



# **NRC 1158584, Pelham Pipeline Spill Pelham, Shelby County, Alabama**

## **SITUATION REPORT #7**

1800 CDT, September 16, 2016

### **INCIDENT DESCRIPTION**

On September 9, 2016, at 1449 hours, Colonial Pipeline Company (CPC) reported a gasoline spill from a 36" subsurface transmission line to the National Response Center. The gasoline traveled overland for approximately 500 feet to a pond that feeds into Peel Creek (which is a tributary of the Cahaba River). The initial report to CPC was made by a state mining inspector; however no volume estimate was provided at the time. CPC initially reported to the responding OSC that between 1,000 and 2,000 gallons of gasoline entered the pond. The spill volume has since been updated to between 6,000 barrels [bbls] and 8000 bbls (252,000 gallons – 336,000 gallons).

The local fire department responded and established a secured zone around the spill site. Local responders detected hazardous conditions due to potentially explosive vapor concentration around the spill location. Shelby County Emergency Management responded and confirmed that no public or private drinking water sources are currently threatened by the spill.

Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have integrated into Unified Command and are coordinating with State and County Agencies. An Incident Command Post is being operated out of Pelham, Alabama. The spill location is located in a remote area and no evacuations are necessary. The nearest residential neighborhood is located two miles from the spill location.

CPC confirmed that the impacted transmission line is shut down. Environmental contractors for CPC are on site to conduct air monitoring and remediation activities. Delays to remediate the spill routinely occur due to elevated concentrations of volatile organic compounds (VOC), specifically benzene, and explosive vapors exceeding the lower explosive limit (LEL).

EPA consulted with the Department of Interior (DOI) and the State of Alabama to identify threatened and endangered (T&E) species in the area of the spill. To EPA's knowledge, no impacts to T&E species have been reported at this time; however, field crews have noted minimal impacts to wildlife in the spill area.

### **INCIDENT MANAGEMENT**

On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) Chuck Berry remains integrated into Unified Command, which includes EPA, CPC, ADEM, and Shelby County. OSC Berry will demobilize on September 17, 2016. OSC Kevin Eichinger will assume EPA's position in Unified Command. OSC Garrard, OSC Tripp and four US Coast Guard Gulf Strike Team members remain deployed to assist with field observations. OSC Stilman remains deployed to assist in the Environmental Unit. Kerisa Coleman, a Region 4 public affairs specialist, arrived September 16, 2016 to assist in the Joint Information Center (JIC).

Current number of EPA Personnel Assigned: 6

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

Current number START Personnel: 3

## **REPORTING SCHEDULE**

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

## **CURRENT OPERATIONS**

A 6-inch pipe was observed discharging water from Pond 3; however flow was restricted and likely due to a blockage. CPC has installed a plug in the pipe to reduce the potential of petroleum impacted water being released.

The elevated benzene and LEL continue to be the greatest limiting factor to recovery operations. CPC contractor, Center for Toxicology and Environmental Health, LLC (CTEH), remain on site providing air monitoring services. CTEH continues monitoring air quality in the work zones and providing roving air monitoring and escort services for personnel working inside the hot zone. Action levels for benzene, VOCs and explosive vapors remain as previously established. Work interruptions continue due to excessive benzene and LEL readings. Today's VOC exceedance levels range from 0 – 1,351.3 (Pond 2a compressor) parts per million (ppm). The exceedances from benzene range 0.05 – 3 (release site) ppm. LEL exceedance levels range from 0% - 10% (Release site).

CPC has managed to recover approximately 286,481 gallons of fuel and 233,228 gallons of mixed oil/water to date.

CPC performed a mass balance calculation and determined an estimated volume of 252,000 gallons of fuel was discharged. That number has been revised to an estimated 336,000 gallons. They estimate 200,705 gallons of fuel evaporated as of 9/16/16. These numbers are approximate and CPC will perform a final mass balance after product recovery activities are complete.

Diversions designed for Pond 3 include a weir and two underflow dams (at the Pond outfall). CPC continues to monitor Pond 3. No oil sheening has been seen along the shoreline on Pond 3. Unified Command (UC) will be notified if any petroleum is observed. OSC Garrard, along with the Gulf Strike Team (GST) and CPC personnel identified additional locations along Peel Creek for potential placement of an additional underflow dam. CPC has agreed to reserve material to construct these features. CPC has estimated a 10-hour construction time for this final structure. To facilitate access, CPC completed construction of an access road along the entire length of Peel Creek.

No adverse weather impacts are expected for the next operational period.

EPA/GST remain incorporated into Operations Section and air monitoring activities. OSC Garrard, OSC Tripp, and two GST members continue to provide oversight of site safety and monitor the operations progress. Two GST members continue to observe night operations.

Kerisa Coleman is representing EPA in the Joint Information Center (JIC).

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) continues to maintain an aviation floor restriction of 2,500 feet in a 3-mile radius around the work site.

Two START members continue the collection of split surface water samples with CPC and conducting oversight of air monitoring activities. Split samples were collected from Pond 3 and confluence of Peel Creek and Cahaba River. In addition, a third START is providing ICS support.

EPA approved the vapor suppression plan and evacuation plan; subsequently, excavation in the area of the damaged pipe began at 1530 this afternoon. Local firefighters used a vapor suppressant agent during excavation activities.

Product recovery operations continue in Pond 2 at two points, southwestern portion of the Pond (2a) and northeast portion of the Pond (2b). CPC primarily used drum skimmers to capture free product from Pond 2. Vacuum trucks from 2b are transferring recovered product to 4 storage tanks at staging 2b. There are 2 storage tanks at staging 2a where they are recovering product from recovery point 2a.

There are currently 14 storage tanks at the main staging area. Visual observations indicate gasoline thickness on Pond 2 to be approximately 1-inch.

There are approximately 721 response worker onsite.

The CPC environmental consultant is responsible for identifying and documenting impacted wildlife. To date, four mammals including a rabbit, two raccoons, one fox, and one armadillo have been impacted; one reptile (turtle) has been impacted; and one white bird has been impacted. The bird is located in a restricted area and teams have not been able to get to it.

A Regional Response Team (RRT4) call was held today to update RRT4 members.

See <https://helena.colonialresponse.com/> for information on related to restoration of service.

### **PLANNED RESPONSE ACTIVITIES**

The EPA OSC has requested that START collect additional surface water samples with the Cahaba Riverkeeper. START will collect the samples during the next operational period. START and OSC Stilman will continue to monitor CPC's sampling and monitoring efforts. The following activities remain unchanged and continue during the response efforts:

- Continue to participate in UC
- Monitor removal activities
- Monitor safety air monitoring
- Participate in the Joint Information Center
- Prepare for and coordinate a transition to a removal phase
- Perform water sampling