

Flow Rate Technical Group
Fact Sheet

The National Incident Command's Flow Rate Technical Group (FRTG) is designed to support the response and inform the public by providing scientifically validated information about the amount of oil flowing from BP's leaking oil well while ensuring the vital efforts to cap the leak are not impeded.

- The administration-wide response efforts have always been geared toward the possibility of a catastrophic event, and our deployment of resources and our tactics have been based on such a worst case scenario not an inexact number.
- That said, the FRTG reflects the federal government's clear understanding of the long-term value of determining an oil flow rate, both in regards to the continued response and long-term recovery, as well as the important role this information may play in the final investigation of the failure of the blowout preventer and the resulting spill.

With the source of the oil 5,000 feet under the ocean's surface, it has been extremely difficult to estimate oil flow rate in an environment that prohibits human access.

The FRTG is leading a coordinated effort across the federal government to determine oil flow rates from the spill at multiple time periods following the explosion, fire and sinking of the oil rig in order to compute total outflow.

This will be achieved by:

- Obtaining a wide variety of data available on the reservoir, wellbore, blowout preventer, subsea flowing pressures, leak points, discharge plums and surface discharge observations, and others, as well as video review; and
- Using that data to identify and run state-of-the-art models to calculate flow rates and compare results.

Within the Group are two teams:

- A Modeling Team, which will collect and analyze data, and run state-of-the-art models.
- A Peer Review Team, which will conduct an independent review of all reports and findings of the modeling team under a contract with an independent organization.

The FRTG, chaired by Dr. Marcia McNutt, USGS Director and Science Advisor to the Secretary of the Interior, draws on the experience of the best experts from the federal government, including the U.S. Coast Guard, Minerals Management Service, Department of Energy, NOAA and the U.S. Geological Survey, as well as members from academia.

The group expects to have an initial flow assessment completed by early next week. Reports will be posted at www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com. Flow rate estimates produced by the group will include the sources of data used, a description of data quality, any assumptions made, and the names of models used.

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