



Update #18 Olympic Pipeline gasoline spill Conway, WA

Conway, WA (Feb. 9, 2024 / 6:30 p.m.)

The Unified Command leading the response to the discharge of gasoline from a vault associated with the Olympic Pipeline in Conway, Washington has the following updates on the progress of cleanup efforts.

Operational updates

- Construction of a sheet pile wall is underway to build a cofferdam, which will create a barrier between the water of Hill Ditch and the bank so the affected soils next to the ditch may be removed without impacting the water.
- The sheet piling installation work will continue until it is completed, estimated to be February 15.
- The next step will be installation of the dewatering system, which is scheduled to begin by February 17. The dewatering system will remove water from the soil inside the cofferdam to ensure the stability of excavation and to maintain a safe working environment.
- Fish exclusion nets are in place to keep fish out of the cofferdam construction area. Crews are regularly checking the nets for fish that could be caught in the nets. The fish exclusion nets will be removed when the sheet wall installation is completed.
- Turbidity curtains are in place to reduce loosened silt traveling downstream from the construction area.
- Vibration caused by sheet pile installation operations is being measured and monitored to reduce the risk of potentially impacting homes or infrastructure in the immediate vicinity of the work.

Reporting sheens

The Unified Command asks members of the community and public to continue reporting sheens in Hill Ditch by emailing Liaison@ecy.wa.gov. To report sheens outside Hill Ditch, call [1-800-OILS-911](tel:1-800-OILS-911).

FAQ from this week's community events

At the February 6 open house and February 7 virtual meeting, Unified Command and subject matter experts heard and responded to questions from the community, including:

Q: If 21,168 gallons of gasoline were discharged, and 8,324 gallons has been recovered, where did the rest of it go?

A: The difference between these two numbers is not the volume that can be recovered through cleanup work. While some gasoline remains trapped in soil that will be removed from the site, other gasoline would have evaporated.

Q: When will the site be clean?

A: Cleanup is driven by sampling results, not the volume of gasoline recovered. Response work will continue until contaminated soil is removed and shoreline assessment teams stop seeing sheens. Ecology's Toxics Cleanup Program will then oversee any remaining remediation work to ensure the state's regulatory cleanup standards are met.

Q: Who will pay the costs of the cleanup?

A: State and federal laws require the responsible party (bp) to pay for the response.

Q: Could the cleanup do more damage than the spill?

A: Environmental specialists for the response look at the tradeoffs of damage vs. benefits from cleanup options and make recommendations to the Unified Command. For example, after the release, boom was placed in an area adjacent to Fisher Slough to protect the area against potential damage from the discharge. In late January, environmental staff recommended the removal of boom adjacent to Fisher Slough because there were no gasoline impacts there and the boom was disrupting the natural water flow and wildlife patterns.

Q: Why did this happen? What was done to stop the leak?

The federal Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration and Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission are investigating the cause and the actions taken to stop the discharge. The conclusions of those investigations will be publicly available in the next several months.

Photos, videos, and resources

- [Virtual meeting presentation slides](#)
- [Response, restoration, and investigation handout \(en español\)](#)
- [Biosheens fact sheet](#)
- [Aerial video compilation of response progress](#)
- [Video montage of aerial photos, Dec. 10, 2023 – Feb. 8, 2024](#)
- [Wildlife field camera videos \(YouTube\)](#)
- [Crane and sheet pile cofferdam photos \(Flickr\)](#)

General information

Air monitoring conducted under the direction of the Unified Command continues to indicate no public health risk from gasoline fumes. Community air monitoring will continue during work hours when impacted soil is being removed.

Sampling downstream of the spill site continues and no exceedances of environmental or health-based screening values for hydrocarbons have been reported at any location since December 22, 2023.

Members of the public who come upon injured or deceased wildlife are asked not to touch or relocate affected wildlife and to call 1-800-22BIRDS.

A claims center has been established by the Olympic Pipeline. Please call 1-866-616-1558 to report any personal or property damages resulting from the spill.

The Unified Command consists of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Washington Department of Ecology, the Skagit County Department of Emergency Management, bp, and the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community.

Status updates are posted on Ecology's website at ecology.wa.gov/OlympicPipelineSpill. Photos and videos are available on Ecology's [Flickr](#) and [Youtube](#) sites. For further information on this incident, contact:

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