

EAST BAY TIMES

Richmond: Cleanup at Chevron refinery oil spill continues a day after leak

Authorities say no animals coated in oil have been spotted



RICHMOND, CA – FEBRUARY 9: Chevron and fire-agency crews respond to a five-gallon-per-minute leak petroleum product as an absorbent boom is placed on the water next to the Chevron Richmond Long Wharf in Richmond, Calif., on Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2021.(Ray Chavez/Bay Area News Group)

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RICHMOND — Efforts to clean up an oil spill at the Chevron Refinery that sent at least 100 gallons of oil into San Francisco Bay waters continued Wednesday morning.

Repair personnel stopped the leak Tuesday evening and said a pipeline near the refinery wharf was the apparent source of it, according to a social media statement

from Chevron Richmond that was updated Wednesday. Personnel shut down the pipeline, according to a statement.



RICHMOND, CA – February 9: A duck swims through oil slick as a five gallon per minute petroleum leak washes in near the Chevron Long Wharf in Richmond, Calif., on Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2021. (Dylan Bouscher/Bay Area News Group)

The refinery also said in a statement early Wednesday that response teams have deployed about 2,100 feet of containment boom around the site of the spill, and that three oil skimmers ran through the night to recover oil that was in the water.

Refinery personnel, along with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Office of Spill Prevention and Response; Contra Costa Health Services; and the U.S. Coast Guard all were on site.

Emails by this organization to the Department of Fish and Wildlife were not returned immediately Wednesday morning.

A social-media account post Tuesday said the refinery observed a sheen on waters near the refinery wharf around 3 p.m. The leak brought a public health advisory that was e-mailed to Richmond, North Richmond and San Pablo residents around 3:50 p.m. Tuesday.

In the advisory, the spill from the refinery was described as having happened along the long wharf.

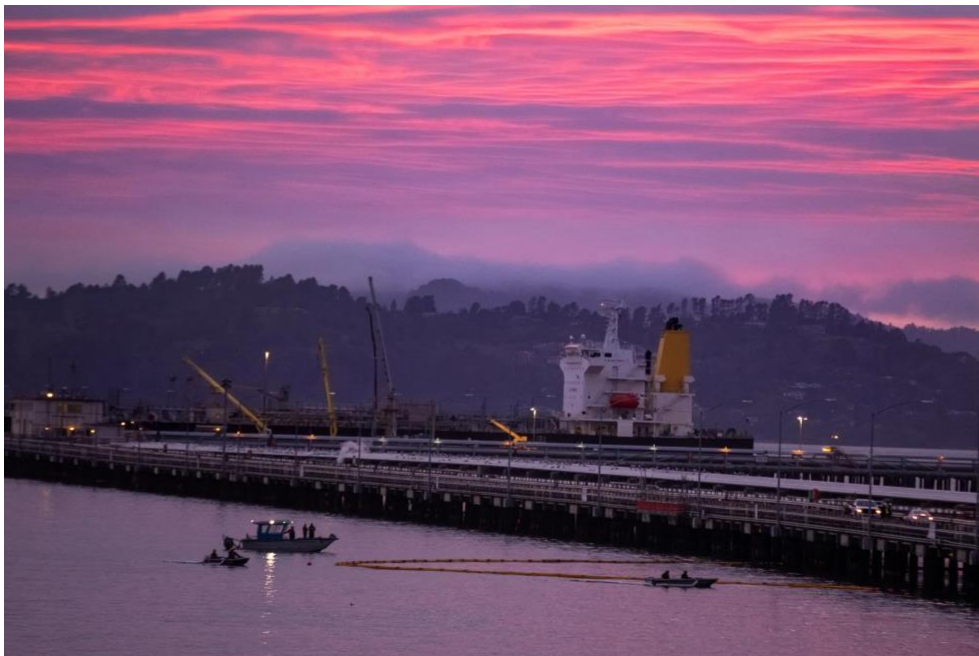
“Chevron immediately initiated its response protocol, began working to isolate and contain the release, and notified all applicable agencies. The hydrocarbon release has been stopped at this time, and cleanup is ongoing,” the post said in part.

“Chevron is fully cooperating with authorities, including the U.S. Coast Guard and [Office of Spill Prevention and Response]. We have issued a community notice and ask the public to remain clear of the area so crews can quickly contain and clean up the released volumes.”

County officials lifted the advisory shortly after 8:40 p.m.

At the start, the refinery’s [air-monitoring site](#) showed southerly winds around 5 mph for three sites around and near its fenceline.

A Richmond Police Department spokesman said there were no reported road closures in the Point Richmond area, but that beaches and shorelines were closed due to the spill. Those beaches remained closed Wednesday morning.



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According to a [hazardous-materials spill report](#) filed at 3:25 p.m. with the state’s Office of Emergency Services, the refinery said about a hundred gallons of a mixture of recovered oil and gasoline began leaking shortly after 3:05 p.m., with no established specific cause.

In a social-media post, Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia said that Chevron and fire-agency crews were setting up a boom around a five-gallon-per-minute leak of a petroleum product at the wharf, and that county hazardous-materials staff were responding.

In statements Tuesday night, Gioia said the amount that leaked from a refinery standing pipe could be as much as 600 gallons, and noted that some petroleum appeared to have washed up on the city shoreline despite workers' efforts to contain it.

He added that he had spoken with state Assembly member Buffy Wicks, who indicated her interest in moving forward with legislation to strengthen fines and penalties for releases from refineries and industrial facilities.

"It is unacceptable to have this happen in our community," Gioia said. "It causes harm to people's health. It causes harm to bird life, wildlife and marine life. I've seen it personally in prior spills. We expect industry to operate at the highest level with no room for error, because error causes harm to life. We coexist with industry in the area, which is why we have high regulatory standards. When you operate industry in an urban environment, there needs to be precautions to protect life."

In a statement, Audubon California Director of Bird Conservation Andrea Jones slammed the spill's impact on bay waters.

"Staff from our Center at Richardson Bay will keep an eye on the surrounding area for injured wildlife tomorrow and for the rest of the week, and report any findings to the Office of Oil Spill Prevention and Response," Jones said in part Tuesday. "Any spill in San Francisco Bay underscores the many reasons California must continue to move away from fossil fuels and toward renewable forms of energy, for the health of wildlife, fisheries, and coastline communities."

In [a notice](#), East Bay Regional Parks staff said the spill left "an odorous sheen" off Miller/Knox Regional Park and Keller Beach, and closed park and shoreline access through at least noon Wednesday.

According to the refinery's Wednesday morning statement, no animals coated in oil have been reported. They asked the public to report any such sightings by calling the Oiled Wildlife Care Network at 1-877-823-6926.

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