



News Release

Oct. 20, 2017
U.S. Coast Guard 8th District Public Affairs Detachment Texas
Contact: 8th District Public Affairs Detachment Texas
Office: (281) 464-4810
After Hours: (832) 293-1293

Coast Guard responds to barge fire near Port Aransas, Texas



Editors' Note: Click on images to download high resolution version.

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas - The Coast Guard is responding to a vessel that caught fire Friday morning three miles off the jetties of Port Aransas, Texas.

At 4:35 a.m., Sector/Air Station Corpus Christi watchstanders received a mayday from the captain of the tug vessel Buster Bouchard over Channel 16 who reported that the barge B255 attached to his tug was on fire and two crewmembers were unaccounted for.

A Coast Guard Station Port Aransas 45-foot response boat and an Air Station Corpus Christi MH-65 Dolphin helicopter aircrew departed to search for the missing crewmembers.

A unified command consisting of the Coast Guard, Texas General Land Office and a representative from Gallagher, who is representing Bouchard Transportation who owns the barge, has been set up to manage the incident.

The Port of Corpus Christi's fireboat along with other local assets are on scene and attempting to extinguish the fire.

The Coast Guard has established a 1,000 yard safety zone and is working with the pilots and harbor master to control vessel traffic in the area.

As a precautionary measure, air monitoring is being conducted. At this time, there is no indication of health risks to the public.

Pollution boom is being staged to protect the environment. The barge is loaded with approximately 133,000 barrels of crude oil. There are initial reports of some oil in the water.

"In this situation, safety is paramount," said Capt. Jason Smith, the Sector/Air Station Corpus Christi acting sector commander. "Our first objective is to find the missing crewmembers, and our immediate second objective is pollution response and ensuring navigational safety in the affected area."

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

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Oct. 20 2017

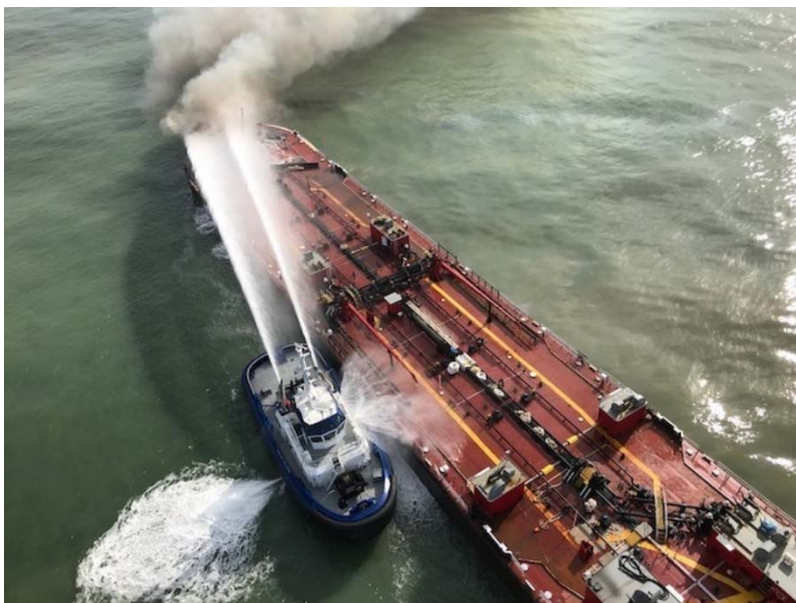
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**UPDATE: Coast Guard responds to barge fire offshore of Port Aransas,
Texas**





Editors' Note: Click on images to download high resolution version.

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas - The Coast Guard, Texas General Land Office and a Bouchard Transportation representative continue to respond to a barge that caught fire Friday morning three miles off the jetties of Port Aransas, Texas.

The Coast Guard continues search and rescue efforts to find the two unaccounted for crewmembers.

The fire has been extinguished and is being monitored for reflash, or re-ignition, by a local surface asset fire watch which will be in effect through the night.

Air monitoring has been completed by the state and confirmed to be no threat to the public.

The unified command is working to keep any oil discharge contained and mitigate any impacts to the marine environment. 2,000-feet of oil-containment boom has arrived on scene and is currently being deployed around the barge to contain any oil that has entered the water. An additional 6,000-feet of boom is on scene to protect environmentally sensitive areas.

The Captain of the Port has closed the entrance and jetty channels leading to the Corpus Christi ship channel from Harbor Island to offshore in order to prevent the spread of discharged oil into the port and to safely facilitate cleanup operations. The Lydia Ann channel and Gulf Intracoastal Waterway remain open. A 1,000-yard safety zone remains in effect around the barge.

"The unified command is dedicated to mitigate all threats while ensuring the safety of all response personnel," said Capt. Jason Smith, the Sector/Air Station Corpus Christi acting

sector commander. "We are very appreciative to the Aransas-Corpus Christi Pilot Association, Port of Corpus Christi, and maritime community who have supported the efforts to extinguish the fire, contain the discharge and search for the missing crewmembers."

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News Release

Oct. 21, 2017

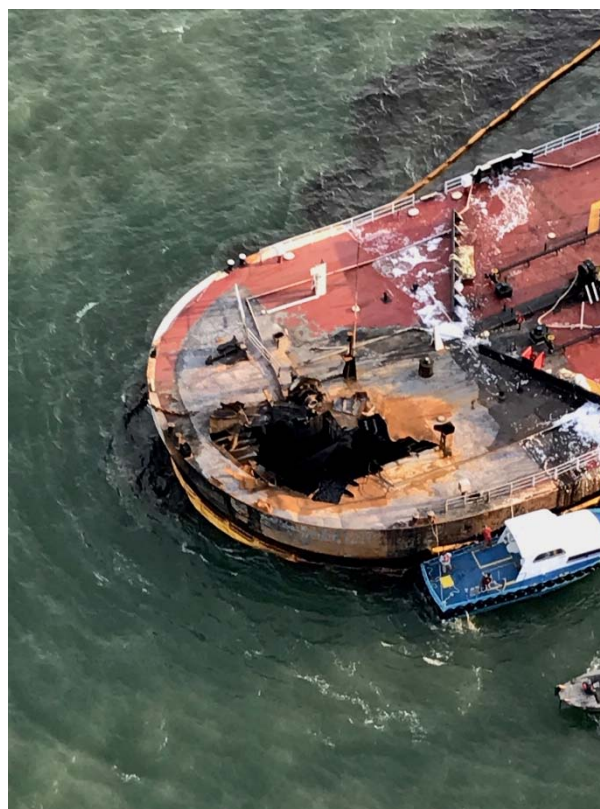
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UPDATE 2: Coast Guard responds to barge fire offshore of Port Aransas, Texas



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CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas - The Coast Guard, Texas General Land Office and Bouchard Transportation representatives continue to respond Saturday to a barge that caught fire Friday morning three miles off the jetties of Port Aransas, Texas.

Although the fire is out, response efforts continue to minimize the impact to the environment and maritime community.

The Coast Guard continues search and rescue efforts to find the two unaccounted for crewmembers.

The Unified Command has taken steps to secure the source of oil pollution at the barge. Multiple oil containment and recovery assets are on scene, including additional oil containment boom to reinforce existing containment boundaries.

Discharged oil has made minimal shoreline impact on Mustang Island as of this time. For public safety, do not touch or handle the oil if any is found.

Wildlife restoration resources are in place and wildlife restoration specialists are coordinating response efforts to minimize the impacts to wildlife observed along Mustang Island.

The Entrance and Jetty Channels remain closed in order to prevent the spread of discharged oil into the port and to safely facilitate cleanup operations. The Lydia Ann Channel and the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway remain open. A 1,000-yard safety zone remains in effect around the barge.

"Search and rescue, environmental protection, and opening the entrance channel are amongst our highest priorities," said Capt. Jason Smith, the Sector/Air Station Corpus Christi acting sector commander. "We are working diligently to secure the source and contain the discharge of oil in order to open the channel and mitigate environmental impacts."

For property claims, please call 888-850-8486.

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

News Release

Oct. 22, 2017

U.S. Coast Guard 8th District Public Affairs Detachment Texas

Contact: 8th District Public Affairs Detachment Texas

Office: (281) 464-4810

After Hours: (832) 293-1293

UPDATE 3: Unified Command responds to oil discharge offshore of Port Aransas, Texas





Editors' Note: Click on images to download high resolution version.

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas — The Coast Guard, Texas General Land Office, and Bouchard Transportation representatives continue to respond Sunday to an oil discharge from a barge that caught fire and was extinguished on Friday three miles off the jetties of Port Aransas, Texas.

Response efforts continue to minimize impact to the environment and the maritime community, which has enabled the Coast Guard to reopen the impacted ship channels.

Discharge from the barge cargo tanks appears to have stopped following the removal of 2,500 barrels of oil-water mix from the barge through lightering operations. Lightering is currently suspended due to weather, but will resume with improvement in sea conditions. Containment boom remains in place around the vessel, though sheening from the barge and containment boom is present. Coast Guard air overflights found no oil in the vicinity of the Entrance and Jetty channels.

The Coast Guard has reopened the Entrance Channel to inbound and outbound traffic. The port is now fully open with the exception of the restrictions outlined in marine safety information broadcast 16-17 regarding Hurricane Harvey.

Deflection and protection boom remain in place inside the channel as a precaution against any environmental impact and a 1,000-yard safety zone remains in effect around the barge.

Skimming boats have responded to the discharge, including the 210-foot Southern Responder.

Discharged oil has made shoreline impact on Mustang Island and North Padre Island. For public safety, it is imperative to stay away from the oil and to not touch or handle it. Three beach cleanup crews have been deployed and are actively cleaning the impacted shoreline. Crews recovered 34 cubic yards of oil, sand, and debris mixture from the impacted beaches thus far. Air monitoring teams are in place onshore and on the water to ensure safe air quality for responders and the public. Three additional teams will join beach cleanup operations on Monday.

Two wildlife response teams have been deployed between the Padre Island National Seashore and Port Aransas. They are actively engaged in assessing any impacted wildlife.

“The Unified Command continues to aggressively work on all aspects of this incident,” said Capt. Tony Hahn, the sector commander of Sector/Air Corpus Christi.

Please contact the Coast Guard Corpus Christi Public Affairs office at 361-438-0176 for any questions regarding this release.

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News Release

Oct. 23, 2017

U.S. Coast Guard 8th District Public Affairs Detachment Texas

Contact: 8th District Public Affairs Detachment Texas

Office: (281) 464-4810

After Hours: (832) 293-1293

UPDATE 4: Unified Command responds to oil discharge offshore of Port Aransas, Texas





Editors' Note: Click on images to download high resolution version.

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas — The Coast Guard, Texas General Land Office, and Bouchard Transportation representatives continue to respond to an oil discharge from a barge three miles off the jetties of Port Aransas, Texas.

Beach cleanup operations have removed approximately 48 cubic yards of oily solids from the impacted shoreline on Mustang Island and North Padre Island. Six cleanup teams, totaling over 120 people, are actively engaged in beach cleanup.

Two wildlife response teams and one wildlife response vessel continue to assess any impacted wildlife between the Padre Island National Seashore and Port Aransas. Any recovered wildlife will be taken to the Amos Rehabilitation Keep at University of Texas at Austin Marine Science Institute in Port Aransas, Texas.

There has been no further discharge of oil from the barge and air overflights observed no oil remaining on the water.

Response personnel are applying high expansion foam to the cargo tanks of the barge as a preventive measure to suppress vapors in the tanks. There is no fire or firefighting activity ongoing. The barge remains safely in place with two response vessels on standby.

“The TGLO’s oil spill response team and unified command partners have deployed along the affected beaches to quickly clean any shoreline impacts so that beach-goers can return to enjoying the natural beauty of the Texas coast,” said George P. Bush, Texas General Land Office Commissioner.

Please contact the Unified Command Information Center at 361-438-0176 for any questions regarding this release.

To report sightings of impacted wildlife, please call 361-500-9968.

For claims related to this incident, please call 888-850-8486.

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News Release

Oct. 24, 2017

U.S. Coast Guard 8th District Public Affairs Detachment Texas

Contact: 8th District Public Affairs Detachment Texas

Office: (281) 464-4810

After Hours: (832) 293-1293

UPDATE 5: Unified Command responds to oil discharge offshore of Port Aransas, Texas



Editors' Note: Click on images to download high resolution version.

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas — The Coast Guard, Texas General Land Office, and Bouchard Transportation representatives continue to respond to an oil discharge from a barge three miles off the jetties of Port Aransas, Texas.

Beach assessment and cleanup teams continue to respond to shore impact on Mustang Island and North Padre Island, including the Padre Island National Seashore. Response personnel recovered a total of 52 cubic yards of oily solids as of 2 p.m. Tuesday.

The barge remains safely in place with response vessels on standby. There continues to be no new signs of discharge from the barge and overflights conducted on Monday observed no free floating oil.

“We are actively assessing and conducting cleanup of the Padre Island National Seashore and other affected areas,” said Capt. Jason Smith, Sector/Air Station Corpus Christi deputy sector commander. “Unified Command has made great progress with planning for the safe transit of the barge to a repair facility and appreciates the support from the Aransas-Corpus Christi Pilot Association, the Port of Corpus Christi, and others in the maritime community.”

For media inquiries, please note the updated Unified Command Information Center phone number of 866-271-6821.

For Coast Guard specific information, the public affairs officer remains available at 361-438-0176.

To report sightings of impacted wildlife, please call 361-500-9968.

For claims related to this incident, please call 888-850-8486.

-USCG-



News Release

Oct. 25, 2017
U.S. Coast Guard 8th District Public Affairs Detachment Texas
Contact: 8th District Public Affairs Detachment Texas
Office: (281) 464-4810
After Hours: (832) 293-1293

UPDATE 6: Unified Command responds to oil discharge offshore of Port Aransas, Texas



Editors' Note: Click on images to download high resolution version

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas — The Coast Guard, Texas General Land Office, and Bouchard Transportation representatives continue to respond to an oil discharge that occurred three miles off the jetties of Port Aransas, Texas.

Unified Command achieved a significant milestone Wednesday with the safe transit of the barge to a shore facility to safely offload product contained in its cargo tanks.

Beach assessment and cleanup operations continued on Mustang and Padre Islands on Wednesday. A 32 person team was deployed on Mustang Island, where a total of 59 cubic yards of oily solids have been removed. Cleanup operations with two teams of 40 personnel each on Padre Island have recovered 14 cubic yards from Padre Island.

“Today a major milestone was achieved with the safe transit of the barge to a shore facility,” said Capt. Jason Smith, Sector/Air Station Corpus Christi deputy sector commander. “The progress achieved is a result of the hard work by Unified Command and many from the maritime community.”

For media inquiries, please call Unified Command's Joint Information Center at 866-271-6821.

For Coast Guard specific information, please call Public Affairs at 361-438-0176.

To report sightings of impacted wildlife, please call 361-500-9968.

For claims related to this incident, please call 888-850-8486.

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