

Petrotrin stages oil spill

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The Health, Safety and Environment Department of state-owned oil company Petrotrin is confident that if an oil spill should occur at its offshore bases, its containment and recovery response would be effective.

During an oil drill at the company's Pointe-a-Pierre port yesterday, team leader of environment Shyam Dyal said the exercise had become an annual event in an effort to test its capabilities.

"We do this every year and after today I can safely say that we are ready to control whatever comes our way," he said.

Dignitaries from oil producing countries in North and South America, as well as employees from various energy companies in the country were on hand to witness Petrotrin's mopping up efforts.

According to Dyal, the company wanted to provide onlookers with a scenario of a tanker crashing into one of its vessels, while 350 barrels of oil seeped out.

While this was not the case, containment and ocean booms were deployed to the affected area around 7.30 am, a half hour after the spill took place.

Within seconds, two light aircraft flew across Berth Number Eight spraying dispersant.

Dyal explained that the dispersant is used to break up thick oil spill, to make it more manageable to control.

To contain the shoreline, other exercises kicked in, where oil mop equipment, which included a rope mop skimmer was placed in the affected area to gather the spill.

The rope was then placed through a dryer, where the oil was collected in containers and transferred to nearby tanks.

In a real spill Dyal said operations had to be conducted in the fastest time possible to prevent heavy oil from sinking to the bottom of the sea. The thick film can damage feeding and breeding species.