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Review of the OSHA-NIOSH Response to the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill: Protecting the Health and Safety of Cleanup Workers

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Abstract

Introduction:
The fire and explosion of the Deepwater Horizon oil rig resulted in an enormous oil spill that threatened large distances of coastline. The overall response was led by the United States Coast Guard and involved the oil company BP, federal agencies, and state and local governments of five states.

Methods:
The Occupational Safety and Health focused extensive resources on the health and safety of cleanup workers, including thousands of workers involved in means of abatement, assessment, and cleanup. We describe the languages they could understand, the protective equipment they were provided, and the health and safety of cleanup workers.

Results:
Advance planning, immediate operations planning, and immediate operations resulted in no worker deaths.

Conclusions:
For future responses, improvements should be made in how safety and health information, as well as the process behind safety and health decisions, are communicated to the public.

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The Deepwater Horizon Spill
On the night of April 20, 2010, the Deepwater Horizon oil rig, located 72 kilometers offshore southeast of Venice, Louisiana, exploded and caught fire, resulting in the deaths of eleven workers. It soon became clear

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Overall, the efforts to ensure the safety and health of these cleanup workers were very effective.