



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY REGION VIII

Subject: Loveland I-25 Diesel Spill Site Update #2
Loveland, CO, 40.3837875, -104.9935375

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Primary area of contaminated soil excavation west of I-25 South. Area was heavily saturated with diesel product and main collection point during initial response actions.



Drainage ditch confluence with the Big Thompson River west of I-25 South.



Earthen berm and underflow dam in the ditch that runs west of I-25. Underflow dam has been reinforced and boom removed.

Site Description

At approximately 0100 on March 20, 2021, a tanker truck carrying 11,500 gallons of diesel fuel was involved in a rollover accident on I-25 (near Mile Marker 255) in Loveland, Larimer County, Colorado. The tanker lost the entirety of its load, plus the contents of its two saddle tanks (250 gallons each). This section of I-25 is currently under construction, and the tanker ended upside down, straddling the divide between the north bound lanes of I-25, and a center construction area. Diesel fuel soaked into the asphalt, as well as draining into storm drains on both the east and west side of the highway. The spilled fuel traveled north from these drains into an irrigation ditch on the west side of I-25 that flows into the Big Thompson River, roughly 3/8 of a mile north of the accident scene.

Location

The discharge location occurred on I-25 just north of its intersection with Highway 402/34 near mile marker 255. The impacted area included both North and South bound lanes of I-25, as well as a construction area between the two. The spill is located in Loveland, Larimer County, Colorado. There are residential neighborhoods 1,000 feet east of the incident location. To the west of the interstate is a private residential property, which includes a large (approximately 15 acres in area) pond. Adjacent to the north of the residential property is a State Wildlife Area which lies along the Big Thompson River. The area is also home to a system of drainage and irrigation ditches that travel both north to the Big Thompson River, and east to agricultural lands in Larimer County. Larimer County has estimated population of 356,899 (census.gov).

Description of Threat

A total of just under 12,000 gallons of diesel fuel was involved in this discharge, Per 40 CFR 300.5, the NCP defines this discharge as a major one (>10,000 gallons). The proximity of the impacted drainage pathways leading directly to the nearby Big Thompson River posed a serious threat of the diesel fuel reaching the River.

The Big Thompson River is a tributary to the South Platte River, which serves as a source of both drinking and irrigation and brings recreational and economic value to the State of Colorado. Diesel fuel constituents can attach to particles in the soil or water and, in water, may sink down into the sediment. Chemicals that attach to soil or other matter (e.g., marsh sediment) may remain in the environment for more than a decade.

The close proximity to the residential neighborhoods prompted the need for community air monitoring. According to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, diesel fuel is a highly flammable liquid with a high vapor pressure and poses a high fire hazard if not contained and removed. Diesel fuel may evaporate into the air when spilled onto soils or surface waters in an open environment.

Diesel fuel can enter the human body when breathed in through the air, when ingested in food containing diesel, and when skin comes into contact with it. Breathing diesel fuel vapors for a long time may damage the kidneys, increase blood pressure, or lower the blood's ability to clot. Constant skin contact (for example, washing) with diesel fuel may also damage the kidneys. Hence, there was concern that the discharge may have posed a threat to public health in the nearby neighborhoods.

Preliminary Removal Assessment/Removal Site Inspection Results

Due to the presence of a major discharge and its threat to the Big Thompson River and the nearby community, EPA OSC Bizyayev immediately recognized the need for federal assistance and coordination with local response authorities.

Response Actions to Date

Please review Site Update #1 for more information:

<https://response.epa.gov/sites/15128/files/Loveland%20I%2025%20diesel%20Spill%20Site%20Update%201.pdf>

EPA, along with State Partners have continued to prevent any diesel fuel from reaching the Big Thompson River. The Responsible Party's (RP) contractor has been able to continue monitoring, recovery and remediation of areas impacted by the incident with State and EPA oversight. Underflow dams, berms and containment structures have been continuously improved to prevent failures. Spring wintery weather has created excess water in the area causing additional flows. Contaminated soil removal has been completed on the upper ditch above Hillsboro Ditch and soil areas of high saturation have been addressed in the upper ditch area.

Progress Metrics

Waste Stream	Medium	Quantity
Recovered Oil	Oil	3,000* Gallons
Removed Oil/Water	Water	120,000 Gallons
Soil Removed	Soil	250 tons
* Previous report from March 23, 2020 ¹ indicated 5,000 gallons. Recovered volumes were recalculated and metrics updated. Previous measurement error was due to instrument error.		

Planned Response Activities

EPA will continue to monitor the situation and make assets available to local response agencies if needed to include continued oversight of the RP's clean up contractor until oil recovery and mitigation is complete. It is anticipated that EPA's involvement will cease in the next several weeks.

Colorado State Patrol with the RP's contractor will continue monitoring and recovery efforts. Once all interstate lane changes are completed, final removal of the contaminated soils will be completed in the ditches.

Next Steps

Once EPA's involvement ends in the next few weeks, Colorado State Patrol, as the state Designated Emergency Response Authority, will continue oversight of clean-up efforts. However, EPA will continue to provide technical support and assets as requested.

Participating Entities

Unified Command (Informal)

- US EPA Region 8
- Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT)
- Colorado State Patrol (CSP)

Other Assisting Agencies

- Larimer County Department of Health and Environment
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Additional sources of information

Please review Site Update #1 for more information:

<https://response.epa.gov/sites/15128/files/Loveland%20I%2025%20diesel%20Spill%20Site%20Update%201.pdf>

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