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Shell pays fine for 2006 spill

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Shell Oil Co. has agreed to pay more than \$300,000 in fees and penalties for spilling about 420 gallons of oil into Carquinez Strait at its Martinez refinery in January 2006.

No injuries were reported at the time and no dead wildlife were found, though the spill did foul the marina and some boats.

"It's something we wish didn't happen and we have taken all steps to make sure it doesn't happen again," said Shell spokesman Steve Leshner, who also apologized to boat owners and others affected by the spill.

The accident occurred as refinery personnel were taking partially refined oil from a tanker into the refinery.

The slow leak led to oil contaminating the nearby water because a pump that was supposed to keep the containment system clear failed and an alarm that was supposed to alert workers did not work either, Leshner said.

The settlement, announced by the Contra Costa County district attorney's office, was approved Wednesday.

Deputy district attorney Lon Wixson said Shell made several improvements to help prevent similar spills.

"They were concerned when it happened and did

some things on their own," Wixson said.

"They have a better system now."

The settlement calls for Shell to pay \$250,000 in civil penalties, \$50,000 to the city of Martinez for improvements to the city's marina or waterfront, and \$10,000 to pay for the response by state oil spill cleanup crews.

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