



U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
**NEWS RELEASE**  
WWW.EPA.GOV/NEWSROOM

**Media Contact:**

Dana Barnicoat, [Barnicoat.Dana@epa.gov](mailto:Barnicoat.Dana@epa.gov)  
406-560-6261

## Media Advisory #3

### Update on EPA response activity at

### Lyons, Colorado (Apple Valley) tanker spill

**Denver (April 30, 2021–6:25 pm):** EPA (@EPARegion8) continues to support cleanup efforts at the scene of a gasoline tanker rollover on US 36, northwest of Lyons, Boulder County, CO. While excavating gasoline impacted soils today, responders came upon unexpected pockets of free-flowing product (gasoline) from the spill. Responders are bringing more resources on site and will be working through the night. For more detailed information on EPA's efforts, including a sampling data map, please visit the EPA's response website [Site Profile - Apple Valley Tanker Rollover - EPA OSC Response](#).

Drivers and outdoor enthusiasts, including cyclists and runners, are encouraged to use alternate route through the area to help keep the highway open for emergency responders and cleanup equipment.

For updates on the status of road closures, please check the Colorado Department of Transportation (@ColoradoDOT), Boulder County Sheriff (@BldrCOSheriff and @CSP\_Boulder) and Colorado State Patrol (@CPS\_News) social media accounts.

The Responsible Party's contractors are continuing excavation of contaminated soils along the drainage into the North St. Vrain. On April 29, 2021, the culvert was jettied to remove residual gasoline and impacted sediment. Contaminated soils are being loaded into containers and will be stored on-site pending disposal. CDOT was on-site to observe and approve the removal of contaminated soils surrounding the mouth of the culvert. This area will be re-secured with concrete or flowable fill.

Lyons Fire Protection District (@LyonsFireCO) is providing 24-hour fire watch to address any fires that are sparked during the excavation of gasoline-soaked soil. Gasoline contaminated soils are easily ignitable and several small fires were ignited on April 28<sup>th</sup> during excavation of the most contaminated soils.

Colorado State Patrol is continuing their accident investigation. As a result, EPA learned the tanker was carrying 8,500 gallons of gasoline, and not the 8,000 gallons originally reported. Based on this information and further analysis, EPA now estimates 1,000 – 1,600 gallons of gasoline may have been

released. This revised estimate does not change EPA's assessment that the pulse of gasoline has dissipated and our sample results suggest no lingering contamination in the Creek. Gasoline is highly volatile and much of it would have dissipated within hours of the spill.

EPA received numerous requests to sample water wells along Apple Valley and in Lyons, as well as concerns regarding impacts to the local fishery and replacement of the fish.

EPA conducted water quality sampling on April 27 and 28, from the water well located adjacent to the spill site and collected three sediment samples along the river to support assessment of the impacts to the fishery. Sample results did not detect any lingering contamination. We do not anticipate any impacts to wells at this time. These data are posted on our website.

We are deferring response to all concerns and questions regarding the fish kill to the Colorado Parks and Wildlife (@COParksWildlife).

## **Background**

At approximately 12:01 pm on April 27, 2021, a tanker truck carrying 8,500 gallons of gasoline was involved in a rollover accident on Highway 36 (near Mile Marker 18) northwest of Lyons, Boulder County, Colorado. The tanker spilled an estimated 1,000 – 1,600 gallons of gasoline at the site. The spilled fuel traveled west along a drainage ditch and into a culvert that discharges to the North Saint Vrain Creek. It is unknown how much of this release entered the creek.

In addition to EPA, multiple Federal, state and local agencies responded to the scene of the spill, including the Colorado Department of Transportation, Colorado State Patrol, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Lyons Fire Protection District; Boulder County Sheriff and Boulder County departments of Public Works, Public Health, and HazMat (@BoulderCounty and @BoCoDOT); Mountain View Fire and Rescue, Hygiene Fire Protection District, Town of Lyons.

Response crews worked throughout the night of April 27<sup>th</sup>, collecting gasoline contaminated water, and ensuring additional product did not enter the creek. The source of the spill was contained, however, there may still be a slight intermittent sheen observed on the water in North St. Vrain Creek.

EPA is aware of concerns regarding potential impacts to private drinking water wells downstream of the spill site. We want to assure members of the community that we are aware of those concerns and are working to address them as quickly as possible.

On April 27, EPA collected water samples from the North St Vrain Creek at multiple locations above and below the spill site. This includes sampling for benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylene (BTEX chemicals) and gasoline-range organics (GRO), compounds that occur naturally in gasoline. Preliminary sampling results do not detect contamination in these locations and we do not anticipate impacts to wells at this time.

The BTEX measurements were all below EPA's drinking water standards. The GRO measurement was slightly above the detection limit near the accident but was not detected further downstream. These data suggest the pulse of gasoline that was discharged to the creek has dissipated and there is no indication of a lingering water quality impact to the North Saint Vrain Creek. Additional sampling was

conducted on April 28, 2021, and results are expected later today. For more detailed information on EPA's efforts, including a sampling data map, please visit the EPA's response website [Site Profile - Apple Valley Tanker Rollover - EPA OSC Response](#).

A fish kill was also observed in North St. Vrain Creek downstream of the spill site, as a result of the release. Colorado Parks and Wildlife is assessing the fish kill and other wildlife issues as they arise. Please contact Colorado Parks and Wildlife at [LyonsFishInfo@state.co.us](mailto:LyonsFishInfo@state.co.us) with any photos or videos of dead fish, or if you collected and saved dead fish.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **How do you know there will be no lingering water quality impacts?**

On April 27, EPA collected water samples from the North St Vrain Creek at multiple locations above and below the spill site, with additional sampling conducted on April 28, 2021. Results do not detect contamination in these locations and we do not anticipate impacts to wells at this time.

### **If there are no lingering impacts on water, why does EPA remain on site?**

EPA continues to support containment and recovery operations, including containment and pumping operations from the gasoline fuel that spilled. Excavation of gasoline impacted soil has started and will continue until removal of contaminated soils is complete.

A berm has been constructed at the location of the accident; and containment booms have been deployed in the North St. Vrain Creek to capture product downstream of the accident Site, which EPA continues to monitor.

### **Why isn't EPA collecting samples from all private drinking water wells in the area?**

At this time, the majority of the fuel from the spill has moved downstream. Several samples were taken along the river from the spill site down to Hwy 36 and Hwy 66 intersection on Tuesday. Sampling results do not detect contamination in these locations. We do not anticipate impacts to wells at this time.

We encourage residents to continue to observe conditions and report any concerns or indications of gasoline contamination to Boulder County Public Health at 303-441-1241 or email [healthows@BoulderCounty.org](mailto:healthows@BoulderCounty.org).

Boulder County Public Health encourages all well owners to test their well water at least annually for coliform and E.coli. For more information on well testing and to find a lab to perform the testing please visit <https://www.bouldercounty.org/environment/water/water-testing/>

### **What if I find dead fish in the Creek?**

Please contact Colorado Parks and Wildlife at [LyonsFishInfo@state.co.us](mailto:LyonsFishInfo@state.co.us) with any photos or videos of dead fish, or if you collected and saved dead fish.



[epa.gov](http://epa.gov)