



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Everett assures there is no immediate impact to water quality following helicopter incident in tributary to source water

Everett drinking water meets all state and federal standards for water quality

EVERETT, Wash. – Everett Water Utility (Everett) was notified on Tuesday, Sept. 12, of an incident involving a private helicopter in the upper reaches of the Spada Reservoir watershed, which resulted in the helicopter sinking in Copper Lake. All passengers are safe. A multi-agency team is coordinating response efforts to ensure water quality in Spada Reservoir is not impacted. Everett officials are monitoring water quality.

There are no immediate public health concerns, and Everett is evaluating its long-term course of action. Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) is responding to the incident; however, there is no spill at this time.

“Everett is committed to ensuring water quality,” said Jeff Marrs, Everett’s operations superintendent. “We will be monitoring to confirm that the water supply continues to meet all water quality standards.”

More details will be provided as they become available. To learn more about Everett’s water quality, visit everettwa.gov/waterquality.

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Background

Incident status as of 9/14/23

The pilot reported the helicopter held approximately 60 gallons of fuel on board. The amount and type of hydraulic fluid on board the helicopter is unknown. There has been no visible evidence of fuel or other fluids leaking. Staff from the various agencies continue to monitor the lake to ensure that no fluids have spilled.

Watershed details

Copper Lake is in a remote location, approximately five miles upstream of Everett's source water, Spada Reservoir, and is difficult to access. Spada Reservoir is five miles long and currently contains about 26 billion gallons of water. The intake for drinking water use is approximately 10 miles away from the crash site.

- *The distance between the helicopter incident and Everett's water treatment facilities greatly reduces any impact of fuel or other mechanical fluids impacting water quality.*

Water quality response

Everett was notified of the incident on Tuesday, Sept. 12. Everett immediately enacted its incident response plan and began coordinating response efforts with the United States Forest Service (USFS), the Washington State departments of Natural Resources (DNR), Ecology and Health (DOH), Snohomish County PUD (PUD) and Search and Rescue (SAR).

PUD and Ecology staff set oil spill booms and absorbent materials at the outlet of Williamson Creek (which receives water from Copper Lake) within five hours after the incident was reported to PUD. No visible sign of any spill was observed. Ecology staff plan to set oil spill booms and absorbent materials at the outlet to Copper Lake later today (9/14).

Everett water quality staff will continue to monitor the situation and work with its partner agencies to mitigate any impact to water quality from this incident. If an impact to drinking water quality is detected, the public will be notified immediately.

Incident details

Initial reports indicate that the helicopter was fully submerged and not visible from the surface. The privately owned helicopter is reported to have been carrying eight passengers and a pilot, all of whom survived the incident and evacuated safely. There were no injuries. The passengers and pilot were extricated by Snohomish County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue helicopter, SnoHawk10, on Saturday, Sept. 9. The Forest Service is encouraging people to avoid the area because of the ongoing investigation and will be considering management of the site into the future.