

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
Division of Spill Prevention and Response
Prevention and Emergency Response Program

SITUATION REPORT

INCIDENT NAME: Slim Williams Way Ethyl Mercaptan Release

SITREP #: 1

SPILL NUMBER: 04119932501

LEDGER CODE: NA

TIME/DATE OF SPILL: November 20, 2004 – the time of the spill is unknown. The spill was reported by the Juneau Fire Department (Capital City Fire and Rescue) to DEC at 4:45 PM.

TIME/DATE OF SITUATION REPORT: 3:30 P.M. November 22, 2004

TIME/DATE OF THE NEXT REPORT: As the situation warrants.

TYPE/AMOUNT OF PRODUCT SPILLED: An undetermined amount of Ethyl Mercaptan was released. Ethyl Mercaptan (Mercaptan) is a petroleum product. It is added to propane at the rate of 1 pound of Mercaptan to 10,000 gallons of propane to provide an odor to the propane for detection of leaks. Mercaptan is an irritant that can cause respiratory problems, headaches, nausea and vomiting.

LOCATION: Juneau, Alaska.

CAUSE OF SPILL: The Potential Responsible Party (PRP) filled a supposedly abandoned, empty 1000 gallon propane tank for transport to Hoonah, Alaska via the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS). The water displaced residual Ethyl Mercaptan which came out of the tank and onto the truck and ground around the truck. Heavy rains carried the Ethyl Mercaptan down into the ditches of the neighborhood and into a small pond.

POTENTIAL RESPONSIBLE PARTY (PRP): Grant Coutlee, a propane dealer in Hoonah, AK.

RESPONSE ACTION: Capital City Fire and Rescue received a call reporting a strong odor of propane on Slim Williams Way at 4:09 P.M. on November 20, 2004. The fire department responded to the scene and found a heavy odor of Mercaptan over a wide area. Access to the area was restricted while the fire department determined the cause of the odor.

The fire department located a 1000 gallon propane tank in the rear of a stake bed truck and determined it to be the source of the odor. The fire department also noted diesel oil apparently leaking from the truck's fuel tank.

The fire department contacted ADEC requesting information and assistance on scene with the mercaptan release and the apparent oil spill. They also contacted a representative of the local Amerigas propane dealer for assistance with the mercaptan release.

The fire department monitored the area with a combustible gas meter and determined there was no fire or explosion hazard present.

The Amerigas representative came to the scene and sprayed the propane tank, truck and surrounding area with a Mercaptan neutralizing agent.

An ADEC responder on scene was briefed by the fire department incident commander on both the Mercaptan release and the oil spill. After the briefing the ADEC representative began investigating the oil spill. It was determined the oil spill was not associated with the Mercaptan release but was actually due to a minor overfill of an underground home heating oil tank early in the morning of November 22, 2004 at the same address as the propane release. The oil spill is the subject of a separate report and no sitrep will be issued on that incident.

The fire department and ADEC recommended the truck with the propane tank be removed from the area to another location. The PRP agreed to take to the AMHS terminal parking lot until the ferry departed on November 23, 2004 which was accomplished by the evening of the incident.

The fire department brought power ventilating equipment on scene to air out houses impacted by the Mercaptan release.

The Department received two telephone calls on November 22, 2004 from residents in the area of the spill complaining of an odor of propane and reports of nausea and headaches.

ADEC contacted the Arrowhead propane dealer for additional information on the Mercaptan. The dealer stated that Mercaptan collects in the bottom of old propane tanks as a liquid and if spilled has a very strong odor that may remain in the area for long periods of time. Further, there is no easy way to remove the Mercaptan except by burning.

SOURCE CONTROL: None

RESOURCES AFFECTED: The fire department treated two people who complained of difficulty breathing with oxygen and there were reports of numerous people with headaches and nausea. One citizen reported some children in the area were vomiting as a result of their exposure to the odor of Mercaptan. Numerous residents reported a strong odor of propane (Mercaptan) in their houses as a result of this incident.

Air quality over a large area was affected by this incident. Two residents of the area report there is a strong odor of propane coming from a pond in the area of the release.

FUTURE PLANS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

An ADEC spill responder will investigate reports of continuing odor in the pond near the scene of the spill.

ADEC will continue to monitor the area.

WEATHER: On-scene weather was heavy rain, calm winds with the temperature in the mid-forties.

UNIFIED COMMAND AND PERSONNEL:

Incident Commander: John George, Capital City Fire and Rescue
S.O.S.C.: Bob Mattson (ADEC)
Field S.O.S.C.: Scot W. Tiernan (ADEC)

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT: Scot W. Tiernan at (907) 465-5378

AGENCY/STAKEHOLDER NOTIFICATION LIST

This sitrep has been distributed via email to the Governor's office, ADF&G, ADNR, SECC, USEPA, USDOJ, NMFS, USFWS, and USFS in addition to the following.

Agency	Name	Sent Via	Additional Info	Telephone	Fax
ADF&G	Mark Fink	Email	Sent via Spill Report Group	267-2338	267-2464
ADNR	Doug Sanvik	Email	Sent via Spill Report Group	465-3400	465-3513
USCG (MSO Juneau)	CDR John Sifling	Email	jsifling@cgalaska.uscg.mil	463-2453	463-2445
USCG (MSO Juneau)	Lt. Gary Koehler	Email	gkoehler@cgalaska.uscg.mil	463-2470	463-2445
EPA	Matt Carr	Email	Sent via Spill Report Group	271-3616	271-3424
Other	Name	Sent Via	Additional Info	Telephone	Fax
Senate Dist.B	Kim Elton	Fax		465-4947	465-2108
House Dist. 3	Beth Kerttula	Fax		465-4766	465-4748
House Dist. 4	Bruce Weyhrauch	Fax		465-3744	465-2273
City Borough of Juneau	Rod Swope, City Mgr.	Fax		586-5240	586-5385
SEAPRO	Dave Owings	Fax	dave@seapro.org	225-7002	247-1117
103 rd Civil Support Team (Alaska National Guard)	Emma Thyen	Email	Emma.thyen@ak.ngb.army.mil	384-9406	384-9414
	Brett Meyer	Email	Brett.meyer@ak.ngb.army.mil	384-9401	384-9414
	Tod Perkins	Email	Tod.perkins@ngb.army.mil	384-9403	384-9414
Fairbanks Hazmat	Tyler Bones	Email	Tyler.bones@williams.com	488-5180	
	Jim Maltby	Email	maltby@awe.lynden.com	452-4355	
Valdez Hazmat	George Keeney	Email	gkeeney@ci.valdez.ak.us	835-4314	835-2992
Kodiak Hazmat	Andy Nault	Email	anault@city.kodiak.ak.us	486-8040	
Anchorage Hazmat	Tom Wells	Fax		343-1498	343-1441