



Alaska Department of
**Environmental
Conservation**



**Cook Inlet
Pipe Line
Company**

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security
**United States
Coast Guard**



Unified Command: *Drift River Terminal Coordination*

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News Release

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Update: Additional oil to be removed from Drift River terminal tanks

ANCHORAGE, Alaska - The Unified Command, Drift River Terminal Coordination, has approved a plan for further removal of oil from the Drift River tank farm this week.

"It is the consensus of the unified command that the hydrocarbon footprint at Drift River should be further reduced to its absolute minimum always accounting for the safety of the personnel," said Capt. Mark Hamilton, federal on-scene coordinator, unified command. "We continue to evaluate the risks associated with the stored oil and the process of moving it. We believe this well coordinated operation is the best option at this time."

The Chevron-flagged tanker *Mississippi Voyager*, hired by the upstream producers through Chevron Shipping, sailed from the West Coast arriving at the Christy Lee platform at Drift River Tuesday, April 28. The vessel will receive as much of the remaining oily water mix as possible. Once the transfer is complete, water that was transported within the tanker's ballast tanks will be pushed back into the facility's oil storage tanks to eliminate any buoyancy issues.

"We will be effectively removing the majority of the oil at the facility," said Rod Ficken, vice president Cook Inlet Pipeline Company, unified command. "Until we put people on the ground for an extended period of time we can't get into the tanks to remove what will remain below the suction intake. That must be done by hand. The process of cleaning the tanks takes anywhere from two to four months working 24 hours a day. We are not prepared at this time to put our people on the ground for that duration whilst the volcano remains active."

The unified command and Chevron Shipping are working to identify a receiving facility for the oily water mix. Due to the amount of water contained in the mix it can not be delivered to the Tesoro refinery as the first load was.

The tanker is accompanied by the tug *Vigilant*. The bridge of the tanker is being manned 24 hours a day and the engines will remain on stand by at all time. Contingency plans for the facility, tanker and operation are in place. Spill response scenarios have been developed and oil response resources have been staged include skimming vessels, storage tanks and other equipment.

"The state has been meticulous in our review of the contingency plans for this transfer operation," said Gary Folley, state on scene coordinator, unified command. "Because this tanker does not regularly operate in Cook Inlet we had some amendments to approve. It is double hulled and meets all the requirements for operations in Alaska. The top priorities of the unified command and the state are the protection of the environment and the health and safety of people. This plan fully supports those objectives."

Approximately 2.5 million gallons of oil remains in tanks 1 and 2 at the Drift River Terminal following the removal of about 60 percent of what was stored on April 6. About 840,000 gallons of water was pushed back into the tanks from Cook Inlet using the tanker *Seabulk Arctic* to stabilize the tanks and prevent them from becoming buoyant should a significant lahar occur and flood the tank farm.

There have been no lahars generated by the volcano since the April 4 event. The dike is completely intact and no lahar material or river water has entered the tank farm from outside the terminal. The Drift River continues to flow down Rust Slough. There has been some minor water pooling around the tanks as a result of seasonal runoff and snow melt.

Personnel at the terminal have been on site during daylight hours only. They will remain on site for the duration of the oily water transfer.

Repairs and clean-up of the facility continues. About 3,000 feet of the existing runway has been cleared. This will allow for diesel fuel deliveries by fixed wing aircraft. The fuel will be used to run generators and equipment at the facility.

"This way forward is mirrored by our senior leadership at Cook Inlet Pipe Line Company and Chevron Pipe Line Company," said Ficken. "Safety of the personnel on site has been the priority of our company and the unified command from day one. Long term plans for Cook Inlet oil pipeline shipments are being evaluated. We are committed to making responsible decisions that balance the environmental and economic factors."

Cook Inlet Pipe Line in conjunction with Chevron and the upstream producers are considering options for future operations of the facility. The Coast Guard and the State of Alaska will ensure that whatever decision the companies make they continue to operate within the regulations for oil operations and transfers.

Redoubt Volcano continues to produce emissions of steam, volcanic gases and minor amounts of ash, according to the Alaska Volcano Observatory.

For more information please visit: the Coast Guard District 17 website at <http://www.uscgalaska.com> or the State of Alaska Dept. of Environmental Conservation Site at http://www.dec.state.ak.us/spar/perp/response/sum_fy09/090324201/090324201_index.htm.

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