

# Tips for Oil Spill Disaster Response Workers

## Possible Signs of Alcohol and Substance Abuse



### Hotlines

*National Domestic Violence Hotline*  
Toll-Free: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)  
TTY: 1-800-787-3224

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline*  
Toll-Free: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)  
TTY: 1-800-799-4TTY (4889)  
Web Site: <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

### Treatment Locator

*SAMHSA Treatment Referral Helpline*  
Toll-Free: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)  
TTY: 1-800-487-4TTY (4889)  
Web Site: <http://www.samhsa.gov/treatment/>

### Information Clearinghouse

*SAMHSA Health Information Network*  
Toll-Free: 1-877-726-4727  
TTY: 1-800-487-4TTY (4889)  
Web Site: <http://www.samhsa.gov/shin>

### Helpful Resources

*SAMHSA Disaster Technical Assistance Center (DTAC)*  
Toll-Free: 1-800-308-3515  
E-Mail: [DTAC@samhsa.hhs.gov](mailto:DTAC@samhsa.hhs.gov)  
Web Site: <http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/dtac>  
*For specific State referral information, please contact SAMHSA DTAC.*

*Note: Inclusion of a resource in this fact sheet does not imply endorsement by the Center for Mental Health Services, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.*

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Oil spill disaster response work in the Gulf Coast is both physically and emotionally challenging. Exposure to environmental damage and difficult working conditions may lead to increased stress among many oil spill disaster response workers. Some may use alcohol or other drugs to cope. If you or one of your co-workers is using alcohol or drugs to cope with increased stress, talk to someone about ways to reduce or stop use. Help from professionals is also available. The following warning signs are often associated with alcohol or drug abuse, and other physical or emotional problems. The lists below are not to be used as a substitute for a screening with a qualified healthcare provider.

### Physical/Emotional Indicators

- Has smell of alcohol on breath or marijuana on clothing
- Slurs speech or stutters; is incoherent
- Has dilated (enlarged) or constricted (pinpoint) pupils
- Has tremors (shaking or twitching of hands and eyelids)
- Is overly energetic
- Appears lethargic or falls asleep easily
- Shows poor coordination or is unsteady (e.g., staggering, off balance)
- Speaks very rapidly or very slowly
- Has wide mood swings (highs and lows)

- Appears fearful or anxious; experiences panic attacks
- Appears impatient, agitated, or irritable
- Is increasingly angry or defiant

### Personal Attitude/Behavior Indicators

- Talks about getting high
- Behaves in an impulsive or inappropriate manner
- Denies, lies, or covers up
- Takes unnecessary risks or acts in a reckless manner
- Breaks or bends rules, cheats
- Misses work, appointments; or arrives intoxicated

### Cognitive/Mental Indicators

- Has difficulty concentrating or focusing on the job
- Appears distracted or disoriented
- Makes inappropriate or unreasonable choices
- Has difficulty making decisions
- Experiences short-term memory loss
- Experiences blackout
- Needs directions repeated frequently
- Has difficulty recalling known details
- Needs repeated assistance completing ordinary work forms
- Experiences blackouts



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Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
Center for Mental Health Services  
[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)