

Follow Up Report: #21-217

May 31st, 2021 – 5 L Hydraulic Oil Spill



The following information refers to an incident reported by Agnico Eagle Mines Ltd. on June 1st, 2021, and is being provided in accordance with:

- the Nunavut Water Board License 2BB-MEL1424 Water License, part H, item 4c
- the Fisheries Act subsection 38(5)

Description of Incident

During an exploratory drilling campaign near local lake B5, workers noticed a hydrocarbons sheen on the surface runoff surrounding the drill. The drill was set up approximately 39m from the ordinary high water mark of the lake, in a low-lying area prior to freshet, which later encountered substantial surface runoff as temperatures warmed. Hydrocarbon residues on the components and surfaces of the drill equipment were being washed off by the freshet runoff towards B5 lake. The spill volume was approximated at 5 L.

The coordinates of this spill are 63° 1'30"N, 92°14'39 "W.



Figure 1: Location of the spill near B5 lake.



Figure 2: Hydrocarbons sheen on the surface of water by the drill



Figure 3: Observed hydrocarbons sheen flow path between drill and B5 Lake.

Spill Response & Cleanup

The drill was shut down on May 31st to address the issue and materials such as fuel tanks, hoses and other equipment which may present hydrocarbon contaminated surfaces were moved to higher ground away from freshet runoff. Absorbent pads and booms were put in place to capture the hydrocarbons at the surface of water. The contaminated absorbent materials were recovered into Quatrex hazmat bags.



Figure 4: Absorbent pads and booms were deployed to capture the hydrocarbons at the surface of water.

Cause of Incident and Corrective Measures

The specific cause in this incident is attributed to the selection of the location and timing for drilling (in relation to freshet onset). In this case and as previously mentioned, the drill was shut down and materials such as fuel tanks, hoses and other equipment which may contain hydrocarbons contaminated surfaces were moved to higher ground away from freshet runoff. The Environment department will continue conducting regular inspections. Orbit Garant supervisors will ensure to reiterate the importance of inspections of their rigs to their workers to prevent any environmental incident. The procedure for drilling just prior and during freshet is being modified to ensure that drills are not operational during this period where large freshet inflows can be problematic.