

Spain cleans up after mystery substance closes three beaches

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Workers in protective coats and masks shoveled sand tainted with an unidentified black substance into plastic sacks.

Spanish authorities on Wednesday began cleaning up three beaches in the eastern city of Valencia, closed to the public after an unidentified black substance washed up on the coast.

Workers in protective coats and masks shoveled tainted sand into plastic sacks.

"All avenues of investigation are still open regarding the origin of the oil spill," deputy prefect Raquel Ibanez told reporters.

The maritime authorities were checking the area to ensure there was no other pollution in the sea, she added.

"The entire area where hydrocarbons were reported is now pollution-free, according to all the inspections we conducted yesterday and this morning," said Ibanez.

Professionals were collecting and analyzing samples to assess the impact of the [pollution](#), she said.

Fire service drones were flying over the [coastline](#) to check the extent of the incident, Juan Carlos Caballero of Valencia's civil protection service wrote in a post at the local authority's website.

The main aim was to get things back to normal and reopen the [beaches](#), he added.

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