

Beat: News

Sandy causes 300,000 gallon oil spill on U.S. East Coast

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USPA News - Superstorm Sandy, one of the largest storms ever to strike the U.S. East Coast, damaged two storage tanks which have caused up to 300,000 gallons of diesel fuel to spill into the waters between New Jersey and New York, officials said on Thursday. Motiva, a joint venture of Shell Oil and Saudi Refining, said the spill occurred earlier this week when Sandy damaged two diesel storage tanks at its Sewaren, New Jersey, facility which is located along the Arthur Kill, a tidal waterway separating the state of New Jersey from Staten Island in neighboring New York. It was not immediately clear how much was spilled, but it is believed up to 300,000 gallons of diesel fuel may have spilled into the waters.

The U.S. Coast Guard said it had collected 151,200 gallons of oily water mixture as of 4 p.m. local time on Thursday, and this includes product transferred from one of the damaged tanks, secondary containment and on water skimming operations. "No injuries have occurred and there has been no further product released since the initial event," a Shell spokeswoman said in a brief statement. "Previously deployed booms are continuing to skim released product in the Woodbridge creek adjacent to the site. Motiva and public emergency responders are onsite assessing the situation." The U.S. Coast Guard said approximately 150 emergency responders are continuing to contain and recover diesel fuel in the containment area around the storage tanks. Contractors are working to remove contained pockets of oil in Smith's Creek utilizing skimmers, vacuum trucks, absorbent pads, and absorbent boom. Additional cleanup actions are ongoing around the docks, and approximately 14,000 feet of containment boom has been deployed. There were no immediate health concerns for residents in the community surrounding Smith's Creek as air monitoring tests showed 20.8 percent normal oxygen levels, zero percent volatile organic compounds readings and lower explosive limits as well as zero levels of hydrogen sulfide and carbon monoxide. Superstorm Sandy tore a path of destruction when it made landfall on the U.S. East Coast on Monday, killing at least 88 people and leaving more than eight million people without electricity. The storm churned across Pennsylvania on Tuesday on a path toward Canada, where two others were killed. The storm had earlier killed 67 people in the Caribbean.

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