



Fact Sheet: Water Issues

Enbridge Oil Spill
Marshall, Michigan

August 19, 2010

For more information

If you have questions, comments or need more information about the Enbridge oil spill you can contact:

Don de Blasio

EPA Community Involvement
Coordinator

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On the Web

EPA has established a website at www.epa.gov/enbridgespill_to provide daily information about the response.

More contacts

Public:

A toll-free number for the public has been established for this emergency:

800-306-6837

Media members:

888-363-8632

spillpress@epa.gov

On Monday, July 26, 2010, Enbridge Energy Partners LLP reported that a 30-inch pipeline ruptured near Marshall, Mich. The company estimates more than 800,000 gallons of crude oil leaked into Talmadge Creek, a waterway that feeds the Kalamazoo River.

EPA has not been able to independently verify this number. The spill has affected up to 30 miles of the Kalamazoo River. The spill site, between Marshall and Battle Creek, includes wetlands, residential areas, farmland and businesses.

Drinking water

Marshall and Battle Creek municipal water systems have not been affected by the oil spill. To date, there have been no indications that the spill has contaminated any municipal water supply system.

Calhoun County Public Health Department (CCPHD) and Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services (HCS) officials have been evaluating the potential impact the spill has had on private water wells. The health departments have been conducting a systematic evaluation of private drinking wells located within 200 feet of either side of the Kalamazoo River and Talmadge Creek. At this point, no well contamination has been detected. As a precaution, CCPHD and HCS are providing bottled water for drinking and cooking to those who live in homes with wells in those areas. Residents who have concerns about their private wells should contact the Calhoun County Public Health Department, 269-969-6341, or the Kalamazoo County Health Department, 269-373-5210.

Wells outside the 200-foot area on either side of the Kalamazoo River are not likely to be affected by the spill since ground water typically flows toward rivers. Irrigation activities are not expected to affect the direction of the ground water flow or well quality outside the 200-foot areas.

No well contamination has been found, but CCPHD and HCS will continue to evaluate residents' well water in the affected area.

Impact on waterways

Some restrictions have been placed by county and state agencies on water usage for Talmadge Creek and the Kalamazoo River. Specific areas for the restrictions and advisories include downstream (west) of I-69 on the Kalamazoo River to the west end of Morrow Lake. Sampling has shown no oil spill-related contamination below

Morrow Dam to Lake Michigan. State and federal government partners are conducting an intensive investigation into surface water contamination from the Enbridge pipeline release. The investigation includes ongoing measurements of the surface water quality and review of the presence and movement of oil within the Kalamazoo River system.

Agencies issue bans on water use

Kalamazoo County Health and Community Services has issued a ban on surface water activities on the Kalamazoo River as part of the county's state of emergency, including swimming, wading, fishing, boating, canoeing and kayaking. Local health officials warn residents to avoid all contact with water from the Kalamazoo River until further notice.

Calhoun County Public Health Department has issued a ban on the use of water in the county from Talmadge Creek and the Kalamazoo River for irrigation and watering livestock. The agency has also posted signs along the Kalamazoo saying the river is closed for all swimming, boating and fishing.

Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) is advising people to not eat fish from Talmadge Creek or the Kalamazoo River. MDCH advises no one eat fish of any kind from these waters where oil is visible or oily odors are present. Do not eat any fish that smell of oil or have oil on them.

MDCH is also advising people to not touch or swim in the Kalamazoo River or Talmadge Creek and avoid the general area of the spill.

These advisories are temporary and will remain in effect until a determination is made by state and county officials that the river and creek are safe for activity. All pre-oil spill fish advisories continue for other parts of the Kalamazoo River. More information is available through the MDCH website at <http://www.michigan.gov/mdch>.

What should you do if you get oil on your skin or clothing?

- Wash affected skin with soap and water. Avoid using harsh detergents, solvents, or other chemicals to wash oil from skin as these may promote absorption of the oil through the skin.
- If you get oil on your clothing, wash in the usual way but separated from other clothing.

Response efforts

So far, containment measures have limited the impact on the Kalamazoo River. To control the spill as much as possible, EPA and Enbridge have been placing containment and absorbent boom at strategic points on the river. Boom is a barrier to control spills on water. Containment boom keeps the pollutant from spreading. Absorbent boom, in addition to stopping the spread, soaks up the contaminant.

The response also includes the use of vacuum trucks and skimmer equipment. Vacuum trucks literally suck the oil off the surface of the water.

The Mudpuppy II, EPA's newest research vessel, has also been deployed to Morrow Lake and is currently taking water and lake-bottom sediment samples to assess for potential contamination from the spill.