



May 6, 2010  
#100506-OILSPILLQA2

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***Deepwater Horizon Incident Q&A  
Updated May 6***

**Is the oil spill going to affect Santa Rosa County?**

At this time, the oil spill is not expected to impact our area in the next 72 hours. However, shifting weather conditions may change that. We also do not know what the exact impacts will be to Santa Rosa County. 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.

**How long will the spill threaten our area?**

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?**

This type of incident should not require an evacuation.

**Is Navarre Beach going to be closed?**

There are no plans for local government to close the beach.

**I have vacation plans on Navarre Beach, what should I do?**

Navarre Beach is currently open and no visible effects of the oil spill are currently being seen. Due to changing conditions there is no way to know for sure when the oil could affect Navarre Beach, or for how long.

If you have concerns about reservations, please check with your management company regarding cancellation policies. We suggest that if possible, take a "wait and see" approach rather than cancel your plans to vacation on Navarre Beach. You can monitor the situation at [www.santarosa.fl.gov/oilspill](http://www.santarosa.fl.gov/oilspill).

**Where are booms going to be placed?**

In accordance with the Area Contingency Plan the Coast Guard created, environmentally sensitive areas in the bay and estuaries are the top priority. Several other booming locations, including 3-Mile Bridge, Garcon Point Bridge, Bob Sikes Bridge, I-10 Bridge, Zamarra Canal, Woodland Bayou, Hoffman Bayou, Deadman's Restoration Project, were requested by Santa Rosa County and were approved for placement by unified command. Links to boom maps are located at <http://www.santarosa.fl.gov/oilspill>.

**Where can I get my own booms to put out?**

It is not recommended at this time that residents boom their own property as it may be counterproductive to the U.S. Coast Guard's contingency plan and actually cause greater damage.

### **How will our habitat and wildlife be affected?**

The habitats with the highest sensitivity are marshes, estuaries, sheltered tidal flats, and shallow sub-tidal areas. The lowest is sandy beach because it is the easiest to clean, as both manual and heavy equipment may be used. The oil condition that is expected to impact shorelines is predicted to be a gel or paste-like emulsion and of tarball consistency, stranding in a discontinuous and patchy manner. The oil may be brown, sticky and possibly emitting a sheen associated with emulsified oil. Due to the low aromatic content, the acute toxicity is low relative to fresher oil. It will stick to emergent and aquatic vegetation, birds, fur-bearing mammals and reptiles.

The effect on wildlife can include: smothering of invertebrates, ingestion, loss of ability to thermoregulate, eye and mucus membrane irritation, and transport of oil through marshes by animals. The biodegradation is slow, which could lead to chronic effects on fish, invertebrates, and wildlife. The toxicity or harmful effects on the wildlife are dependent upon:

- mixture and types of chemicals that make up the oil or are used to clean up the oil,
- amount of exposure (dose for internal exposures or time for external exposures),
- route of exposure (inhaled, ingested, absorbed, or external), and
- Biomedical risk factors of the animal (age, sex, reproductive stage, and health status). For turtles this will include differing impacts and vulnerabilities at the different life stages such as eggs, post-hatchlings, juveniles

### **My property has been damaged or I have lost income due to the oil spill. How do I make a claim?**

All claimants will be directed to a hotline (1-800-440-0858) that is manned by the catastrophic loss division of ESIS specializing in oil spill claims. Santa Rosa County encourages citizens and businesses with coastal property to document the condition of their property now, before any effects are seen. This includes shoreline, structures, seawalls, docks, lifts, boats and anything that may come in contact with the oiled water.

BP has released the following claim information:

- Payments will be made to address immediate issues associated with property damage or loss of income due to the oil spill
- BP believes that it is appropriate to provide interim payments to claimants who are not receiving ordinary income while the cleanup is underway
- Within 48 hours of receiving supporting documentation (e.g. tax return) the claim will be evaluated and the claimant will be notified of an advance payment for the claim
- The equivalent of 1 month's income will be paid and these payments will continue until they are able to return to work or their overall claim is resolved.
- BP claims can be handled via phone or in person. Bills will be paid or reimbursed.
- If a claim is rejected the person will be notified in writing of non-payment
- Claims are currently being paid
- A link to information on some of the types of claims available and who can submit each claim is available at [www.santarosa.fl.gov/oilspill](http://www.santarosa.fl.gov/oilspill) or directly at [www.uscg.mil/npsc/Claims/default.asp#types\\_of\\_claims](http://www.uscg.mil/npsc/Claims/default.asp#types_of_claims).

The Florida Department of Financial Services' toll-free Consumer Help Line, at 1-877-My-FL-CFO (1-877-693-5236), is also prepared to assist business owners impacted by the growing oil spill in the Gulf. Specialists are available from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, and information is also available at [www.MyFloridaCFO.com](http://www.MyFloridaCFO.com). Insurance specialists on the Helpline can answer questions about the claim filing process as it becomes available, but **claims for damage or lost income should be filed with British Petroleum (BP) at 1-800-440-0858.**

### **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/oilspill](http://www.santarosa.fl.gov/oilspill).

### *Precautions for Affected Areas*

When our area starts to see the effects of the oil spill, please follow these simple safety tips:

- Avoid entering areas where oil can be seen or smelled. If you see or smell oil, leave the area right away.
- Avoid direct skin contact with oil, oil-contaminated water and sediments.
- Do not swim or ski in areas affected by the oil spill, and if you travel through the area by boat, take precautions when hoisting the boat anchor. If you get oil on your skin, wash it off immediately with soap and water.
- Do not fish in the oil spill-affected waters.
- Do not harvest and eat dead fish, fish with oily residue or fish that have a petroleum odor.
- Do not drive your boat through slicks or sheens.
- Young children, pregnant women, people with compromised immune systems, and individuals with underlying respiratory conditions should avoid the area.
- Restrict pets from entering oil-contaminated areas.
- Look for updated opportunities for spill clean-up training or work with group leaders who have received proper personal protection training.

### **Is seafood from Florida's Gulf coast safe to eat?**

All seafood sold in Florida retail stores, supermarkets and restaurants will remain safe to consume prior to and during any potential exposure to contamination from the pending oil spill. Traditional food safety controls have been supplemented with additional emergency response plans by the pertinent federal, state and county authorities. Control measures include monitoring of the harvest waters and products, cautionary closures of certain waters and fisheries, analytical and sensory monitoring of products, and public advisories. Likewise, seafood will be provided from many areas that are not subject to potential exposure to the oil spill.

### **Should I eat seafood that I catch for myself and family?**

In the event of any contamination, state authorities will try to restrict local harvest and recreational activities to coastal waters that are declared open and approved. Public advisories will be posted and broadcast through many agencies, radio stations and televised news. Progressive updates and contact information will be posted on various websites such as the site maintained by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, (<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon/default.htm>.)

Recreational fishermen should avoid areas with obvious signs of oil contamination on the surface of the water, or on the neighboring beaches and vegetation. Also, it is not prudent to eat fish that look distressed, are behaving in a strange manner, or have been found dead. The contaminants associated with an oil spill can be detected with simple sensory checks for odors. Any fish or seafood with an oily, fuel-like odor, either when raw or cooked, should not be eaten, and should be reported to authorities.

### **Will local seafood be contaminated by the oil spill?**

There is no contamination at this time, but predictions suggest the leaking oil could accumulate and reach the Florida coasts. If exposed to the various types of chemicals associated with the oil spill, certain coastal marine animals can be killed or contaminated. The amount of exposure will vary depending on the type of oil present and type of seafood involved. Previous experience from other oil spills around the world indicate that some of the more mobile species can detect and avoid the contaminants, but other slower, burrowing and bottom-dwelling species are more susceptible to exposure. Exposure can be directly from the water, through the aquatic food chain, and/or from contaminated sediments.

### **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 increase 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, diesel fuel, or similar products on the skin. These products, when applied to the skin, present a greater health hazard than the smeared tarball itself.

#### **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.

#### **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.

#### **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 and are working daily to respond. Santa Rosa County’s official situational reports and incident action plans submitted to the state are posted on [www.santarosa.fl.gov/oilspill](http://www.santarosa.fl.gov/oilspill) and are updated daily.

**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 and e-mail Emergency Management at [Emergency-Management@santarosa.fl.gov](mailto:Emergency-Management@santarosa.fl.gov).

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

Reimbursement for losses is a possibility. We encourage businesses to keep detailed 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 or locally register at 982-5223.

**Where can I donate items for wildlife cleanup?**

The Volunteer Reception Center operated through Help Thy Neighbors is collecting items for wildlife cleanup including:

- baby blankets
- towels
- heating pads (without auto shut-off if possible)
- large Rubbermaid containers with lids
- heating lamps, Rubbermaid troughs (can be purchased at Tractor Supply in Crestview or online)
- large backyard portable pools

Call the Volunteer Reception Center at (850) 983-5223 for drop off locations or additional information.

**I (or my business) have a boat or other equipment and want to help. Who do I contact?**

BP is looking to contract shrimp boats, oyster boats and other vessels for hire through the Vessel of Opportunities Program to deploy boom in the Gulf of Mexico. For more information (425) 745-8017

**Where can I get information about training classes?**

We are working to schedule classes. Information will be posted as soon as it becomes available.

**Are the local waterways going to be closed to boat traffic?**

Boom placement and tides will affect the waterways. There is no area scheduled for closing at this time.

**Can I still fish in the bays and bayous?**

Yes, however please be cautious of booms and report any oil or oil smells encountered. NOAA is restricting fishing for a minimum of ten days on Sunday, May 2, in federal waters most affected by the BP oil spill, largely between Louisiana state waters at the mouth of the Mississippi River to waters off Florida's Pensacola Bay

**Where can I find information about jobs?**

Call Workforce EscaRosa at (850) 983-5325 or online at [www.employflorida.com](http://www.employflorida.com).

**When and where are meetings about the incident scheduled?**

Scheduled meetings will be advertised through the media and posted on our Web page at [www.santarosa.fl.gov](http://www.santarosa.fl.gov).

**Other Contact Numbers**

- Transocean hotline: 832-587-8554
- MI Swaco hotline: 888-318-6765
- BP Investor Relations: 381-366-3123
- BP family hotline: 281-36-578
- BP third party contractor hotline: 281-366-5578

**For More Information**

[www.santarosa.fl.gov/oilspill](http://www.santarosa.fl.gov/oilspill)

[www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com](http://www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com)

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