Message

From: US EPA [noreply-subscriptions@epa.gov]
Sent: 3/22/2019 1:36:31 AM
To: Gray, David [gray.david@epa.gov]
Subject: Joint Release: Unified command working to assess water quality near ITC site

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
NEWS RELEASE
WWW.EPA.GOV/NEWSROOM

Joint Release: Unified command working to assess water quality near ITC site

Thursday, March 21, 2019

Teams and contractors from the city of Deer Park, Harris County, TCEQ, EPA, and the U.S. Coast Guard are working together to evaluate impacts to Tucker Bayou and the Houston Ship Channel surrounding Intercontinental Terminals Co. in Deer Park, which recently dealt with several large fires in its chemical storage tanks.

The city of Deer Park reports that run-off of foam and chemicals resulting from the fire response do not pose a threat to the quality of the city's drinking water. Drinking water is provided to the city by the Coastal Water Authority, which draws from the Trinity River. Water is stored in a reservoir located northeast of the Lynchburg Ferry. From there, it travels through a closed pipe system to Deer Park customers. Water in the municipal water system does not come into contact with the water impacted by the fire response. Furthermore, the public water system is designed to treat debris that has fallen, such as ash, that may have encountered untreated water stored at the drinking water plant. Treated water is contained within a pressurized distribution system. Laboratory testing of the city of Deer Park's water revealed no evidence of benzene. The only volatile organic compounds detected were the total trihalomethanes at 14 micrograms per liter, which is well below the maximum allowed 80 micrograms per liter, which is a disinfectant byproduct.

The area north of Texas 225 drains toward the Houston Ship Channel, which is not used by any public water system in the Houston area as a source for drinking water. Deer Park residents who use wells north of Texas 225 should have their water tested before using.

Teams are looking out for and working to contain any chemicals that may be coming from the site, which include the industrial chemicals stored there and firefighting foam used to fight the fire and suppress vapors.

The Coast Guard directed the placement of close to 3,000 feet of containment and sorbent boom at strategic locations along the facility's drainage outfall—including Tucker and Buffalo bayous, and the Houston Ship Channel—to contain discharge caused by the overflow of firefighting water and foam from the facility's containment area and an exclusionary boom has been placed around the Battleship Texas and the entrance to Santa Ana Bayou as a precautionary measure to prevent impact to these sensitive areas. If at any time, air or

water sampling indicates a safety risk to operations on the Houston Ship Channel, the Captain of the Port will take immediate action to cease operations in the impacted area. Employees working at facilities along the Houston Ship Channel should follow safety instructions issued by their local and county officials.

TCEQ began sampling water on Tuesday from Tucker Bayou to the Houston Ship Channel and at drainage outfalls adjacent to the facility. Collected samples were first submitted by TCEQ's contractor to a certified water laboratory early Wednesday; however, results for certain compounds can take 24 hours, while others can take as long as 72 hours, to be processed and finalized. EPA began collecting water samples in Tucker Bayou on March 20, and in Buffalo Bayou on March 21.

See city of Deer Park, Harris County, TCEQ's ITC Fire Incident webpage, and EPA for updates concerning this response.

If you would rather not receive future communications from Environmental Protection Agency, let us know by clicking here.
Environmental Protection Agency, Fountain Place 12th Floor, Suite 1200 1445 Ross Avenue, Dallas, TX 75202-2733 United States