

Stanley Hall reopens after diesel fuel spill, clean-up efforts being assessed

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BERKELEY — A multi-agency crew that includes the U.S. Coast Guard, California Department of Fish and Game and local public works officials is assessing the entire length of Strawberry Creek today to see how clean-up efforts are progressing following a diesel fuel spill Saturday in Stanley Hall.

The officials involved now estimate that 1,290 gallons of fuel were discharged into the environment outside of Stanley Hall out of a total of 1,700 gallons spilled inside the building. These calculations are based on estimated measurements of fuel that remain inside the UC Berkeley small generator tank and another portable tank.

Efforts have been underway since Saturday to clean up the spill. Special trucks are being used to vacuum up the fuel in Strawberry Creek, while absorbent booms and pads are being used to soak up the fuel in waterways, including the Berkeley marina area of San Francisco Bay.

Based on what the group observes, it will determine what additional plans need to be developed as part of the clean-up effort. No impacts on wildlife have been reported.

Stanley Hall, a large research and classroom building that closed following the spill, reopened this morning to students. Final exams are underway, and the building's air quality has been confirmed as safe.

At 7 p.m. Saturday, a campus police officer noticed an off odor coming from Strawberry Creek, and employees from the campus's Office of Environment, Health and Safety (EH&S) and Physical Plant-Campus Services investigated. They discovered that a diesel fuel tank in Stanley Hall had overflowed as fuel was being transferred from a larger nearby storage tank. The fuel in the tank is used to power an emergency generator for the building.

The leak was contained at about 9 p.m. Saturday. Campus crews shut off the source of the leak and immediately contacted federal, state, local and city authorities.

If members of the public see fuel that may be pooling as a result of the spill, they are asked to avoid touching it, but should report it to (510) 664-4406.