Gullane Beach area and residents should not be alarmed by this.

Clearwater Forth is an established emergency response plan designed to handle incidents on the river which may involve the risk of oil pollution. The plan is the responsibility of Forth Ports and is only required to be tested every three years. However, Forth Ports tests this on an annual basis as the ports group views safety as a priority.

Stuart Wallace, Divisional Director of Forth Ports, said: “*Safety is a top priority for Forth Ports and all the other organisations involved in Clearwater Forth. These annual exercises help us all gain experience so that we are better equipped to respond speedily and effectively should a real oil spillage ever occur in the river.*”

“No-one should be alarmed if they see activity, it’s an exercise and there is no risk to the environment, people or property. We look at all kinds of situations during exercises and build on any lessons that arise so that we can improve our emergency procedures and be better placed to protect the local communities and the environment.”

Angela Leitch, Chief Executive, East Lothian Council added: *“Exercises such as Clearwater Forth provide an opportunity for the council and relevant partner agencies to test out their resilience plans. Whilst we hope such emergencies will never happen, we do need to ensure that we have the appropriate procedures, personnel and skills available to react promptly and efficiently to such eventualities.”*

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Further information:

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Notes to editors:

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About Forth Ports

- Within and around the Firths of Forth and Tay, Forth Ports Limited manages and operates an area of 280 square miles of navigable waters, including two specialised marine terminals for oil and gas export and provides other marine services, such as towage and conservancy.
- Forth Ports owns and operates eight commercial ports in the UK – six on the Firth of Forth – Leith, Grangemouth, Rosyth, Methil, Burntisland and Kirkcaldy - Dundee on the Firth of Tay; and Tilbury on the Thames
- www.forthports.co.uk @forthports