



DGIR 241995

May 28, 2024

Statement for local Charlie Lake, B.C., residents regarding a used oil spill within Fish Creek, near 269 Road

The intention of this statement is to build upon publicly available information on the BC Spill Incidents webpage ([here](#)) and inform local residents of monitoring and recovery activities that will continue in the Fish Creek area in response to Dangerous Goods Incident Report (DGIR) 241995 now that bulk removal of spilled used oil and the emergency phase has concluded.

Background:

On Sunday, May 19, 2024, a spill incident was reported to the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (Ministry) involving used oil in Fish Creek, near 269 Road, just outside of Fort St. John, B.C.. The spilled material impacted about 2000 m of shoreline with the heaviest impact confined to about 150 m of Fish Creek. Due to the environmental risk and unknown nature of the Responsible Person, the Ministry assumed responsibility for the cleanup of the incident and hired contractors to manage onsite cleanup operations.

Current Status:

- Heavy equipment was demobilized from the site when it became ineffective and inefficient in collecting spilled material due to the reduced accumulation of spilled material at the site.
- The quantity of used oil spilled has not yet been determined.
- To date, no Responsible Person has been identified. The B.C. Conservation Officer Service is leading the investigation into identifying the person responsible for the spilled material.
- Collection booms, absorbents, and wildlife deterrents are present in areas where spilled material is still accumulating.
- Sediment and water sampling is ongoing. Sample results have shown a decline in contaminants in the water from when response activities began.

Considerations going forward:

- Sampling collection will continue. Sampling collection is expected to reduce from daily to weekly, monthly, then seasonally through to at least Spring 2025 as contamination levels decrease.
- The Ministry will continue to communicate sampling results with the Peace River Regional District.
- Collection booms, absorbents, and wildlife deterrents will remain in place. There are currently 3 sets of collection booms in place on Fish Creek between 269 Rd and 116 St. These areas are being monitored routinely by both Ministry staff and contractors.
 - These collection booms allow the spilled used oil to accumulate so that absorbents can recover it. The spilled used oil is deemed unrecoverable when there is no longer enough accumulating for the absorbents to recover it. When this occurs on site, the collection boom sets will be removed as they will no longer be effective.
- 100% recovery of all the spilled used oil is not expected. This is for two main reasons:
 - Even though sheening may be present, there may not be enough spilled material for the use of booms and absorbent to be effective in capturing it.
 - Spill response must consider a concept of Net Environmental Benefit Analysis (NEBA) that evaluates the risks and benefits of response activities as they pertain to the success of cleanup relative to the environmental harm cleanup activities may cause. The point at which cleanup activities can cause more harm to the environment than allowing the residual spilled material to naturally degrade must be considered.
- Signs of the spill, including sheening, are expected in the area for at least a year. Residuals that cause sheening can naturally break down and evaporate over time.
- A black ring staining the grasses and shoreline is present in the heaviest impacted area of Fish Creek. This black ring is formed by residual spilled material. Its removal would cause more harm to the environment than leaving the material. The material currently appears tacky or sticky. Over time, it will solidify and breakdown.

Area residents are asked to avoid the areas of impact and recovery work, including the collection booms. If it is observed that the collection booms have been tampered with or moved, the Ministry should be notified through the spill reporting hotline (1-800-663-3456). Area residents are also asked to take steps to prevent domestic animals or livestock from entering the impacted areas.