

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

SITUATION REPORT

INCIDENT NAME: Tug *Pathfinder* Grounding

SITREP #: 3

SPILL NUMBER: 09229935701

LEDGER CODE: 14282260

TIME/DATE OF INCIDENT: The grounding of the tug *Pathfinder* was reported to the U.S. Coast Guard's (USCG) Vessel Traffic System in Prince William Sound at 6:15 PM on December 23, 2009. USCG reported the grounding to ADEC at 7:52 PM on December 23, 2009.

TIME/DATE OF SITUATION REPORT: 3:00 PM, December 25, 2009

TIME/DATE OF THE NEXT REPORT: 1:00 PM, December 26, 2009

TYPE/AMOUNT OF PRODUCT SPILLED: The amount spilled is currently unknown. The vessel had approximately 123,000 gallons of diesel on board at the time of the grounding. Three of the tug's diesel tanks were breached: one on the port (1P) side and two on the centerline (2C and 3C). Tank 1P did not contain any fuel, and Tanks 2C and 3C contained 10,000 and 23,540 gallons of diesel fuel, respectively, at the time of grounding.

LOCATION: The grounding occurred on Bligh Reef, Prince William Sound, Alaska (60° 50.39' N, 146° 52.94' W).

CAUSE OF SPILL: The 136-foot tug had completed an ice survey and was headed back to port at the time of the grounding. The grounding caused extensive damage to the hull, including tearing a 4- to 5-foot hole at the keel. The cause of the grounding is unknown at this time and is being investigated by USCG and ADEC.

POTENTIAL RESPONSIBLE PARTY (PRP): Crowley Maritime Corporation (Crowley), Seattle, WA

RESPONSE ACTIONS:

The response vessel *Valdez Star* attempted to skim sheen off the eastern coast of Glacier Island on the afternoon of December 24, but the sheen was too thin to be recovered. The *Valdez Star* subsequently returned to the *Pathfinder*'s location off of Busby Island.

On the evening of December 24, the Unified Command approved plans to transfer fuel during the night from the *Pathfinder*'s breached tanks to the *Valdez Star* and to tow the *Pathfinder* to Valdez during daylight hours on December 25. Fuel transfer started at 12:34 AM this morning but was stopped at 12:45 AM after fuel leaked from the *Pathfinder*'s damaged hull into the boomed area surrounding it and the *Valdez Star*. Responders on-site began recovering oil immediately from inside the boom with absorbents and a skimmer.

Two over-flights were conducted this morning to determine whether any fuel had escaped the containment boom during the night, to see if any slicks remain from the original release, and to check for affected wildlife. Observers found a rainbow sheen approximately 1 mile long by 50 feet wide trailing from the southeast side of the *Pathfinder*'s containment boom. Fishing vessels towing a collection boom are working to recover this sheen.

Lightering operations are expected to resume this afternoon with response equipment and personnel in the immediate area.

Two salvage experts with Titan Salvage arrived in Valdez at 10:30 AM today and are scheduled to visit the *Pathfinder* this afternoon. The tug remains anchored south of Busby Island, along with an on-water response task force.

Three ADEC responders arrived in Valdez last night to relieve ADEC Marine Vessel staff in monitoring the spill response.

SOURCE CONTROL:

The pressure of the sea water under the vessel's hull is preventing a continuous release of the fuel from the tug. Crowley and Titan Salvage are refining the plan to remove fuel from the breached fuel tanks. The vessel continues to be encircled with a containment boom and a second boom will be deployed this afternoon.

RESOURCES AFFECTED: Marine waters of Prince William Sound. No oiled wildlife has been observed and no beach impacts have been found.

FUTURE PLANS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: Develop plans for fuel transfer and salvage/towing. Continue on site spill recovery operations and over-flights as required.

WEATHER: At 7:00 AM today, seas at the tug's location were reported to be calm. Forecast for today and tomorrow: Rain, temperatures from the mid to upper 30s F. Northeast winds to 15 knots, seas to 3 feet.

UNIFIED COMMAND AND PERSONNEL

Incident Commander: Walt Teague (Crowley)
F.O.S.C: Erin Williams, Commander (USCG)
S.O.S.C: Gary Folley (ADEC)

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT: Gary Folley, ADEC (907) 262-5210 ext. 234

Photographs and other spill information are available for viewing at:
http://www.dec.state.ak.us/spar/perp/response/sum_fy10/091223201/091223201_index.htm

AGENCY/STAKEHOLDER NOTIFICATION LIST

This sitrep has been distributed to the following agencies and stakeholders. The sitrep was also distributed to the various agency staff listed on the standard distribution list. The receiving agencies listed in the standard distribution list includes: Governor's office, Senator Begich's office, ADF&G, ADNR, SECC, EPA, DOI, NMFS, and USFWS.

AGENCY/STAKEHOLDER	NAME	SENT VIA	ADDITIONAL INFO	TELEPHONE	FACSIMILE
USCG-MSU Valdez	CDR Valdez office	Fax		835-7210	835-7207
US EPA	Carl Lautenberger	Fax		257-1342	271-3424
USDA Forest Service	Ken Vaughan	Email/Fax	kvaughan@fs.fed.us	586-8789	586-7555
USDA Forest Service	Gary Xavier	Email/Fax	gxavier@fs.fed.us	743-9544	743-9476
PWSRCAC		Fax		277-7222	277-4523
CIRCAC	Mike Munger	Email/Fax	munger@circac.org	283-7222	283-6102
Mayor of Cordova	Mayor's Office	Fax		424-6200	424-6000
Mayor of Valdez	Mayor's Office	Fax		835-4313	835-2992
Native Village of Eyak	Bruce Cain	Fax		424-7738	424-7739
House 35/Valdez	John Harris	Fax	Juneau	465-4859	465-3799
Senate F/Fairbanks	Gene Therriault	Fax	Juneau	465-4797	465-3884
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