

Unified Command: Princess Kathleen



AK
Department of
Environmental
Conservation

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Oil removal from fuel tanks commences on Point Lena wreck

JUNEAU, Alaska – Dive crews began removing bunker oil from the fuel tanks on board the Princess Kathleen Monday at 8:40 p.m.

Fuel is being removed from the tanks using a technique called hot tapping. Hot water heat exchangers have been temporarily inserted in the fuel tanks to heat the oil. Hot water is also circulating through the tanks heating the bunker oil making it easier to pump.

Oil collection equipment will separate the bunker oil from the water before it is transferred into the fuel barge for transport to a waste oil recycling and disposal center.

Boom has been deployed in the vicinity of the wreck to contain and collect the small quantity of product expected to be released during operations. The operations cannot be completely encircled with boom because of safety concerns. The spill response cooperative Southeast Alaska Petroleum Resource Organization has oil recovery vessels and crew on site during all fuel recovery operations.

The Unified Command has also pre-positioned containment boom and response equipment in the greater Point Lena area as a precautionary measure against the unlikely event of a large release.

Operations which commenced on April 16 to remove oil trapped within the structure of the vessel have been completed. A total of 840 gallons of heavy bunker oil were removed from the overhead.

The Unified Command has identified between 14,000 and 34,000 gallons of heavy bunker oil in 10 of the ship's tanks. Four additional tanks remain to be surveyed.

The ship ran aground on Point Lena in 1952, and has periodically released small amounts of unrecoverable oil in the years since. The Princess Kathleen rests on a slope at depths between 52 and 134 feet, and is a popular recreational diving site.

For more information please visit: the Princess Kathleen Unified Command Web site at <http://www.dec.state.ak.us/spar/princesskathleen>