



**NRC 1158584, Pelham Pipeline Spill,
Pelham, Shelby County, Alabama**
SITUATION REPORT #1
1800, September 10, 2016

INCIDENT DESCRIPTION

On September 9, 2016, at 1449 hours, Colonial Pipeline reported to the National Response Center that there was a gasoline spill from a 36" subsurface transmission line. Gasoline traveled overland for approximately 500 feet to a pond that feeds into the Peel Creek which is a tributary of the Cahaba River. The exact amount of the release was unknown; however, Colonial Pipeline initially estimated that between 1000 and 2000 gallons of gasoline entered the pond (the spill volume has been updated to 100,000 gallons in the pond – See "Current Operations" for more information). The local fire department responded and established a secured zone around the spill site. Dangerous explosive gas levels have been detected around the spill location.

Shelby County Emergency Management responded and confirmed that there are no public or private drinking water sources threatened by the spill. Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) has integrated into Unified Command and is coordinating with State and County Agencies. An Incident Command Post has been established in Hoover, Alabama. The spill location is in a remote area, and no evacuations are necessary. The nearest residential neighborhood is located 2 miles from the spill location.

At this time, site topography is preventing the gasoline from entering Peel Creek. The pond appears to be a former borrow pit, and only overflows after substantial rain. While this makes containment much easier, it also serves to concentrate the explosive and toxic vapors. Initial response efforts are focusing on responder health and safety and installing controls to prevent downstream migration if a sufficient rain event were to occur.

Colonial Pipeline has confirmed that the impacted transmission line has been shut down. Environmental contractors for Colonial Pipeline are on site to conduct air monitoring and remediation activities. Work to remediate the spill is delayed due to the high concentrations of volatile organic compounds (VOC) emitted from the large areas of pooled gasoline. There is an increased risk of rain for Sunday and Monday September 11th and 12th.

Threatened and endangered species in the area of the spill have been identified and communicated to Unified Command.

At this time, a Regional Response Team 4 (RRT4) activation is not planned. The appropriate members were engaged during the initial response notification process. A RRT4 call will be held if conditions change.

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) Chuck Berry was deployed to the Incident Command Post and has integrated into Unified Command. A Natural Resources Trustee consult was held with the Region 4 Department of Interior Representative. OSC Englert and OSC Williamson have been deployed to assist within Unified Command as have 4 US Coast Guard Gulf Strike Team members. A Public Information Officer (PIO) was requested and will assist in the Joint Information Center.

Current number of EPA Personnel Assigned: 3

Current number of United States Coast Guard Gulf Strike Team (USCG GST) Members: 4

REPORTING SCHEDULE

Situation Reports (SITREPS) will be delivered 1800 EDT daily.

CURRENT OPERATIONS

- Site access remains the largest obstacle to remediation. Not only from the poor roads and remote location, but the inability of personnel to approach the pond due to high explosive atmosphere readings and toxic vapors. Despite the use of respiratory protection, the potential for a catastrophic fire limits response efforts.
- Initial volume estimates were not based on information from the pipeline system: the system noted no pressure loss. The last time the property owners observed the impacted pond was 2 weeks ago, which means that a slow leak may have been present for a long period of time resulting in little to no appreciable volume loss in any instantaneous measurement.
- The initial volume reported was based solely on visual estimates of first responders' impressions of the pond visually. Colonial made an estimated volume update on September 9th based on better information from the field. However, this was still unsupported by hard data. Response crews completed a complicated Level B entry first thing this morning to physically measure the thickness of the product on the pond. The total thickness on the pond is currently estimated to be 3.25 inches.
- Colonial has managed to briefly operate a pump and removed an estimated 16,000 gallons of liquid from the pond. However, if the pond is estimated to conservatively be 3 feet deep, there is over a million gallons of liquid in the pond. Colonial is currently devising plans to deal with this volume on site. Temporary storage tanks have been mobilized to the site, but their capacity is currently about 250,000 gallons. Colonial has off-site storage available also, but transportation out of the remote area will complicate and delay these efforts.
- Colonial's pumping is currently on hold as benzene levels and LEL readings have risen too high around the vacuum truck to safely operate the equipment.
- EPA/GST is currently incorporating into Operations and air monitoring. If removal operations start back up overnight, EPA will monitor the safety and air monitoring activities.

PLANNED RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

- Continue to participate in UC
- Monitor removal activities
- Monitor safety air monitoring
- Review and monitor the contingency booms and diversion activities in preparation for future rain events. It should be noted that, based on the best available information now (which is limited due to terrain, vapors, and thick forest) there is little expectation for overtopping of the pond due to the small amounts of rain expected, based on NWS predictions.