

Facts on Refugio Response Effort

Q. Who is in charge of the response effort?

A. A unified command has been established for the response effort. It includes Plains All American Pipeline, and local, state and federal agencies, including the United States Coast Guard, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Office of Spill Prevention, and the Santa Barbara Office of Emergency Management.

Q. How much oil was released?

A. Based upon the information we have regarding this pipeline flow rate and its elevation profile, we estimate a worst-case scenario of up to 2,500 barrels (105,000 gallons) of crude oil was released from the pipeline. However, this total is still under investigation. Additionally, we currently estimate that approximately 500 barrels, which is approximately 21,000 gallons, may have migrated to the water. This estimate is also under investigation.

Q. When did you shut down the pipeline?

A. While monitoring the line, a Control Room employee saw abnormalities in the line and shut it down at approximately 11:30 AM PT.

Q. When did you first confirm the spill?

A. A Plains employee traveled to the site and visually confirmed the release at 1:30 pm PT.

Q. How did this happen?

A. Until we are able to excavate the line, we will not be able to determine the cause of the incident.

Q. What caused the failure?

A. We are still investigating the cause of incident at this time.

Q. How much oil has been recovered so far?

A. Approximately 145 barrels (6,090 gallons) of oil have been collected by vacuum trucks, skimmer boats and other resources, as of today at 9 am. Efforts to collect free oil continue on the water, on the beach and around the area of the release.

Q. What are the response and cleanup priorities?

A. The response effort is focused on protecting the safety of first responders and the general public while minimizing the impact to the environment and preventing migration of oil to the shoreline.

Q. Are vapors in the air a danger to people?

A. During the cleanup, there will be a smell of petroleum in the air, but it poses no danger to the public at this time. To date, reports show no harmful contaminants in the air. Personnel are continuously monitoring air quality levels at the impacted areas.

Q. What is the name of the line that released the oil?

A. The oil was released by Line 901, the Las Flores to Gaviota pipeline.

Q. What is that line's capacity?

A. Line 901 is a 24" buried pipeline. It has a capacity of transporting approximately 150,000 barrels (6,300,000 gallons) of crude on average per day. The line typically operates at approximately 1,200 barrels/hour (50,400 gallons/hour).

Q. How old is this pipeline?

A. Line 901 was constructed in 1987 by All American Pipeline.

Q. When was this pipe last inspected?

A. Aerial surveys of the pipeline right-of-way are conducted weekly. A major internal inspection of the pipe using an internal tool was performed in 2012 and again a few weeks ago, but the results of that inspection are not yet available. Industry standards for these comprehensive internal inspections typically occur on five-year schedules.

Q. How will you investigate the cause of the pipeline failure?

A. Plains work closely with regulatory agencies and third-party experts to investigate the cause of the failure, evaluate the metallurgy and review operating history and Control Center data.

Q. How much will this response effort cost?

A. It's too early in the response for us to estimate. Our current and ongoing focus remains on responding to the incident and continuing cleanup efforts in an urgent and comprehensive fashion.

Q. Will the State of California be compensated for this oil release?

A. Plains will work closely with state and federal officials and follow their established procedures for reimbursement.

Q. Who else will be compensated?

A. A claims hotline has been activated for those who believe they have been impacted by this unfortunate accidental release: 866-753-3619.

Q. What type of oil spilled?

A. Crude oil, specifically Las Flores Canyon OCS (Outer Continental Shelf).

Q. Where was the oil coming from?

A. The oil was coming from an above-ground storage tank facility in Las Flores.

Q. Where is it going?

A. To refineries throughout Southern California.

Q. Where does this pipeline run?

A. Line 901 runs from Las Flores to Gaviota.

Q. How many gallons are in a barrel?

A. There are 42 gallons in a barrel of oil.