Spills in the Northwest Territories 2017

Produced by: NWT Centre for Geomatics

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) has maintained 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 2017.

- 199 spills were reported in 2017, 23 less than 2016.
- 58% of the reported spills were small, less than 100 litres or kilograms.
- Half of the spills reported were in the North Slave region.
- Mining spills decreased 6% since 2016.
- Spills from government operations decreased by 7%.
- Overall spills decreased by 10%.
- 37% of spills involved fuel oil.
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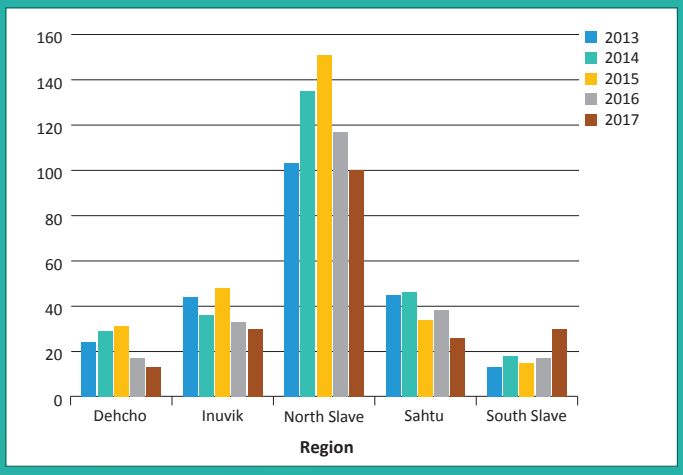
Where did the spills occur?

In 2017, 199 spills were reported to the 24-Hour Spill Report Line in the NWT. Half (50%) of the reported spills occurred in the North Slave region. Inuvik and South Slave reported the second most spills (15% each), followed by the Sahtu (13%) and Dehcho (7%) regions.

Spills from private individuals (11%) increased in 2017. Spills by the mining industry (26%), municipal, territorial and federal government (22%), others (13%), unknown parties (14%), transportation companies (6%) and petroleum companies (4%) remained relatively unchanged compared to 2016. Construction companies (4%) showed a decrease in spills in 2017. Figure 1 below shows the number of reported spills by region between 2013 and 2017.

Figure 1 – Number of Reported Spills by Region



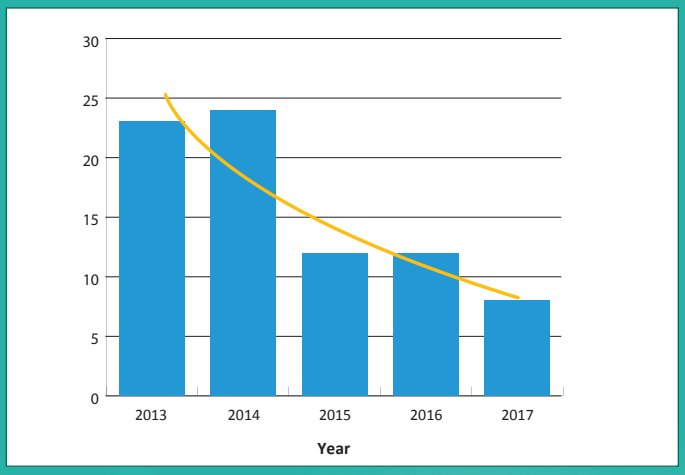
Residential oil tank spills

Since the release of the *Homeowners' Guide to Oil Tanks* in 2010, there continues to be an overall decreasing trend in the number of spills reported in the NWT from residential-size steel oil tanks (1,135 litres) due to corrosion or other reasons (see Figure 2).

The Homeowners' Guide is intended to:

- Act as a pollution prevention measure
- Alert home, building and industrial property owners about the potential environmental and financial liability of an oil spill
- Provide some simple, practical steps that can minimize the chances of an oil spill

Figure 2 – Number of Spills by Residential Oil Tanks



Government of Northwest Territories

"Preventing a spill is more desirable than even the best clean up!"

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What was spilled?

Fuel oil, which includes diesel and heating fuel, accounted for 39% of spills reported in 2017, marking an increase of 2% compared to 2016. However, the volume of fuel oil spilled decreased, with 72,997 fewer litres spilled in 2017 compared to 2016.

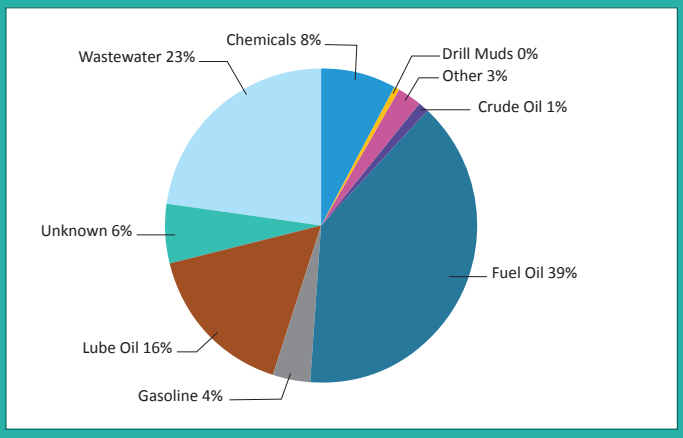
There was only one drill mud spill in 2017, marking a 89,990-litre decrease in spill volume compared to the previous year.

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, accounted for 23% of reported spills. In 2017, there were 10 more wastewater spills, but the volume reported decreased by 1,558,749 litres from 2016.

Other spilled material increased by 2% with three more spills reported in 2017 compared to 2016. The amount spilled increased by 89,479 kilograms. This increase is attributed to 100,000 kilograms of gravel that was found to have the potential to affect soil quality.

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

Figure 3 – Number of Spills by Product



How much was spilled?

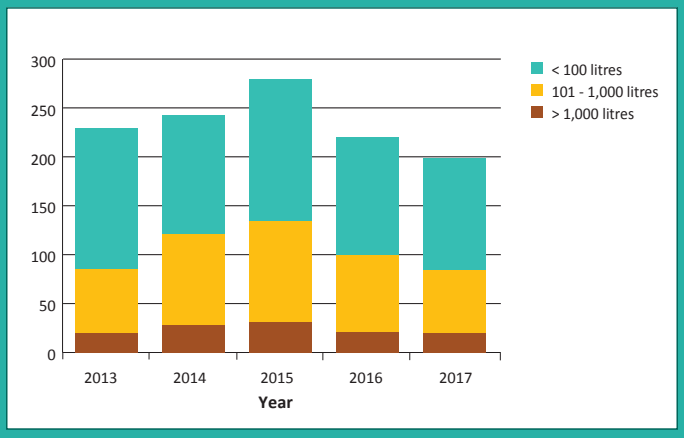
All spill volumes were below the five-year average.

Table 1 – Volume Spilled (Litres)

	2017	5-year Average (2012-2016)
Wastewater	1,544,723	2,117,400
Other	100,208	155,657
Fuel Oil	34,826	62,508
Lube Oil	4,375	10,006
Gasoline	1,105	6,713
Chemicals	950	10,916
Crude Oil	720	1,125
Unknown	120	191
Drill Mud	10	31,304

Figure 4 below shows the number of spills by volume over the last five years. In 2017, 58% of all spills were less than 100 litres.

Figure 4 – Number of Spills and Size



For more 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) 767-9236 Ext. 53176

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