Warning Issued for Summerland Beach

The Public Health Department has identified strong petroleum odors along with significant amounts of oil in the water and oil on the beach at Summerland Beach that may pose short-term health impacts. Our concern first and foremost is for the public’s health. The public is urged to limit exposure to odors and oily substances in the water or land.

Exposure to oil may occur by breathing oil vapors, getting the oil on your skin, or ingesting crude oil through contaminated sea water or seafood. Depending on the level of exposure, breathing crude oil vapors may cause coughing and throat irritation, headache and nausea, drowsiness, or dizziness. Skin and eye contact may cause irritation and redness. If you do get crude oil or tarballs on your skin, it is recommended that the area be washed with soap and water as soon as possible. Some people may be more sensitive to these the chemical components of crude oil compounds than others, and avoiding exposure is recommended.

Summerland Beach is located beneath the Santa Barbara County Lookout Park. It extends eastward towards Loon Point.

The cause of the oily substance at Summerland Beach is not yet clear. This is not believed to be directly related to the Refugio 901 incident. Further testing and analysis will continue over the next few weeks. In the interim, we strongly advise the public to be observant of conditions at the beach and avoid close proximity to the beach when there is a strong odor and/or large amounts of an oily substance present.

For questions or concerns related to air quality, please contact Mary Byrd with the Air Pollution Control District at 805-961-8833.

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