

Aug. 26, 2010

## Source of oil leak found and halted; clean-up underway

CALGARY – Alberta Health Services has discovered and stopped a leak that resulted in about 200 litres of refined oil spilling into the Bow River from a Foothills Medical Centre steam turbine generator. AHS learned Wednesday that a mechanical failure of one of its Foothills Medical Centre steam generators was the source of the leak.

AHS immediately stopped the leak and has worked collaboratively with the City of Calgary to clean up the oil and ensure minimal impact to the environment. AHS has reported the incident to Alberta Environment.

“Our first priority was to ensure that no more oil is leaking into the Bow,” said Penny Rae, Senior Vice President, Capital Management. “We have been working to ensure that the oil is cleaned up and that we have additional safeguards in place to prevent similar issues in the future.”

AHS has been working with the City of Calgary to determine if this oil leak is the same spill reported Sunday, August 22. This joint review has indicated there is a high probability that the Sunday leak originated from the Foothills incident.

The potential health risk to humans and wildlife is considered low due to the relatively small volume of oil spilled. The oil has since dispersed and no further cleanup is required.

“Although it was a small amount, we recognize that no amount is acceptable and we take this very seriously and will take measures to try to ensure it cannot happen again,” said Rae.

The Foothills hospital site receives about 50 percent of its power supply from two steam turbine generators located on the site. One of the generators was shut down on August 14 for routine maintenance. The oil coolers on the generators use river water for cooling via a heat exchanger where the oil and water do not normally come into contact. A booster pump assists with water circulation. The water discharge is normally returned back to the Bow River through the storm water system. During the shutdown, a failure of the heat exchanger infrastructure caused the river water to mix with the oil and then to be discharged to the drain.

Workers on site Wednesday noticed that the oil level on the generator was low and investigated. The generator will remain off until it is repaired.

Operations at the Foothills site have not been affected and the facility remains on full power, drawing from the remaining generator as well as the Enmax power grid. The power plant at the site was built in 1968, and the generators are from the 1970s. They undergo regular maintenance and testing. The oil that leaked is a highly refined ultra pure oil specific to high temperature steam turbines.

Alberta Health Services is the provincial health authority responsible for planning and delivering health supports and services for more than 3.7 million adults and children living in Alberta. Its mission is to provide a patient-focused, quality health system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans.

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