

Press Statement:

EPA Mid-Atlantic Region continues in Unified Command with Allegheny County Emergency Management Agency, United States Coast Guard (USCG), Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP), Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, and Norfolk Southern. The unified command's priorities are to ensure safety of the workers and protect human health and the environment during this response. During this response, EPA has continued air monitoring in the surrounding area to ensure we are able to keep the public protected. EPA's Environmental Response Team (ERT) is providing technical assistance to the Unified Command and has deployed air monitoring instruments at fixed locations surrounding the incident so that the air can be continuously monitored for potential contaminants.

EPA contractors will collect samples today from surface water in the vicinity of the incident to evaluate potential impacts to the river. Allegheny County Emergency Management reports that drinking water intakes in the Allegheny River are reporting zero detections from the incident.

EPA continues to work with the Unified Command to contain the petroleum distillate within Guys Run Creek and keep it from entering the Allegheny River with boom placed in various locations and collection activities underway. Since the petroleum distillates float on water, the boom acts as a barrier at the surface of the water for containment. With the warmer ambient temperature, the petroleum distillates are emitting volatile organic compounds (VOCs), producing a kerosene like smell. While an odor may be observed in the vicinity of the incident, VOCs have not been detected with air monitoring at levels of concern.

Activities continue with the removal of additional derailed cars from the surrounding area of the creek. One rail car was emptied of petroleum distillates and removed from the bank. Three additional rail cars containing petroleum distillates remain in the creek and are expected to be removed today. Materials in the rail cars will be removed and transported off-site.

Freeport Road will remain closed during the removal of the tank cars and ongoing response actions. Pedestrians and non-emergency vehicles will not be permitted in the vicinity of response operations. Norfolk Southern has completed repairs to the track and has reopened the rail line.

EPA will release the next written press statement at 4pm on Sunday 5/29/2022; see <https://response.epa.gov/FreeportRoadTrainDerailment>.