

# Tanker Lightering in Arctic Alaska

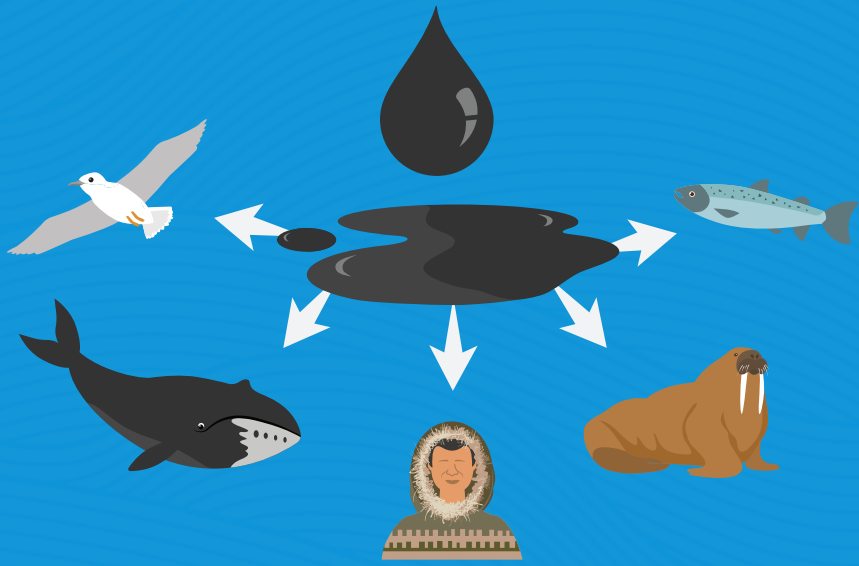


## What is lightering of fuel?

Alaska's remote Arctic coastal communities aren't on the road system, so when they need fuel—like diesel, home heating fuel, gasoline or jet fuel—it is delivered by ship. The coastal waters in western and Arctic Alaska are shallow and deep-draft boats can't deliver fuel to shore. Instead, fuel is transferred—on the ocean—from large, deep-draft tankers to smaller vessels. This process is known as “lightering” or “ship-to-ship transfer.” These tankers may spend weeks or months at a time off the coast of Alaska, transferring fuel onto barges for delivery to towns and villages.

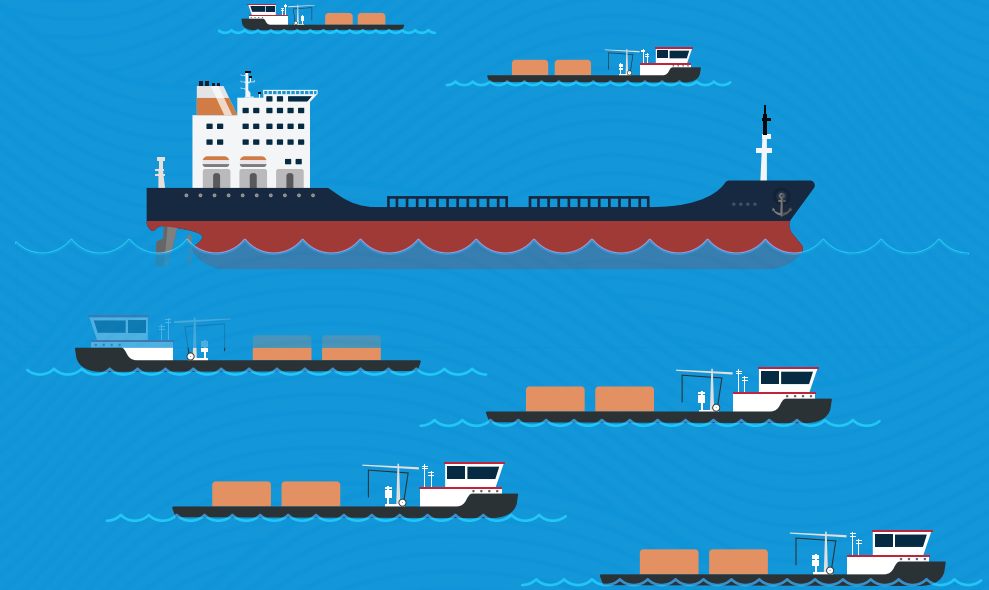


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**Fuel delivery is vital to remote communities. The companies that conduct at-sea fuel transfers in western and Arctic Alaska have excellent safety records. At the same time, the process of at-sea transfer of fuels presents an obvious risk—the oil could spill and contaminate the water:**

- ▶ In the Arctic, a major marine oil spill could have disastrous consequences for the region's abundant birds, fish and marine mammals.
- ▶ It could also have severe impacts on indigenous residents who rely on those animals as important sources of food and as a cornerstone of traditional cultural practices.



#### **Solutions to make at-sea transfers safer:**

- ▶ Identify best practices for the region
- ▶ Share information more broadly
- ▶ Ensure the suitability of on-scene response equipment
- ▶ Enhance planning
- ▶ Conduct focused exercises and drills