



U.S. Department of
Homeland Security
United States
Coast Guard



Unified Command

Date: 1:30 p.m. Thursday, April 16, 2020

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Response efforts continue at Valdez Marine Terminal

VALDEZ, Alaska – Response and recovery work on the water and on the ground continued in rainy conditions overnight and into today as crews respond to the spill at the Valdez Marine Terminal (VMT).

As of 6 a.m. Thursday, approximately 654 barrels (27,468 gallons) of water/oil mix was recovered. An overflight this morning confirmed there is no noticeable sheen outside of the boomed areas.

The source of the spill has been identified as a sump located about a quarter-mile uphill from the VMT small boat harbor. The source at the sump has been isolated and secured since Monday, but some oily water is still entering the water in the vicinity of the small boat harbor as the spill makes its way downhill.

“Because of the nature of the spill and the snow cover in Valdez, determining the flow path and the spill amount is challenging,” said Crystal Smith, State On-Scene Coordinator and Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation representative in the Unified Command. “While we are working on identifying the flow path, boom and skimming operations are containing and controlling the additional oily water that is coming into the harbor.”

To investigate possible flow paths, crews are digging through snow and ice, as well as dirt, gravel and fill.

“The Valdez Marine Terminal has multiple systems buried underground, so the crews must conduct careful research, surveying and deliberate planning before excavating the ground to determine the flow path,” said Commander Michael Franklin, Federal-On-Scene Coordinator and United States Coast Guard representative in the Unified Command. “This process can take time. Crews are working as safely and efficiently as possible.”

Response crews were able to shorten the inner containment boom overnight, concentrating the spill to maximize recovery. More than 4,300 feet of boom has been deployed as 14 Vessel of Opportunity boats and 13 Alyeska work boats are on scene. Their crews are placing boom and operating skimmers, providing surveillance, swapping out boom when needed, and providing logistical support such as fueling, water, and waste collection services.

There are more than 200 people locally involved in the response with 152 working in the field and 54 assigned to the command post, some working remotely from locations in Valdez and around the state. All are working in accordance with state, local and Alyeska company policies and mandates in order to protect the health of the workforce and the surrounding communities amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Helicopter overflights resumed this morning and will continue as conditions allow. In addition, one unmanned aerial vehicle began overhead observation this morning.

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There are no current operational impacts to the Trans Alaska Pipeline System. An oil tanker, *The Polar Discovery*, was loaded with Alaska North Slope Crude without incident and departed around 3 a.m. today (Thursday, April 16). Another tanker, *The Alaskan Explorer*, arrived around 4 a.m. and is being loaded at VMT's Berth 5, the farthest operational berth from the spill area.

The main priorities of the response remain the safety of response personnel and the community, protection of the environment, and open communication with the public and stakeholders throughout the response.

For information and updates on the response, visit www.alyeskaresponds.com and the ADEC site <http://dec.alaska.gov/spar/ppr/spill-information/response/2020/02-vmt-sump-oily-water-spill/>.

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