

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 #: 2 and final

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: 3:00 P.M. November 24, 2004

TIME/DATE OF THE NEXT REPORT: This is the final report

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. A portion of mercaptan in propane can reform as a liquid in a propane tank in long term service and remain in the tank even if the tank is open to the atmosphere.

LOCATION: 1131 Slim Williams Way, Juneau, Alaska 99801.

CAUSE OF SPILL: The Responsible Party (RP) filled an old, unused, empty 1000 gallon propane tank with water 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: On Monday November 22, 2004 the Department received three complaints of continuing odor in the Slim Williams Way area and two calls from people concerned about wildlife impacts in the pond behind 1131 Slim Williams Way. The odor of mercaptan in the area was substantially reduced from that noted at the time of the spill.

Two ADEC spill responders visited the site on the afternoon of November 22nd. The responders examined the spill site including the swale in front of the residence where the spill occurred, the drainage ditch leading from the swale to the pond at the back of the residence and the pond itself.

The pond did not have any perceptible odor of mercaptan but there was some odor found in the drainage ditch between Slim Williams Way and the pond. The pond did have a sheen on its surface but this appeared to be organic in nature and not associated with the mercaptan discharge.

The swale along the street had a slight odor of mercaptan and there was a light, unrecoverable rainbow sheen in the water and rainbow sheen was discharged when the soil was disturbed. It could not be determined if the sheen was the result of the mercaptan, the small home heating oil spill at the residence or street runoff.

A stronger odor of mercaptan was noted where the truck transporting the tank was parked at the time of the discharge. There was also an odor of mercaptan on the porch at this residence.

On Tuesday November 23rd the responsible party (RP) arranged to have the area of the spill burned with a weed burner to remove any residual mercaptan from the soil. The person conducting the operation reported through the RP that the area was still saturated from the recent heavy rains and the weed burning operation was only minimally successful. This person also reported that he did not note an odor of mercaptan during the burning operation but did detect the odor of diesel fuel.

One of the nearby residents that contacted the Department on Monday was contacted on November 24th for an update and she stated the odor was substantially reduced in the area. She was also asked about any wildlife in the area. She stated the pond was sometimes populated by wild ducks but none had been seen recently.

SOURCE CONTROL: None

RESOURCES AFFECTED: On the evening of the release 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.

No impacts to wildlife were noted during this incident.

FUTURE PLANS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:
The investigation will be completed and the case closed.

WEATHER: Temperatures in the mid-forties, winds light and variable with partly overcast skies.

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	Email	dave@seapro.org	225-7002	247-1117
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