

Incident Name: Pump Station 1 Booster Pump Piping Incident

Source: Joint Information Center

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Web site: dec.alaska.gov/spar/ps1

**Press Release 4
Jan. 13, 2011, at 5:30 p.m.**

FAIRBANKS, Alaska – Alyeska Pipeline Service Company officials are targeting early evening tomorrow (Jan. 14) for a shutdown of the pipeline to install a 157-foot bypass pipe that would allow the pipeline to resume normal operations.

The Trans Alaska Pipeline System has been running at limited capacity since an 84-hour shutdown ended Jan. 11. The pipeline was stopped the morning of Jan. 8 due to a leaking pipe at Pump Station 1 on Alaska's North Slope, 500 miles north of Fairbanks.

Federal and state regulators have been working with Alyeska, the pipeline's operator, since the initial shutdown. During the second shutdown projected for tomorrow, workers will install the bypass line that will route the oil around the section of pipe where the oil leak occurred.

Response authorities approved Alyeska's proposed plan to run the pipeline under close monitoring pending the installation of the bypass because a prolonged pipeline shutdown in cold conditions could create greater challenges. Crews are successfully recovering oil from the leak site as the pipeline resumes interim operations.

Crews have recovered an estimated 187 barrels of oil, or 7,854 gallons, from the pump station since the beginning of the incident. As of midday Jan. 13, the pipeline is transporting 320,000 barrels of oil a day.

The ongoing effort to build and install a bypass line at Pump Station 1 is expected to last several days. The pipe was built in Fairbanks and shipped in segments to the pump station.

Crews took several protective steps before restarting flow to the pipeline. They installed an 800-gallon containment vault at the leak site and parked vacuum trucks on site to remove accumulated crude oil from the vault. Between 9 p.m. on Jan. 11 and noon on Jan. 13, trucks removed about 135 barrels of oil, or 5,670 gallons.

Along the 800-mile-long pipeline, crews have been tracking and monitoring two cleaning devices called pigs. The northernmost pig is expected to arrive tonight at Pump Station 8, located near Milepost 489. Crews plan to hold that pig between two valves in the mainline where they will route crude oil through bypass piping. Capturing the pig ensures that it cannot push along any ice or wax that may have accumulated, which could damage pump station equipment.

The Jan. 11 startup of TAPS is temporary and one element of a multi-part plan to return the pipeline to normal operations. The pipeline initially shut down when crude oil was discovered in the booster pump building basement at Pump Station 1 on Jan. 8. The leak source appeared to be from a below-ground pipe that leads to the basement of the booster pump building.

The leak at Pump Station 1 prompted a coordinated response from state and federal agencies, and Alyeska's personnel and contractors. Work continues around the clock to monitor the controlled leak and keep the pipeline running. About 550 people have been assisting with the response.

No oil has been discovered outside the building. There are no injuries or known harm to the environment or wildlife from this incident. Crews are regularly briefed on safety, and fatigue levels are being carefully monitored.

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The Unified Command consists of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation and Alyeska Pipeline Service Company.