

Press Release

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GASOLINE TANKER ROLLOVER AND PRODUCT RELEASE UPDATE

While the impact of last Saturday's gasoline rollover and subsequent release of 8200 gallons of gasoline will be felt in Norfolk for a long time ahead, we have a lot of positive news to share today.

The Friday night/today's rainfall didn't have the negative impact that local officials were planning for but helped in many ways.

Absorbent pads and booms are in place around the brook on Maple Avenue and have been placed lower downstream to collect any remaining gasoline on the water surface. Officials are inspecting them and will change them out as necessary.

The backfilling of the excavation holes on Route 44 have held throughout the rain storm and Route 44 continues to be fully open.

Maple Avenue will be reopened but may be closed intermittently this coming week as crews continue to work and monitor the progress of the clean up in that area.

The Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department has returned to normal operations and their mutual aid partners will not be needed for standby during this coming week.

Burning permits will be allowed once again following local and state protocols. Please contact the Selectmen's Office as normal.

Many of the detour signs, lighting equipment, foam trailers, and heavy equipment will be leaving soon. This is being done as a joint effort between our local DPW, fire department, and clean up crews.

Elementary and high school bus routes will return to normal on Monday. Clean up crews will make every attempt to keep Maple Ave open during the crucial hours between 6a.m. and 830 a.m. and again in the afternoon. However, as stated above, it may be necessary to close the street and officials at both schools will be contacted.

An informational town meeting is scheduled for Tuesday evening at 7 p.m. at the Hall of Flags at Botelle School. We are currently developing an online form for residents to fill out beforehand with any questions you may have. This will allow the meeting to be as efficient as possible and allow officials to gather the proper information beforehand for you. Of course, you will be allowed to ask questions at the meeting as well.

While this report shares the many positives associated with the clean up process, we would be remiss not to share some of the challenges that local and state officials still have as we move forward.

The interruption of the daily lives of some of our neighbors will continue along Route 44 and Maple Avenue for some time to come. Concern of their own well being and the health of their families is still paramount to many. All efforts to clean and monitor their properties are being done and will be done well into the future even as Winter approaches. Concerns about future property values and the long-term health and financial effects to local businesses is something that we all want answers to but can't get easily or quickly due to the nature of this incident.

It certainly is not due to any "downplaying by Norfolk officials" or "milking the job for as long as possible" by cleanup companies and State of CT agencies as described by several on our social media sites.

The Town of Norfolk and its citizens have been very resilient in the past and we look forward to the day when local news crews are returning to share the many fun stories of the "Icebox of Connecticut" and not the gasoline spill.

If Norfolk residents have any questions or concerns regarding any aspect of the cleanup operations, they are urged to call the Selectmen's Office at 860.542.5829.

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