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United States Coast Guard

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DATE: November 02, 2009 16:51:17 CST

Office of External Affairs  
U.S. Coast Guard

U.S. Department of  
Homeland Security  
United States  
Coast Guard



Date: Nov. 2, 2009

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## News Release

### **UPDATE: Freight ship hole patched, oil spill stopped**

**NEW ORLEANS** — Divers patched a hole in the motor vessel *Pac Alkaid* Sunday, preventing further spillage of oil into the Gulf of Mexico and enabling the freight ship to successfully transit up the Mississippi River to a shipyard in New Orleans.

The initial discharge of an estimated 12,000 gallons of bunker oil was caused by a hole in the *Pac Alkaid*'s hull which was approximately five centimeters in diameter and five feet below the waterline. At 2 a.m. Friday while the *Pac Alkaid* was anchored five miles southeast of Southwest Pass, the vessel's captain notified the Coast Guard that the ship was leaking oil into the Gulf of Mexico.

O'Brien's Response Management hired divers who patched the hole on Sunday afternoon. The *Pac Alkaid* then transited up the Mississippi River and arrived at the Perry Street Wharf in New Orleans at 9:30 p.m. Sunday, where it is scheduled to undergo permanent repairs. During its transit, the *Pac Alkaid* was escorted by the *NRC Energy*, a response vessel owned by the National Response Corporation, which is 100 feet in length and capable of recovering oil from the water.

The Coast Guard and O'Brien's Response Management, a private response organization hired by the owners of the *Pac Alkaid*, formed a Unified Command and worked together to manage the spill response. During the response, the Coast Guard and O'Brien's group conducted a total of seven overflights with helicopters and airplanes from Friday through Sunday to assess the spill. O'Brien's Response Management hired the response vessel *Louisiana Responder*, a 220-foot vessel owned by the Marine Spill Recovery Corporation, to clean up the spill. The *Louisiana Responder*'s efforts to recover oil were prevented by three-to-five foot waves and a lack of concentrated oil.

On Friday morning, winds and currents pushed the oil to the northwest, which caused a sheen to wash up against the rocks of the Southwest Pass jetty. Winds and currents pushed the oil towards the southeast, away from the coast on Saturday and Sunday. There have been no reports that the spill has impacted the shoreline since Friday.

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