

Is That oil? Learn the Difference

Between Oil and Natural Sheen on Water



Oil Sheen

Oil and natural sheen look almost the same when floating on water.

However, when the sheen is disturbed, it becomes easy to tell the difference:

Natural Sheen

Oil sheen will break apart, but join back together quickly.

Natural sheen will break apart and will stay separate.



Suspected Oil Leak Recognition

SOUND: Volume can range from a quiet hissing to a loud roar, depending on the size of the leak and pipeline system.

SMELL: An unusual smell, petroleum odor, or gaseous odor will sometimes accompany pipeline leaks. Natural gas and HVLs are colorless, tasteless, and odorless, unless commercial odorants or Mercaptan is added. Gas transmission/gas gathering pipelines are odorless, but may have a hydrocarbon smell.

SIGHT: Liquid pools, continuous bubbling in wet or flooded areas, an oily sheet on water surfaces, vaporous fogs and/or blowing dirt around a pipeline area. Dead or discolored plants in an otherwise healthy area of vegetation or frozen ground in warm weather are all signs of a pipeline leak. Natural gas is colorless, tasteless, and odorless, but vapor and "ground frosting" may be visible at high pressures. A natural gas leak may also be indicated by dust blowing from a hole in the ground or flames, if the leak is ignited.

What not to do in the event of a Leak:

What not to do in the event of a leak:

- DO NOT cause any open flame or other potential source of ignition, e.g. an electrical switch, vehicle ignition, or a lit match. Do not start motor vehicles or electrical equipment. Vacate the area as soon as possible, and don't go back until the appropriate professionals indicate that it is safe to do so.
- DO NOT come into direct contact with any escaping liquids or gas.
- DO NOT drive into a leak or vapor cloud while leaving the area.
- DO NOT attempt to operate any pipeline valves yourself. You may inadvertently route more product to the leak or cause a secondary incident.
- DO NOT attempt to extinguish a petroleum product or natural gas fire. Wait for local firefighters and other professionals trained to deal with such emergencies.

To Report suspected oil or oil sheen, Please call: 911

From a safe location, *call 911* immediately. When reporting identify the pipeline company (*if known*), a brief description of the incident, and the location so the proper response can be initiated.