

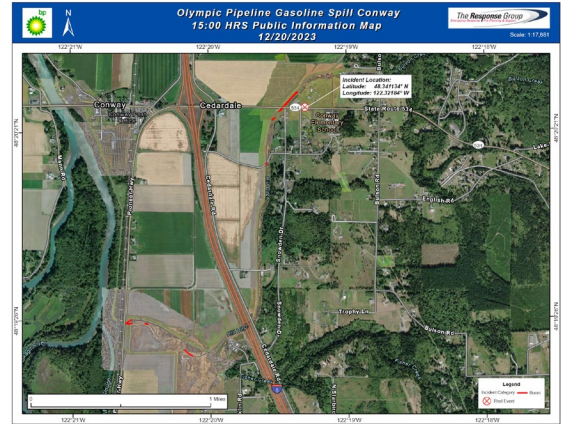
# Olympic Pipeline Gasoline Spill Fact Sheet

Feb. 6, 2024

The Olympic Pipeline is a 400-mile pipeline system, laid in a 299-mile corridor, running from Whatcom County, Washington to Portland, Oregon. The Olympic Pipeline transports refined petroleum products such as gasoline, diesel, and jet fuel. The Olympic Pipeline is operated by BP Pipelines North America, Inc (bp).

Around 4 a.m. on Sunday, December 10, 2023, a discharge of approximately 21,168 gallons of gasoline from the Olympic Pipeline occurred near Conway, Washington. Investigation is continuing into the cause of the gasoline discharge, but preliminary indications suggest the discharge occurred on a piece of tubing connected to a pressure gauge inside of a vault.

Approximately 5,297 gallons remained inside the vault and were removed, while approximately 15,871 gallons entered the environment.



The vault is located at the top of a small rise above Hill Ditch, at the edge of a privately owned agricultural field. The vault was partially filled with stormwater at the time of the leak. The gasoline/stormwater mixture flowed out of the vault and across the field, through the forested streambank, and into Hill Ditch.

## Why did the gasoline spill happen?

The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) and the federal Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) are investigating the Olympic Pipeline gasoline spill. Their preliminary investigation suggests a tubing connector failure.

The Washington Department of Ecology and bp are also conducting investigations into the spill. Ecology is investigating compliance with environmental regulations and will also conduct a natural resource damage assessment. bp is conducting its own investigation into the spill and will report its findings to UTC and PHMSA.



## Who is cleaning up the spill?

For emergency incidents like this, several government agencies and the responsible party form a working group called a "Unified Command." For this incident, the Unified Command consists of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Washington Department of Ecology, the Skagit County Department of Emergency Management, the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, and bp.



Together, the Unified Command oversees the spill cleanup, and the responsible party pays for costs associated with it. Numerous other state, federal, tribal, and local agencies are assisting Unified Command with the response.

## What's been done to clean up the gasoline spill?

**In water:** Quick deployment of boom (floating barriers) in Hill Ditch prevented gasoline from entering Fisher Slough, the Skagit River, and Skagit Bay. Since the incident, professional spill responders have been skimming gasoline, maintaining boom, and cleaning up pockets of fuel along the banks of Hill Ditch.

**In soil:** Shoreline assessment teams have systematically examined the banks of Hill Ditch, looking for places where gasoline may have been trapped. If oil was observed, these areas were cleaned up and resurveyed by a shoreline assessment team. Responders have taken sediment samples along the shoreline outside the immediate area of the spill and have determined that gasoline has not contaminated the sediments in the creek. Because gasoline is lighter than water, the fuel being carried by the stream did not sink into the soil and instead remained at the surface of the shoreline.



However, the soil in the agricultural field between Hill Ditch and the pipeline vault was contaminated by the gasoline spill. The Unified Command is directing the excavation of contaminated soil and oily liquids. At the end of December 2023, crews removed trees in the area bordering the west edge of the agricultural field and east shoreline of Hill Ditch. This was necessary to remove the underlying contaminated soil and prevent long-term seepage into the waterway and shoreline. Crews continue work to remove contaminated soil and once completed, will restore the vegetation along the shoreline that was removed.

This cleanup work has been conducted in coordination with natural resource, cultural resource, fish, and wildlife expertise from other federal, state, and local agencies and area tribes.

## What's been done to keep the community safe?

The Unified Command has monitored community air quality since the day the incident occurred. There are fixed air monitoring stations deployed in the immediate area around the spill site and mobile air monitoring units patrol the nearby neighborhood and school. To date, air monitoring has indicated no public health risks from gasoline fumes.

The Unified Command has also monitored water quality in Hill Ditch, the Skagit River, and Skagit Bay since the incident occurred. Multiple rounds of sampling have confirmed that efforts to contain and clean up the gasoline have been effective.

The Unified Command has also sampled domestic drinking water wells and no adverse impacts have been detected in those samples. Tissue from crabs and shellfish were collected in Skagit Bay. The analytical results of tissue samples are expected in early February.



## What still needs to be cleaned up?

Most of the remaining contaminated soil is near the east shoreline of Hill Ditch just north of SR 534. Hill Ditch is a fish-bearing stream, and streambank excavation requires extensive planning, permitting, and coordination with multiple state and federal agencies, tribes, stakeholders, and landowners. The streambank excavation will require installation of a temporary sheet piling wall and exclusion of fish before excavation can begin. This work is expected to be complete in March 2024. Please see our streambank excavation fact sheet for more details.

## What happens after the emergency response ends?

The Unified Command expects to end the emergency phase of this spill response when:

- Contaminated soil is removed per Unified Command approved sampling plans.
- Temporary sheet piling wall is removed.
- Persistent rainbow sheens are no longer visible.

At that point, work will transition to the remediation and restoration phase of the response. The responsible party, bp, will restore the spill-impacted area to the original grade with clean soil and will replant the impacted area. Ecology's Toxics Cleanup Program will oversee any remaining remediation work to ensure the state's regulatory cleanup standards are met.

Investigation by regulatory agencies into the cause of the pipeline spill will continue after the emergency response ends.

### Fast facts

- 21,168 approximate gallons of gasoline spilled
- 8,324 approximate gallons of gasoline recovered
- 4,293 cubic yards of contaminated soil removed
- 1,780 feet of boom deployed in Hill Ditch
- 359 surface water and sediment samples collected in Hill Ditch/Bulson Creek, Skagit River, and Skagit Bay
- 7,000+ real-time air samples collected, along with 132 lab analyzed air samples
- 4.5+ miles of shoreline evaluated for spill impacts

