

## **Guidance For Avoiding Impacts To Wildlife By Night Work Crews On Florida's Beaches**

### **SHORELINE (ONSHORE) CLEANUP RECOMMENDED PROTOCOLS**

*All protocols, recommendations, and requirements currently in place regarding wildlife and sensitive lands for daylight operations apply in addition to those described here.* Overall, nighttime cleanup operations should minimize noise, light, and operational footprint to the extent practicable. Specific tactics to achieve these objectives are described below.

1. **Notifications** – The following notifications are required prior to initiating nighttime shoreline cleanup activities. All notifications must be made as early as possible in the planning process and no later than 1500 hours prior to that evening's operations unless specified otherwise.  
**State of Florida/Heavy Equipment Tactics:** Notify Robbin Trindell (Cell: **561-262-1104**; Office: **850-617-6055**) or Meghan Koperski (Cell: **561-339-1001**; Office: **561-575-5407** ext. 596) AND the FWC Regional Species Conservation Biologist.
2. **Reporting Requirements:** No nighttime work will be conducted without a Wildlife Observer (trained in sea turtle and shorebird/seabird identification, biology, and behavior).
3. All shoreline cleanup personnel should be informed of these protocols and understand that wildlife resources may be present in any operations area.
4. If a sea turtle is spotted emerging, nesting or returning to the surf; maintain at least 200 ft. between the sea turtle and any beach cleanup activities. A nesting sea turtle may spend well over an hour, maybe two or more, on the beach before returning to the water. If sea turtle tracks are spotted, do not disturb the tracks. Nesting monitors use tracks to document the nest.
5. If the nesting attempt is abandoned, and the sea turtle returns to the surf without completing the nest, cleanup crews should continue with a heightened awareness as the female may attempt to nest again in a different location on the same stretch of beach.
6. Illumination in the operations area should be the minimum necessary to comply with USCG and/or Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requirements. Illumination beyond the immediate work area should be minimized. If headlamps with a red filter on the light can meet this requirement, this is preferred, otherwise, see the FWC Approved Sea Turtle Lighting guidelines below.
7. Limit cleanup crews to a total of 50, and a maximum of 30 active cleaners, at any one time within the operational area. Cleanup crews will be instructed to stay with the group and remain quiet at all times.
8. Limit cleanup crews to 10 cleaners per 150 yards of shoreline. Thus, the maximum length of shoreline that may be cleaned by a single crew is 450 yards.
9. Each cleanup operation crew will have a minimum of 2 contract and 1 Federal (USCG) supervisors present at all times. This will be in addition to any resource advisors (READs) or Natural Resource Advisors (NRAs) that may be required to be present in areas designated as sensitive lands. Contact the appropriate state or Federal land manager prior to entering these areas.
10. A wildlife observer should be present on-site for all nighttime shoreline cleanup activities. This role may be staffed by NOAA, USFWS, FWC, or existing members of the sea turtle or shorebird/seabird nest monitoring program.
11. The wildlife observer should examine the work area prior to work for all life stages or evidence of activity of sea turtles (adults, hatchlings, eggs, nests, crawls) and birds (adults, nests, eggs, chicks, and fledglings). If individuals are located, the wildlife observer will be responsible for identifying a staging area positioned to avoid the area by 50 feet, and flag the area so there is no human or equipment/material intrusion.
12. If a turtle crawl is present, there may be a nest. Driving, equipment use, and walking on the crawl could destroy a nest or obscure the nest location. Drive or walk as close to the mean high water line as possible to avoid the crawl (and the nest), the sea turtle survey crew will find the nest during the next morning's survey effort. If it is a beach that is not regularly surveyed, mark the potential nest as described in the protocol in Appendix?? and report the nest to the contacts above.

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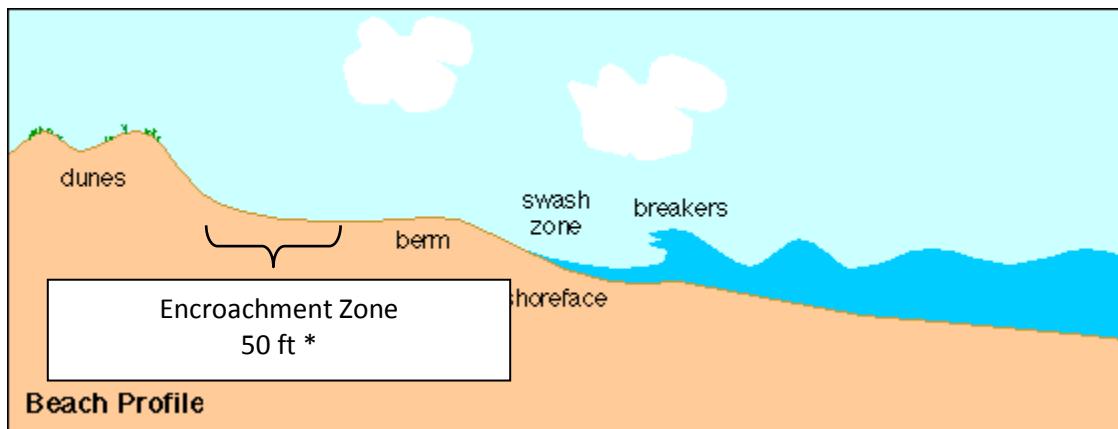
#### Manual Cleanup Activities

13. During manual cleanup, if more than one operational area is located on a segment of shoreline, each operational area will be separated by at least 1,000-yard exclusion zones. No other nighttime operational work will encroach within that exclusion zone during that operating period.

#### Mechanical Cleanup Activities

14. Work areas, including staging and equipment storage, and vehicle use, should not extend more than 10 feet shoreward of the oiled areas being cleaned. At no time should the work area encroach within 50 feet of the dune line if operationally sustainable (see below). If maintaining this distance is not possible due to the location of the oiling relative to the dune line, maximize the distance from the dune line to the extent possible.

**Dune Encroachment Diagram**



\* If operationally sustainable

15. All ingress/egress points as well as the operational area will be clearly delineated and workers will remain within the work area at all times. No other access areas are allowed.
16. All staging areas will be contained within the operational area.
17. Use of mechanized removal methods represents a significant risk to wildlife, especially during nighttime operations. If the decision is made to use mechanical methods, the following protocols should be adhered to:
  - a. Consider creating a nighttime beach cleanup Task Force – 3 to 5 beach cleaners, dump truck, front end loader, READ, 3 to 5 sea turtle observers, OSC Supervisor.
  - b. Vehicles should be restricted to UTV/ATV, beach cleaners (i.e. Cherrington 5000), and tractors (< 2,000 kg). Dump trucks and front end loader use will be kept to a minimum. No more than the minimum necessary vehicles should be on the beach.
  - c. At no time should equipment be operated at speeds that exceed a fast walk (< 5 mph).
  - d. The sea turtle observer will walk, or ride a beach-approved vehicle (UTV/ATV operated at speeds not exceeding a fast walk [< 5 mph]) approximately 100 feet in front of the equipment, out of the contamination, to survey for all life stages or evidence of activity of sea turtles and birds. If non-oiled wildlife are observed in the path of the equipment, the equipment should stop until the wildlife moves out of the way or the equipment may be diverted to avoid beached sea turtles or crawlings that have not been previously surveyed. If nesting sea turtles or hatchlings are encountered on the beach, stay back at least 50 feet and contact your sea turtle observer.
  - e. Follow the *SEA TURTLE NEST PROTECTION PROTOCOLS FOR CLEAN-UP CREWS ON PENINSULAR FLORIDA'S BEACHES*

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- f. All lights on the beach cleaners, ATV/UTV, and tractors should be shielded to control light pollution beyond the immediate work area. If possible, red filters or red vellum should be placed over any lights on the equipment.
18. All equipment and UTV/ATV use should be below the high tide line. Equipment and UTV/ATVs should not be driven higher on the beach. Equipment and UTV/ATVs must not be driven over dunes, or through any vegetated area. Crossing the wrack line should be avoided by UTV/ATVs and only be done by equipment actively engaged in cleanup of oiled wrack. Crews must use areas designated by the READs for UTV/ATV access if on NPS or USFWS Refuge lands. The use of equipment on NPS, USFWS, or State of Florida lands will be made on a case-by-case basis.
19. Noise should be minimized. Shouting or yelling should be restricted. Communication should be at a conversational level.
20. Operational areas should be established prior to nightfall.

#### **FWC APPROVED SEA TURTLE LIGHTING**

##### **ACCEPTABLE LAMPS / BULBS AND OTHER LIGHT SOURCES**

Long wave length lights, e.g. those that produce light that measures greater than 560 nanometers on a spectroscope, are necessary for all construction visible from and adjacent to marine turtle nesting beaches. Bright white light, such as metal halide, halogen, fluorescent, mercury vapor and incandescent lamps should not be used. Filters are unreliable and not recommended. Limited use of shorter wavelength lights may be acceptable in areas where direct and indirect light or glow could not possibly be visible from the beach upon approval by FWC.

##### **ACCEPTABLE LAMPS**

- Low Pressure Sodium (LPS) 18w, 35w
- Red, orange or amber LED (true red, orange or amber diodes, NOT filters)
- True red neon
- Other lighting sources that produce light of 560 nm or longer

A list of certified wildlife-friendly lighting may be found at:

<http://myfwc.com/conservation/you-conserve/lighting/certified/>