

Spills in the Northwest Territories 2009



Produced by: NWT Centre for Geomatics

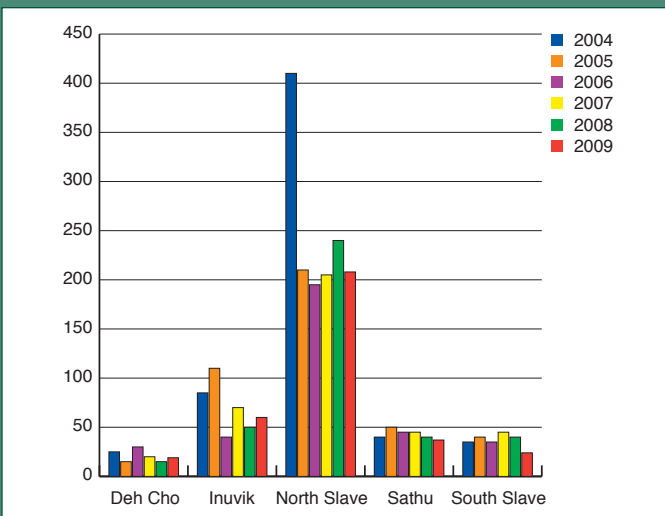
The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) maintains a database of hazardous material spills reported in the Northwest Territories (NWT) since 1971. This report briefly summarizes the data collected for spills reported in 2009.

- 353 spills were reported in 2009, 18 less than 2008.
- Over half (53%) of the reported spills were fewer than 100 litres.
- 59% of the spills reported were in the North Slave Region.
- Mining, petroleum and transportation spills decreased.
- Private individuals, government and other spills increased.
- Over one-third (36%) of the spills reported involved fuel oil.
- Residential oil tank spills continue to increase.
- 3.8 million litres of wastewater was spilled.

Where did the spills occur?

In 2009, 353 spills were reported to the 24-hour Spill Report Line. Over half (59%) of the reported spills occurred in the North Slave Region. The Inuvik Region followed with 17%, Sahtu with 11%, South Slave with 7% and Deh Cho with 6%. Mining (34%), petroleum (11%) and transportation (3%) saw a decrease from a year earlier. Private individuals (14%), government (22%) and others (10%) saw an increase from 2008. Unknown parties remained the same at 6%. Figure 1 below shows the number of reported spills by region between 2004 and 2009.

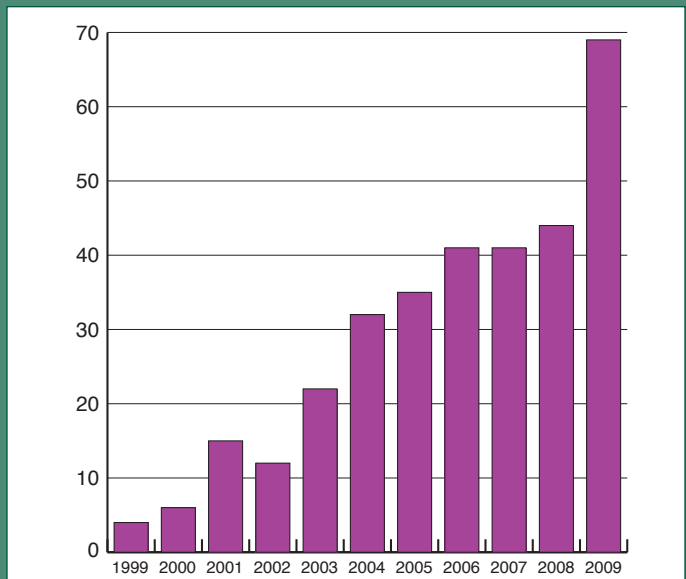
Figure 1 – Number of Reported Spills by Region



Residential oil tank spills

Since 1999, there has been an overall decrease in the number of spills reported in the NWT. Despite this trend, there continues to be a steady increase in the number of spills reported from residential-size steel oil tanks (1,135 litres) due to corrosion. ENR recently released the Homeowner's Guide to Oil Tanks to provide homeowners with some simple, practical steps that can minimize the chances of an oil spill. Visit www.enr.gov.nt.ca or call (867) 873-7654 for a free copy.

Figure 2 – Number of Residential Oil Tank Spills



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What was spilled?

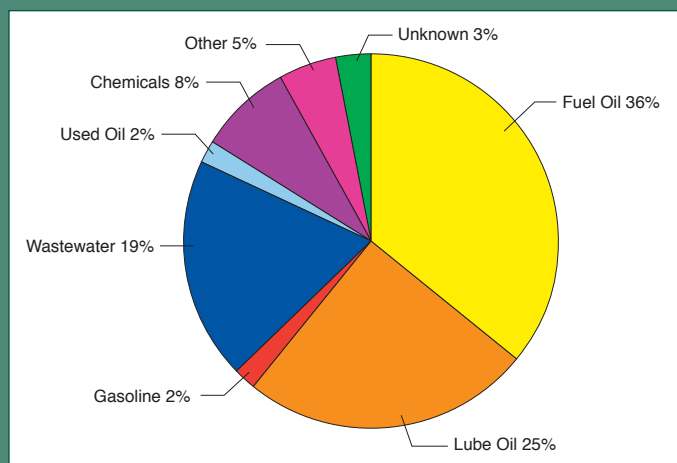
Fuel oil, which includes diesel and heating fuel, accounted for 36% of the spills reported. Up 3% from 2008, but almost half the volume spilled in 2008 (51,354 litres).

Lubricating oil spills decreased by 3% from the previous year. Most of these reports involved blown hydraulic lines or leaks from heavy equipment haul trucks and smaller industrial vehicles such as pick-ups leaking engine and transmission fluids.

Wastewater, including sewage, produced water (salty wastewater brought to the surface during oil and gas extraction), mine tailings, fine processed kimberlite from diamond mines and fresh water was responsible for 19% of reported spills. Although the number of wastewater spills increased by 2%, the volume reportedly spilled was substantially down from 14,878,319 in 2008.

Figure 3 shows the number of spills reported by product categories.

Figure 3 – Number of Spills by Product



For further information on spills, contact:

Environment Division
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Government of the Northwest Territories
P.O. Box 1320
Yellowknife NT X1A 2L9
Telephone: (867) 873-7654
Facsimile: (867) 873-0221
Web site:
<http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca>

How much was spilled?

All product volumes spilled were less than the five-year average with the exception of lubricating oils.

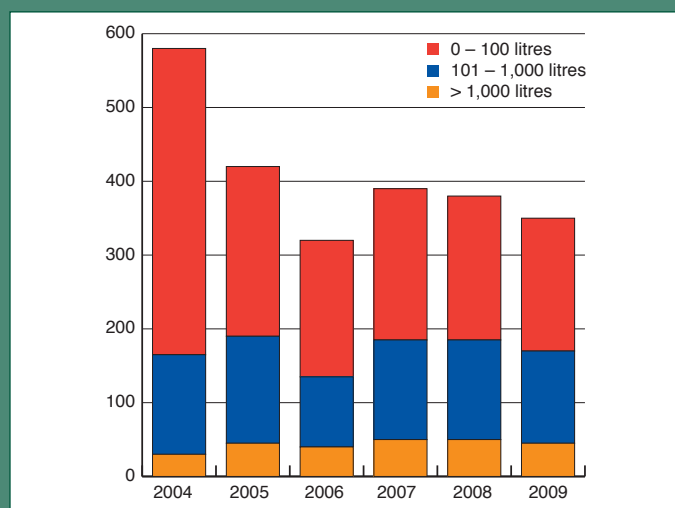
Table 1 – Volume Spilled (Litres)

	2009	5-year Average (2004-2008)
Wastewater	3,875,927	4,416,863
Lube Oil	35,069	30,980
Fuel Oil	25,693	75,902
Other (crude oil, drill mud)	23,562	34,239
Chemicals	10,917	20,638
Gasoline	155	578
Unknown	53	262
Used Oil	21	4,959
Natural Gas ^{1,2}	0 m ³	5,051 m ³

¹ Released to air and reported in cubic metres (m³). May contain hydrogen sulphide.

² "Natural Gas" is separated from "Others" to show volume.

Figure 4 – Number of Spills and Size



Over half (53%) of the spills reported were less than 100 litres.

To report a spill, call the
24-hour Spill Report Line
(867) 920-8130
(Collect calls accepted.)