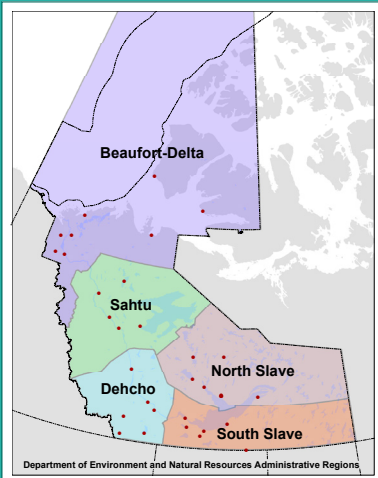


2020 Northwest Territories Spills Report



Produced by NWT Centre for Geomatics

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) has maintained a database of all hazardous material spills reported in the Northwest Territories (NWT) since 1971. This report briefly summarizes the data collected for spills reported in 2020.

- 212 spills were reported in 2020, an increase of 4 spills or 2% compared to 2019.
- 58% of the reported spills were less than 100 litres or 100 kilograms.
- 55% of the spills reported occurred in the North Slave region.
- Spills at mining operations accounted for 23% of reported spills in 2020.
- Spills at all government operations combined (municipal, territorial, and federal) accounted for 30% of reported spills.
- 32% of spills reported in 2020 involved fuel oil.
- The number of spills from home oil tanks is down by 77% since 2010, when ENR released the [Homeowners' Guide to Oil Tanks](#).

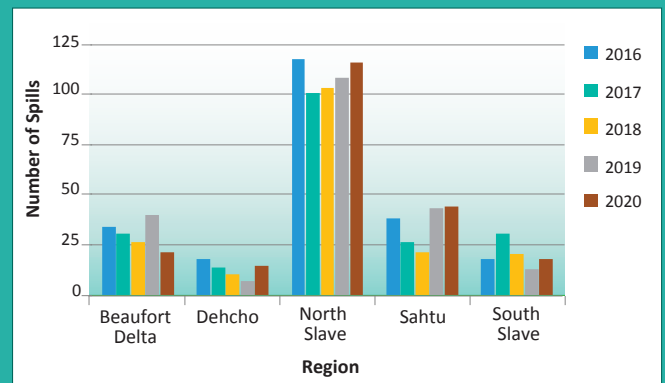
Location of Spills

In 2020, 212 spills were reported to the 24-Hour Spill Report Line in the NWT. Of those, 55% occurred in the North Slave region. Figure 1 shows the number of reported spills by region from 2016 to 2020.

The following is the percentages of reported spills by sector for 2020:

- Mining operations 23%
- Government operations (municipal, territorial, and federal) 30%
- Transportation companies 3%
- Private individuals 15%
- Petroleum operations 12%
- Others 4%
- Construction sites 8%
- Unknown parties 5%

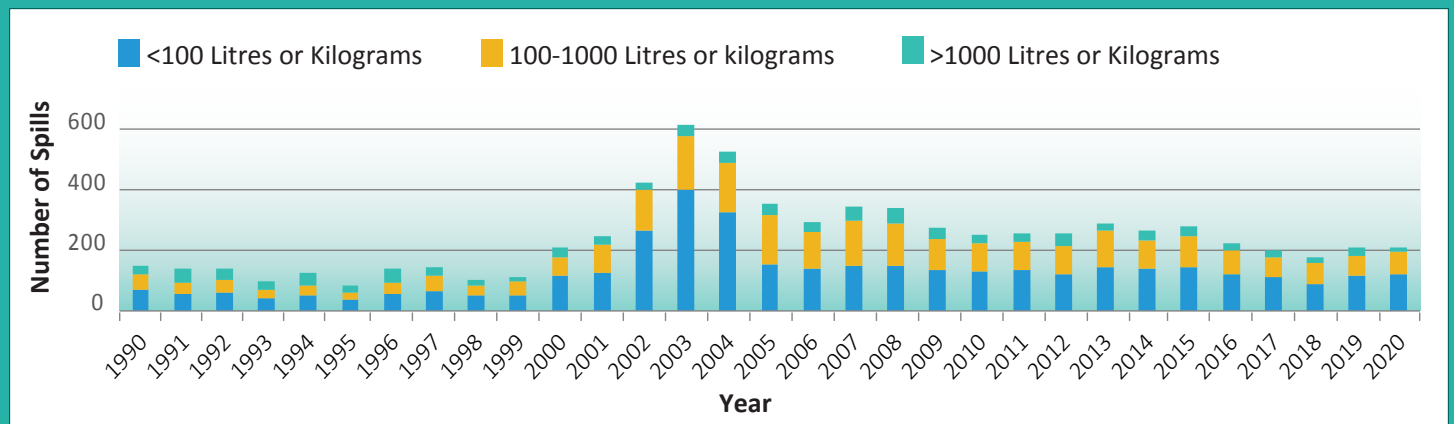
Figure 1 – Number of Spills by Region



Number of Spills Between 1990-2020

Figure 2 below shows the number of spills by volume since 1990. Of the spills reported in 2020, 58% were less than 100 litres.

Figure 2 – Number of Spills by Year



2020 Northwest Territories Spills Report



What and How Much Was Spilled?

Wastewater, which includes sewage, mine tailings and other types of contaminated water, accounted for 23% of reported spills. In 2020, there were 48 wastewater spills for a total volume of 2,232,733 litres. In 2019 there were 33 wastewater spills for a total volume of 306,811 litres.

Mixed load spills are spills where multiple products are spilled. These spills are uncommon as containers and systems usually only have one chemical in them when a spill occurs. The largest mixed load spill in March 2019 involved approximately 6,000,000 litres of water used to extinguish a fire at the Hay River Landfill. This was unusual and the total volume for mixed load spills in 2020 was 157 litres.

Fuel oil, which includes diesel and heating fuel, accounted for 32% of the 212 spills reported in 2020. This compares to 39% of 208 spills reported in 2019. The volume of fuel oil spilled decreased by 130,743 litres compared to 2019.

In 2019 there was a single event at a production facility resulting in an estimated 61,000,000 litres of natural gas escaping into the environment. In 2020 only 8,028 litres of natural gas were reported to be released into the environment.

Figure 3 shows the number of spills reported in 2020 in each product category and Table 1 summarizes the total volume of product spilled in each category.

Figure 3 – Number of Spills by Product Category

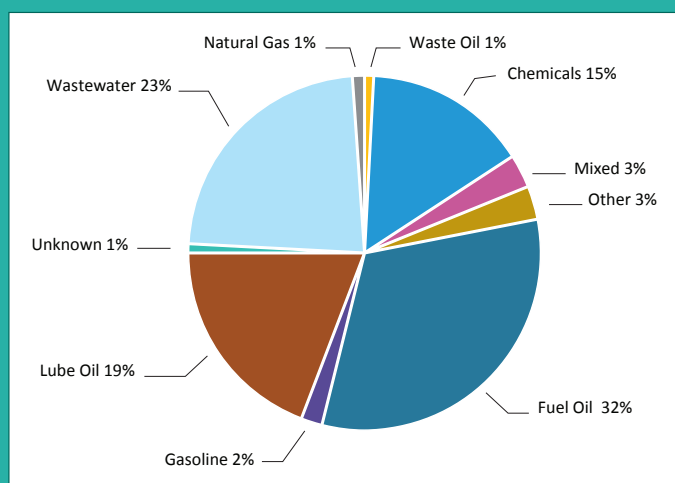


Table 1 – Volume (litres) of Product Spilled by Category

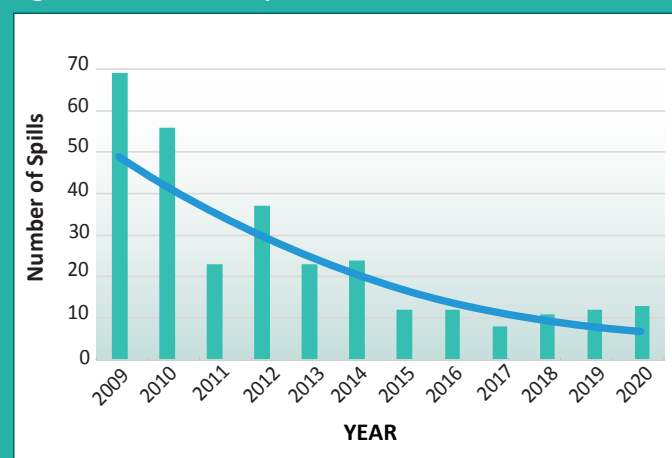
	2020	2019
Natural Gas	8028	61,000,000
Mixed Load	157	6,000,020
Wastewater	2,232,733	306,811
Fuel Oil	9,292	140,035
Lube Oil	7,365	13,451
Waste Oil	30	5,463
Chemicals	5,464	5,329
Other	5,016	3,847
Gasoline	201	0
Total	2,268,287	67,474,956

Residential Oil Tank Spills

Since the release of the [Homeowners' Guide to Oil Tanks](#) and the requirement for new oil tanks to be double walled in 2010, the number of spills reported from residential oil tanks (defined as tanks under 1,136 litres) has followed a continuous downward trend.

The [Homeowners' Guide to Oil Tanks](#) was developed to inform individual homeowners and commercial building and property owners of the potential environmental and financial liabilities associated with an oil spill. It also provides some simple, practical steps that can minimize the chances of an oil spill.

Figure 4 – Number of Spills from Residential Oil Tanks



For more information on spills contact:

Environmental Protection and Waste Management Division
 Department of Environment and Natural Resources
 Government of the Northwest Territories
 P.O. Box 1320
 Yellowknife, NT X1A 2L9
 Telephone: (867) 767-9236 Ext. 53176

To report a spill, call the
24-Hour Spill Report Line
(867) 920-8130