

Ink spills into Schuylkill River after valve fails at Reading plant

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Reading, PA - A faulty valve at a Reading manufacturing plant resulted in a large ink spill into the Schuylkill River Thursday morning, officials said.

Interstate Container Corp., which has a printing operation at its plant on Grace Street near Schlegel Park, notified the state Department of Environmental Protection about the spill shortly before 10 a.m., officials said.

The state notified Berks County and city emergency management officials, who responded to the spill.

James R. Conrad, the city emergency management coordinator, said the ink is non-toxic and water soluble and did not present a hazard to residents.

Conrad, who was at the site all day supervising and assisting with the cleanup, said he was unaware of any fish kill as a result of the spill but that the state sent workers downstream to check.

He said he did not know how much ink got into the river, but the company contained the spill and brought in a cleanup crew from Elk Environmental Service in Reading.

The spill happened on the west bank of the river near the Bingaman Street Bridge.

The company normally treats the ink before disposing of it, but the faulty valve caused untreated ink to enter the river from a culvert running from the site, officials said.

Emergency crews closed one of the southbound lanes on the bridge throughout the day while workers contained the spill and cleaned up the area. The cleanup operation continued into the night, but crews expected to finish the work by early today.

A person who answered the telephone Thursday night at Interstate Container declined comment. It was unclear how the spill affected operations at the company.

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