

Walla Walla gasoline spill and cleanup

Stillwater Holdings Chevron cleanup site: April 2025 update



New equipment installed at Marcus Whitman and Chevron

New, more efficient vapor removal systems and pumps for the water mitigation system have been installed and are fully operational at the Marcus Whitman and the 106 Building. The new systems discharge into the City of Walla Walla's sewer after treatment, have a smaller footprint, and reduce the impact to the 106 Building.

NWFF Environmental is now overseeing the vapor and water mitigation systems at the sites, taking over for the previous contractor Clean Harbors.

106 Building flooding

During the installation of the new vapor and water mitigation system, 106 Building experienced flooding in their basement. Ecology's contractor, Clean Harbors, is working with a restoration company to comprehensively and quickly address and repair the damage.

Water mitigation system incident

On April 5, a 4,000-gallon water container used with the water mitigation system split and released untreated sump water that had been collected from the 106 Building. The holding tank, located on Stillwater Holdings property, failed and sent the water down the street and into storm drains on 2nd and Cherry streets.

Ecology's contractor, NWFF, and Ecology worked to set up a temporary system, keeping the mitigation system operational. NWFF hired a vacuum truck to clear out the storm drains. Ecology collected samples from the water container and storm drains to characterize the water, determine contaminant levels and inform next steps. NWFF has replaced the container tank with a hard-sided tank and reconfigured the system to manage water.

Sampling results

GeoEngineers completed another round of groundwater sampling at Stillwater Chevron, 106 Building, and the Marcus Whitman Hotel properties during the last week of March. Vapor intrusion sampling is tentatively scheduled for all three properties in April. The results will be posted to our [site webpage](https://go.ecology.wa.gov/StillwaterChevron)¹ as soon as they are available.

Overall gasoline petroleum hydrocarbons and the breakdown contaminants of gasoline in groundwater appear to be decreasing or stable across the site. Contaminants decreased in the 106 Building sump with only benzene

¹ <https://go.ecology.wa.gov/StillwaterChevron>

exceeding cleanup levels. Petroleum hydrocarbons and the breakdown contaminants of gasoline rebounded in the Marcus Whitman Hotel sump with petroleum hydrocarbons and benzene exceeding their respective cleanup levels.

Ecology requests funding

Ecology has requested \$3.5 million from the state capital budget to continue cleaning up the gasoline spill. Ecology estimates this is the amount needed to complete the remedial investigation, feasibility study, cleanup action plan, implementation of a cleanup remedy, and long-term monitoring.

Stillwater Holdings updates

The Department of Revenue and the Office of the Insurance Commissioner confirmed that Stillwater Holdings' insurance policy meets the required coverage for underground storage tank owners and operators.

Ecology was notified that a tank monitor alarm in the Chevron's operational fuel system was triggered. Stillwater Holdings immediately brought in a third party to assess the situation and found that product was released into a containment sump from a leaky valve. It appears the product was contained, and there was no release to the environment. Following the alarm, Ecology required a precision line test to provide proof there is not a leak in the line. The testing was completed and passed.

The first deliverable required from Stillwater Holdings under the enforcement order is a comprehensive schedule and a remedial investigation work plan, which Ecology has not received yet.

Site history

The emergency response and cleanup operations in downtown Walla Walla began in September 2023, when Ecology spills staff responded to gasoline odors in the basement of the Marcus Whitman Hotel. Air quality testing identified potentially harmful and explosive gasoline vapors in the basement. The hotel was evacuated immediately. Vapors were also detected in two nearby buildings.

For the next month, ventilation was required to reduce dangerous vapors, and gasoline-contaminated groundwater was pumped from the affected buildings. By October 2023, the threat to the community was reduced, allowing efforts to shift from emergency response to developing a mitigation plan that would ensure the continued safety of nearby residents and businesses.

Based on sampling results, Stillwater Holdings Chevron was identified as the source of the release. Contamination from the spill continues to impact two neighboring properties, the Marcus Whitman Hotel and the 106 Building.

Questions?

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