

Oil Spill Sorbents: Testing Protocol and Certification Listing Program

by

**David Cooper, Project Engineer
Environment Canada
Emergencies Engineering Division
River Road Environmental Technology Centre
3439 River Road
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0H3**

**Lisa Keller, Project Engineer
Environment Canada
Emergencies Engineering Division
River Road Environmental Technology Centre
3439 River Road
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0H3**

INTRODUCTION

A universally accepted standard method for testing oil spill sorbents is not currently employed by the majority of sorbent manufacturers. End-users are limited to manufacturers' and distributors' claims which may be perceived as being biased. Environment Canada has spearheaded a drive to develop an official Canadian standard for the testing and certification of sorbents using the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) as the certification body. It is anticipated that Environment Canada will provide a system to maintain an unprejudiced method for testing oil spill sorbents.

BACKGROUND

Environment Canada's Emergencies Engineering Division (EED) is mandated to evaluate existing technologies and act as a proving ground for technologies deemed new and innovative in areas of Oil and Chemical Spill Cleanup. The sorbent testing program had its beginnings in 1974 when Environment Canada released its first publication entitled "Selection Criteria and Laboratory Evaluation of Oil Spill Sorbents". Updates to this publication were release every four or five years. The time lag between publications and the limited number of sorbents tested were acceptable limitations to this program as interest in sorbents was relatively limited. Since that time; however, interest in sorbent performance evaluation has grown steadily. Recent events including the Exxon Valdez spill in Prince William Sound and the spills during the Gulf War spurred renewed interest in sorbents.