

Statement from Southern Water – Thursday 18 August 2022

Details of the spill

At 13:57PM, our Galley Hill pumping station experienced a power outage. Usually, the backup power supply would provide resilience, however there was a second outage which caused complete failure. To prevent sewage pipes from backing up and flooding homes and businesses, wastewater was released via the short sea outfall.

There were two spills with a total duration of 152 minutes.

- 14:59pm to 16:37pm for 98 minutes
- 17:28 – 18:22 for 54 minutes

Volume discharge estimate based on flows pre-spill + between both spills = 3,306m³ (3,306,000 litres), based on an average of around 362.5 l/s FTT at Galley Hill.

Based on information issued by the Environment Agency and Southern Water, Rother District Council made the extremely difficult decision to close the beaches from Wednesday evening.

We have undertaken extensive beach walks and will continue to do so until at least Monday morning, very little debris has been found. Our modelling indicate that the discharge will clear by Saturday morning. We also have customer representatives on the beach to talk to visitors.

Pollution Risk Forecasts (PRFs)

PRFs are issued by the Environment Agency, who consider several factors in their estimation. A PRF is a forecast rather than an incident that has taken place, and between Monday and Wednesday at 14:59 there were no environmental events that affected the local beaches.

The area experienced 40mm of rain in a very short space of time, causing many outfalls to emit rainwater mixed with road and agricultural run-off.

Road run-off during high levels of rainfall

The long spell of dry weather has caused the ground to become extremely resistant to absorbing the high levels of rainfall we are experiencing. This road run-off is separate to the sewage spill that took place on Wednesday.

Southern Water actions

The transformer is undergoing repair and further complex investigations are ongoing which will take a number of days. During this period, we have mobile generators on standby to prevent this happening again. We are staffing the site and closely monitoring it 24 hours a day, until at least Thursday. We will continue the beach walks until Monday at the earliest – longer if needed.

Our emergency contact centre is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to report incidents and suspected pollutions: 0330 303 0368