

**From:** [Vincent, Angela \(ECY\)](#)  
**To:** [Maureen Meehan](#)  
**Cc:** [Raso, Gabe \(ECY\)](#); [Serad, Courtney \(ECY\)](#); [Sains, Alex \(ECY\)](#); [Meyers, Alison \(ECY\)](#); [Reed-Harmon, George](#)  
**Subject:** Response to S4F Notification for diesel fuel spill (Vermeer)  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 22, 2025 7:07:22 PM  
**Attachments:** [\\_112nd St E Diesel Spill Cleanup Report wAttachments.pdf](#)  
[S4F\\_112thSpill Nov 2024.pdf](#)  
[RE ERTS 734762 - diesel fuel spill, Clover Creek \(reported 11\\_1\\_24\).pdf](#)  
**Importance:** High

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Dear Maureen,

I am responding to the S4F notification dated November 21, 2024, that Pierce County submitted to the Department of Ecology (Ecology) under the county's NPDES Phase I Municipal Stormwater Permit (Permit). This notification concerns a diesel spill that happened at Vermeer Mountain West (Vermeer), which is located at 2205 112<sup>th</sup> Street East, Tacoma, WA, 98445.

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Spill Incident Reported to Ecology

On November 1, 2024 at 4:02 pm, Wayne Wells with Drainage District 19 called Ecology to report a sheen and petroleum smell within the drainage ditch along Aqueduct Drive East. Joe Thomas entered this incident into Ecology's environmental reports tracking system as ERTS number 734762 on November 1<sup>st</sup> and referred it to Pierce County Public Works on the same day. We understand that the amount of diesel dumped and/or spilled at the Vermeer property is unknown, but that it exceeded 15 gallons and could have been as much as 55 gallons.

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Summary report from Pierce County

According to the attached summary report from Pierce County Maintenance and Operations (M&O), George Reed-Harmon and staff deployed BMPs on the evening of November 1, 2024, in response to this spill. This summary report says,

"...Tom Zurfluh sent Jesse Best out with a spill trailer the evening of November 1 to deploy BMPs with George. Their investigation led them to believe the spill originated at 112<sup>th</sup> St E and Bob Findley [Findlay] Rd so they placed BMPs in all potentially impacted catch basins (CBs), SF160 pond and associated bioswale. They followed the spill to the west where it discharges into North Fork Clover Creek (Tributary 5) and found more evidence of the spill. DOE, SWM and M&O staff worked on the investigation and BMP deployment until 11:45 pm that day."

According to the attached M&O report, on Saturday November 2<sup>nd</sup>, M&O staff vactored out five CBs from 112<sup>th</sup> Street East and Bob Findlay to the inlet, and on November 4<sup>th</sup>, M&O staff returned to the North Fork Clover Creek, and they replaced/added more booms all the way to the W-1 (SF261) pond. According to County reporting, Pierce County staff identified the source of diesel at the Vermeer property on November 5, 2024, and the next day, M&O began to vactor "every CB from the Vermeer address all the way to North Fork Clover Creek, which took a total of two days and was finished on November 7." On November 12, 2024, Pierce County staff identified that the private CB at the Vermeer property continued to leak into their MS4. The County says,

"Vermeer hired a contractor to clean the impacted CB. After the contractor was done, M&O did a full inspection and maintenance of booms in 22 locations of drainage from Vermeer into North Fork Clover Creek. November 13 through December 4 M&O continued to inspection [sic], monitor, and maintain/replace BMPs on a daily basis. All in-water BMPs were removed by December 4. On December 6 M&O removed all remaining BMPs including plastic on the gravel shoulder."

On December 9, 2024, Pierce County closed the survey for this ERTS incident.

#### Information from Ecology Spills Program

On November 6, 2024, Ecology Spill responder Courtney Serad emailed me about this incident. Courtney relayed her concern that Pierce County did not immediately notify Ecology of the reported sheen in the drainage ditch, among other issues. Courtney said, "We received notification around 1600, roughly five hours after discovery, that Pierce County wanted assistance. When we our responders arrived on-scene around 1800 everyone had left scene. Responders called their dispatch to attempt a meet-up back on-site. George, with Pierce County, and a few of his folks met back on-site around 1900..."

#### Additional communication related to this spill

I emailed Courtney's email to me to George Reed-Harmon on November 7, 2024, and I also requested additional follow-up from George for this spill. George replied to me on November 13, 2024. I requested additional information from George related to this ERTS in December 2024 and on March 6, 2025. I received the attached M&O report from George on January 22, 2025, and George's response to my March 6<sup>th</sup> email on March 25, 2025. My email communication with George on ERTS 734762 is attached to this letter for your reference.

#### Permit General Condition G3: Notification of Discharge Including Spills

General condition G3 of the Permit requires Pierce County to notify the Ecology regional office and other appropriate spill response authorities **immediately but in no case later than within 24 hours** of obtaining knowledge that a spill into or from a MS4 "could constitute a threat to human health, welfare, or the environment." It is best practice that Pierce County call the National Response Center (NRC) and Washington State Emergency Management Division (EMD) within 1 hour of discovering an oil or hazardous substance spill to water that is an environmental threat. RCW 90.56.280 is the *Duty to notify the coast guard and division of emergency management of discharge* of oil and hazardous substances entering waters of the state. Pierce County shall review and update, as necessary, your spills and illicit discharges response protocols to ensure immediate reporting to the NRC and EMD of oil and hazardous substances entering waters of the state in accordance with RCW 90.56.280 and G3 of the Permit.

#### Cross-training and recommended actions

I understand Pierce County had cross-training with Ecology Spill responders on April 4, 2025. Following this cross-training, we recommend Pierce County review its spills and illicit

discharges response protocols and update them where needed.

On December 20, 2024, George Reed-Harmon identified the following lessons learned related to ERTS 734762:

"Following the incident, IDDE staff upgraded vehicles with enhanced spill supplies that will be restocked as needed. This improves the response to spill situations until Maintenance Operations, contracted responders, or Ecology Spills arrive."

Courtney Serad informed me that Pierce County was delayed in booming the outfall into the North Fork Clover Creek for this incident. Courtney said,

"Pierce County responded and took actions on the incident, however, there was some delay in booming the outfall due to responders not carrying sorbents in their vehicles...George has been actively communicating with his team and working with the maintenance crew to address some of their shared concerns internally."

Pierce County Public Works should ensure vehicles used by IDDE staff are fully stocked with spill response materials, including but not limited to appropriate PPE (gloves, goggles, etc.), absorbent pads, oil booms, etc. to help ensure an effective response to spills.

Following this spill, Pierce County should evaluate if any additional stormwater facility maintenance is necessary for the W-1 (SF261) pond, and SF160 pond and associated bioswale, in accordance with your Permit and Stormwater Manual. As an example, [Appendix I-A](#) of the [Pierce County Stormwater Manual](#) says maintenance is needed for wet ponds and treatment wetlands when there is "prevalent and visible oil sheen." Pierce County and Ecology spill responders deployed oil-absorbing booms in response to this spill. Pierce County also reports that M&O vactored debris at the weir of the W-1 pond.

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Permit Determination

Ecology has determined that an adaptive management response under Permit condition S4.F.3 is not necessary for this notification because the Permit's Stormwater Management Program requirements are designed to address and eliminate illicit discharges into the MS4. This is Permit condition S5.C.9. This determination does not affect any obligation you may have under other laws, regulations, or permits. If you or your staff have questions, please contact me by phone at (360) 628-4734 or email at [angela.vincent@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:angela.vincent@ecy.wa.gov).

Sincerely,

Angela Vincent  
Municipal Stormwater Planner  
SWRO Water Quality Program  
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