Background
Waste Management is assisting in cleanup activities resulting from the oil leak at BP’s Deepwater Horizon MC252 oil well in the Gulf of Mexico. This work is being performed under contract with BP, and is part of the overall recovery effort led by the Unified Command Center in Mobile, Ala. Our service area extends from the Louisiana-Mississippi border eastward to the Ecofina River in Florida.

The materials being handled
We’re transporting, disposing and recycling:
• Solid wastes generated from support operations, including regular trash and recyclables;
• Oil-impacted material, such as debris, soil, sand and vegetation collected from the shoreline, personal protective equipment, disposal equipment, sorbents and booms; and
• Liquids, such as oil and water from skimming operations, and liquids generated from decontamination of equipment and reusable booms.

All these materials are classified as non-hazardous waste. The EPA and additional state environmental authorities have all classified this waste type as non-hazardous. Technically, the waste belongs to a category called “non-hazardous special waste,” which includes petroleum-contaminated soils and industrial waste products. Although they are not classified as hazardous wastes, the risks associated with them depend on the concentration. (For example, chlorine by itself is hazardous; yet pool water, which contains chlorine, is not.)

The facilities involved
Solid waste and oil-impacted materials are being disposed of at a number of Waste Management landfills. These facilities were selected because of their existing permits and capabilities and their strategic location. To facilitate efficient transport, we have established staging areas where the materials are inspected to verify contents, and combined and packaged for transport.

Well-prepared for the job
As the leading provider of comprehensive waste management services in North America, Waste Management is well-prepared for this job. We maintain the highest standards of environmental responsibility, as well as comprehensive procedures to protect human health and safety, both for our employees and for the communities we serve. And we have facilities, resources and experienced personnel in close proximity to the affected shoreline.

Our standard procedures for safe management of these materials include: multiple inspections of waste materials to ensure regulatory compliance and proper handling; comprehensive safety procedures to protect our employees and the communities through which wastes will be transported; control systems to manage storm water runoff at landfills and staging areas; proven systems to collect and remove landfill gas and leachate from landfills; and compaction and covering of each day’s deposits at landfills with at least six inches of soil or other cover material.

Additional precautions in place
A number of additional safeguards are in place for this project:
• Staging areas have been established for additional inspection and more efficient transport of wastes.
• Containers used for transport are lined with plastic before loading, and covered afterward to prevent leakage.
• Comprehensive response procedures are in place should container leakage occur during transport.
• Liquid wastes are being transported in specially designed tanks.

The process flow being used for these waste streams is shown on the back.

Waste Management - a vital part of the solution
We recognize that this effort is a vital one for the health and well-being of hundreds of communities along the Gulf Coast and beyond. While this effort represents a major undertaking, it’s one for which we’re well-prepared. And it’s one we’re eager to pursue to a resolution as quickly and safely as possible.

For more information, visit www.wm.com.