

## **Multiple Agencies Respond to Westport Marina Oil Spill**

### **Local News**

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WESTPORT, Wash. - The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) U.S. Coast Guard (Coast Guard), Westport Marina and the Westport Fire Department responded yesterday to a 20-gallon diesel fuel spill at the Westport Marina. The spill was reported to state and federal authorities at about 11:30 a.m. Thursday. The spill was largely contained by oil spill containment boom as responders worked to clean up the spill. The source is unknown but under investigation. Southwest Regional Office Spill Response Unit Supervisor Jim Sachet said: "Quick action by the staff at Westport Marina prevented this spill from spreading. In fact, it was mostly contained before professional responders arrived. Normally, even a small spill spreads throughout a marina and can be a problem for several tidal cycles — their effective action may have helped prevent this issue." Marina staff worked quickly to put absorbent pads and other containment equipment in place, Sachet said. They used oil spill response equipment Ecology provided in 2007. The equipment trailer in Westport is one of 99 the department has provided public marinas, ports, tribes, fire and police departments throughout the state.

Responders continue working to: Remove fuel from the water and minimize impacts to the environment.

Investigate the cause of the spill.

Identify important fish and wildlife habitat areas.

Observe and respond to potential shoreline and wildlife impacts.

Marina staff were alerted to the spill by nearby residents, who saw sheen on the water. Oil spilled to water spreads out quickly on the water's surface and can cover many acres of water. All oil spills cause environmental damage, regardless of size. Oil is toxic to the environment and the damage starts as soon as the oil hits water. A single quart of oil has the potential to foul more than 100,000 gallons of water. Boat owners and operators who spill oil can face monetary penalties for allowing oil to pollute state waters. Because petroleum products damage the environment and can threaten fish, shellfish, birds and critical habitat areas, spillers can also be held responsible for compensating Washington citizens for damage done to the public's natural resources.