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#100429-OILSPILLQA

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Deepwater Horizon Incident Q&A

Is the oil spill going to affect Santa Rosa County?

At this time, Santa Rosa County is not in the threat zone and the oil spill is not expected to impact our area in the next 72 hours. However, shifting weather conditions may change that. At the minimum, we do expect to see some amount of tarballs, or dark-colored pieces of oil, on the beach. An odor in the coastal areas may also be possible. Resources are currently staged in Pensacola in preparation for a response for our area.

Who are the lead responders in the Deepwater Horizon spill?

The lead response agencies are the U.S. Coast Guard, the Minerals Management Service and BP.

What is a Unified Command?

The Unified Command is a structure that brings together the "Incident Commanders" of all major organizations involved in the incident in order to coordinate an effective response while at the same time carrying out their own jurisdictional responsibilities. The UC links the organizations responding to the incident and provides a forum for these entities to make consensus decisions. Under the UC, the various jurisdictions and/or agencies and non-government responders may blend together throughout the operation to create an integrated response team.

The UC is responsible for overall management of the incident. The UC directs incident activities, including development and implementation of overall objectives and strategies, and approves ordering and releasing of resources. *Members of the UC work together to develop a common set of incident objectives and strategies, share information, maximize the use of available resources, and enhance the efficiency of the individual response organizations.*

The unified area command for this incident is located in Robert, Louisiana. The regional response is divided up into five response areas based on the U.S. Coast Guard's jurisdictional lines. Our regional command center is located in Mobile, Alabama and reports to the UC in Louisiana. This does not mean the response is focusing on Alabama, that is just the physical location of the command center.

What role does Santa Rosa County play in the response?

Our role is to support the unified command. As discussed earlier, the UC ensures that we are able to maximize the use of available resources and enhance the efficiency of the response locally and as a whole. That does not mean we are not an active participant in any response effort. We know our county, our strengths and weaknesses, and as a member of the UC we will be a part of the decision making process and response if the oil spill affects our area.

While it may seem like local counties are not reacting, that is far from the case. Unlike a hurricane where the county is the lead or first response organization, and calls on the state and then the federal government for any assistance with resources needed, this oil spill requires a large regional response and works in the reverse- with

a private/federal, state, and local approach. BP and the federal government have the expertise and resources to lead this response which we may not have on the local level.

What is Santa Rosa County doing to prepare?

We are very concerned about the affects of the spill to our area and the impact to our residents. Santa Rosa County's official situational reports and incident actions plans submitted to the state are posted on www.santarosa.fl.gov. In addition:

- We are researching the health, economic, safety issues that may arise if we are impacted so we are ready to act as part of the unified command.
- We will continue to issue public information about our response, potential affects to our residents, and actions our citizens should take.
- We are researching the U.S. Coast Guard's oil spill contingency plan which identifies response resources, cleanup strategies, areas at risks, and response techniques so we will know what to expect and the role we might play.
- We are playing an active role in the unified command's area command post in Mobile. We are ready to support any needed response including supplying local resources if called upon by the lead responding agency
- We have reached out and are maintaining contact with the unified command and with state, local, and other county's agencies that may be a part of the response efforts.
- There is a possibility that the unified command will ask for manpower from our county. We will make local resources including manpower, available as requested from the unified command.

Booming is being placed in Alabama and in Escambia, why not in Santa Rosa?

At this time, the priorities are the threat zones. As it moves, there is a priority list of environmentally sensitive areas that will be the first to receive booms. Estuaries and inlets are at the top of the list, not the beach areas. This is to protect sensitive habitat that support wildlife and fish. If the oil washes on the beach, we can clean the sand. If the oil reaches the estuaries and inlets, it could be devastating to our local wildlife and fish habitat, taking years to recover. Please note booms are not a fail safe solution. They can become ineffective in high seas, strong winds, or currents over one knot. Resources are currently staged in Pensacola in preparation for a response for our area.

Who is paying for the current response efforts?

BP, the responsible party, is required to fund the cost of the response and cleanup operations. The Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund, established after the Exxon Valdez incident, is also available to fund cleanups, if needed.

How long will the spill threaten our area?

If, when and how long Santa Rosa may be impacted is unknown due to the uncertainty of weather conditions, the total amount of oil released from the site, and when the spill is contained at the accident site.

Will evacuations be ordered?

At this time, we don't anticipate the affects of the oil spill necessitating the issue of any evacuation orders in Santa Rosa County. We understand that evacuating for any reason is disruptive, inconvenient and greatly impacts our citizens. The decision to issue an evacuation order is not one that is taken light by county officials. However, as with any incident, the safety of our residents and visitors is our number one concern.

What actions do I need to take to keep my family safe?

At this time, no protective action is needed. We ask that you monitor our local media outlets daily for the latest information from county officials on any action you may or may not need to take. You can also visit our Website at www.santarosa.fl.gov.

What are potential health impacts residents might face?

Air Quality

Some individuals are more susceptible to change in air quality due to medical conditions. Anyone who is concerned about change in air quality due to this event should contact their primary health care provider, as each of us has a unique health profile.

- As with wildfires and other events that increases particulate matter in the air, consider staying inside, in an air-conditioned room and change the air-conditioner filter to ensure peak performance.
- Avoid strenuous activities outside.
- If you have difficulty breathing, shortness of breath or other serious symptoms, seek immediate medical attention
- Individuals with an air quality question or concern should contact the Environmental Protection Agency Region 4 National Response Center at 1-800-424-8802.

Contact with Tarballs

For most people, an occasional brief contact with a small amount of oil, while not recommended, will do no harm. However, some people are especially sensitive to chemicals, including the hydrocarbons found in crude oil and petroleum products. They may have an allergic reaction or develop rashes even from brief contact with oil. In general, we recommend that contact with oil be avoided. If contact occurs, wash the area with soap and water, baby oil, or a widely used, safe cleaning compound such as cleaning paste sold at auto parts stores. Avoid using solvents, gasoline, kerosene, diesels fuel, or similar products on the skin. These products, when applied to the skin, present a greater health hazard than the smeared tarball itself.

What if I come in contact with injured wildlife?

To report oiled wildlife, please call 1-866-557-1401 and leave a message. Messages will be checked hourly. Individuals are urged not to attempt to help injured or oiled animals, but to report any sightings to the toll free number.

How do I report spill related damage?

To discuss spill related damage, please call 1-800-440-0858.

To report oiled shoreline, please call 1-866-448-5816.

My business has been affected by the spill, will I be reimbursed?

Reimbursement for losses is a possibility. We encourage business to keep detail records of any losses they may incur. To discuss spill related damage, please call 1-800-440-0858.

How do I help?

For volunteer information, please call 1-866-448-5816.

For More Information

www.santarosa.fl.gov

www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com

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