

The Virgin Islands Consortium

WAPA Equipment Spills More Than 50 Gallons Of Oil Into Sea; Investigation To Be Launched On Friday

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ST. CROIX -- A clean-up effort will continue by personnel of the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority through the overnight hours and into Friday following [an oil spill incident](#) just off the WAPA fuel dock in Estate Richmond, a press release the authority issued late Thursday has confirmed. Above, WAPA employees working to contain the spill.

WAPA Acting Chief Executive Officer Julio Rhymer said this afternoon that an estimated more than 50 gallons of oil seeped into the waters around the utility's fuel dock after oil/water separation equipment became compromised late this morning.

“The sheen was first noticed by plant personnel around 12 noon which caused WAPA to engage its emergency response plan to both contain and clean up the spilled oil,” Mr. Rhymer said. On Friday, WAPA will investigate why the final leg of a dual safeguard oil/water separation system failed, causing today’s spill.

Containment booms were deployed and absorbent materials are being used to clean up the heaviest of the spilled oil which has been contained in the general vicinity of the fuel dock. “There is a light sheen that extends along the shoreline to the east of the plant closer to the Seaborne seaplane terminal in Estate Watergut. It is estimated that we have removed about 40-45% of the spilled oil but there is a ways to go until all the spilled petroleum-based product has been removed from the water,” Mr. Rhymer said.

WAPA has been in contact with the U.S. Coast Guard, its National Response Center and with a number of local government regulatory agencies. “A Coast Guard inspection will be required at the end of the clean up to ensure that the oil product has been removed to a satisfactory level before the clean-up can be deemed completed,” Mr. Rhymer said.