

Oil Spill Clean Up in London

CASE STUDY

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London, United Kingdom



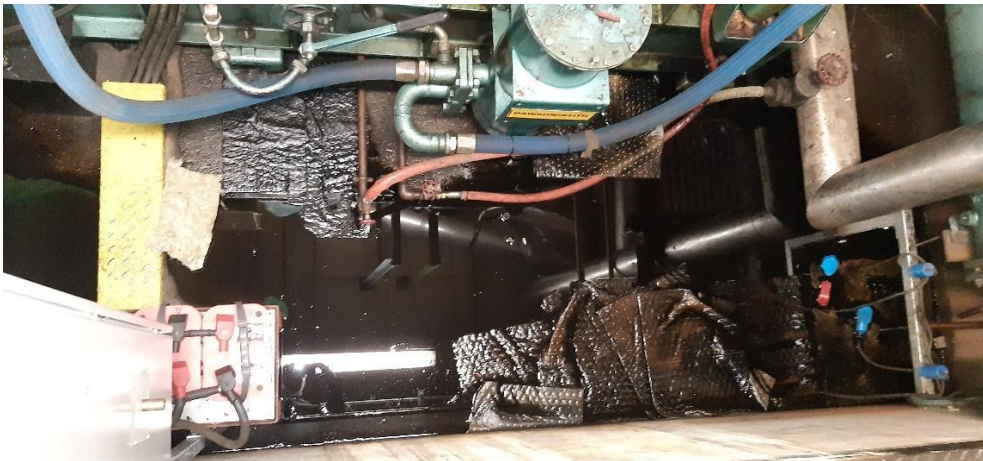
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THE CHALLENGE

An 'oil spill' is never a good thing. While it may conjure up images of major ships leaking oil throughout oceans, causing ecological devastation, even an oil spill on a much smaller scale poses plenty of problems and needs to be handled by professionals.

When an engineer working in the boiler room of a bank in London accidentally spilled 80 litres of coolant and 30 litres of oil, they knew that action needed to be taken quickly.



The risks were obvious. For a start there was the increased chance of physical injury from a slip or a fall with so much liquid on the floor. On top of that, oil is incredibly flammable. If a heat source or open flame were to come into contact with the spillage, there was a chance that it could ignite into a fireball. In an area with lots of equipment like a boiler room, they had to be incredibly careful.

As we see with the larger scale oil spills, the effect that can be inflicted upon the environment can be catastrophic – even the act of cleaning doesn't remove all of the threat, the spillage must be disposed of in a responsible way. If oil was to seep into drainage systems, it can be very harmful to the entire area, and can even get into drinking water.

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For the staff working in the bank, on top of slip hazards, there is also risk in simply breathing the air around an oil spill. Oil vapours have been known to reduce people's capacity to smell or taste, and if they are left exposed for a longer period of time, they could find that they are suffering from nausea, headaches, and light-headedness. This will obviously affect their performance at work.

Certain oils can even contain chemicals that have been known to cause cancer in people that are overexposed to their fumes, and can also affect major organs.

On top of the threat to people's health and safety, there was a threat to the business itself – areas of the building would be out of action and productivity would be down.

It is understandable that the building management company wanted to act as quickly as possible – they called Ideal Response.

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THE IDEAL RESPONSE

We were onsite the following day to start work. While it was a small area which had been affected by the spill (10x15ft), access was incredibly tight. One of the biggest challenges of the job was getting to all of the areas of the spill. With time a factor, though, we set to work straight away.

The decontamination programme was split into three phases:

Phase 1: We applied a chemical to the affected areas. This acted as a detergent to help break up the oil into much smaller particles which would help the entire process. For this particular job we used OT8 – an environmentally-friendly agent that is often used to remove oil spills on roads without causing an emulsion or contributing to surface erosion.

Phase 2: Next, we manually aggravated the spillage with a deck scrubber, manual scrubbing and hot water. This brought all of the oil away from the surface in the area in preparation for the final phase.

Phase 3: We then used 'wet vac' vacuum equipment to suction up all of the chemical, water and oil. This was then disposed of responsibly. This cleared all remnants of the spill and the cleanup in one go.



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THE RESULT

We completed the oil spill clean up in London in just one day, the day after we received a call from the building management company.

Thanks to the speed and quality of our work, the bank was able to function pretty much without disruption, and all of the staff and customers were kept safe.



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