
Soil Excavation, Air Samples Part of Gasoline Cleanup

Wellington Spill Site

Wellington, Ohio

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For more information

For questions, comments or more information about the emergency cleanup of the Wellington, Ohio, pipeline spill, you can contact these EPA team members:

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Cleanup of a large gasoline spill includes soil excavation around a ruptured pipeline, air monitoring and a focus on protecting the nearby Black River. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency with Ohio EPA is supervising cleanup operations at the spill site. The burst pipeline Jan. 12 spilled an estimated 117,000 gallons and forced the evacuation of around 70 people from 31 homes. Officials were concerned about an explosion and fire risk at the site. Fumes from the spill could also have caused breathing and long-term health problems. Residents began returning to their homes Jan. 20 after health officials reviewed air sampling data. The 8-inch pipeline owned by Sunoco Logistics ruptured shortly before 11 p.m. A resident noticed a strong gasoline smell and alerted authorities. Wellington firefighters and village employees used sand and gravel to build containment dams and ponds preventing most of the spill from entering the Black River. The river is a tributary to Lake Erie. The gasoline did contaminate White Ditch near the site of the spill. The ditch feeds into the river.

The local responders were aided by emergency personnel from U.S. EPA, Ohio EPA, Lorain County Health Department and Sunoco. Residents began returning to their homes Jan. 20 after health officials reviewed air sampling data.

Air monitoring

Air quality is a major concern around the spill site because gasoline contains dangerous chemicals. Benzene is a major part of gasoline and known cancer-causing substance. EPA and Sunoco are monitoring the air. EPA is checking the air to protect the health of residents. Sunoco is



Cleanup workers pump out gasoline-contaminated water at the site of a pipeline rupture in Wellington, Ohio.

monitoring air quality around the cleanup crews. U.S. EPA brought in a mobile laboratory called TAGA for “trace atmospheric gas analyzer.” The TAGA can do real-time sampling and analysis and detect chemicals in the air at very low levels. U.S. EPA can provide air quality results with a high degree of accuracy using TAGA and other air sampling equipment. Those results are used by local and state health agencies to determine when the air quality is safe for people to return home.

Water quality

Responders are also working hard to protect the Black River from the gasoline spill. Cleanup teams are doing water sampling as well as regular visual checks from the ditch into the Black River. So far only one instance of a light sheen was detected on the river. The slick was immediately cleaned up. Officials analyze daily water samples from the White Ditch as well as upstream and downstream of the confluence of the White Ditch and

Black River.

Under U.S. EPA and Ohio EPA guidance, Sunoco also installed equipment that circulates air through the White Ditch water. This process of aeration will help eliminate chemicals that may still remain in the water.

Other activities

The soil around the pipeline break had to be dug up and removed because it was soaked with gasoline. U.S. EPA supervised Sunoco contractors. Excavated soil was placed in containers for disposal.

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, part of the U.S. Department of Transportation, directed the removal and replacement of the damaged pipeline. That agency will examine the damaged section and determine a cause for the break.

U.S. EPA staffers will remain at the site during the emergency. The long-term cleanup will be carried out by Ohio EPA.



A U.S. EPA On-Scene-Coordinator supervises operation of a machine that blows air through contaminated water. This aeration process helps remove hazardous chemicals that were spilled when a gasoline pipeline ruptured Jan. 12 in Wellington, Ohio.