

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ATTACHMENT:**

- Fact Sheet

**Governor Crist Offers Guidelines for Reporting Oil Spill Impacts in Florida**

*~ Critical for Floridians to know what to look for when reporting oil ~*

[www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon)

TALLAHASSEE – Florida Governor Charlie Crist today encouraged residents and visitor to report evidence of oil from the Deepwater Horizon incident along the state's shores by calling the State Warning Point at 1-877-2-SAVE-FL (1-877-272-8335), or by dialing #DEP from a cell phone.

Impacts reported to the State Warning Point will be investigated by reconnaissance teams of trained individuals for verification. If oil impacts are found, a Shoreline Cleanup and Assessment Technique (SCAT) team will be sent out by Unified Command in Mobile in coordination with state and local government.

"Floridians and visitors can play an active role in minimizing any potential threats to Florida's beautiful beaches and coastline by reporting the impact of oil," said Governor Crist. "There are no oil impacts to our coasts at this time, but it is important that we be prepared and informed about what to look for and what impacts may be associated with the spill."

A key component to reporting evidence of oil is recognizing the appearance of weathered oil. When crude oil is released into the environment, its composition changes as a result of "weathering," or exposure to the water and sun. Evaporation is one of the more significant weathering processes. Evaporation occurs mainly during the first 24 to 48 hours after release, and it greatly reduces the amount of the lighter components of crude oil. Some crude oils may lose up to 40 percent of their volume due to evaporation in the first days after a release. The composition of any released material remaining in the affected area is substantially different from the originally-released crude oil.

Oil on Florida's coastline will most likely be in the form of tar balls, oil sheen, tar patches or mats. Please see the attached photographs depicting what oil may look like on Florida's shores. The photos are meant to help people when calling the State Warning Point.

Nearby dredging or construction projects have the potential to produce debris which could be mistaken for impacts associated with the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. While not everything that washes onshore may be attributed to Deepwater Horizon, Floridians and travelers are recommended to report any suspected oil.

The State Warning Point is operated by the State Emergency Response Team – consisting of the Florida Division of Emergency Management and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, under the leadership of Governor Crist.

To download a fact sheet with guidelines on what to look for when reporting impacts to Florida's shoreline, and to learn more about Florida's response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, visit [www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon), follow [www.Twitter.com/FLDEPalert](https://www.twitter.com/FLDEPalert) or call the Florida Oil Spill Information Line at 1-888-337-3569.

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