

Vineyard Wind Searching Nantucket Beaches For Blade Debris

By Chris Lisinski, State House News Service

Vineyard Wind will deploy teams to search Nantucket's southern beaches for any debris that has washed ashore after one of its offshore wind turbine blades was damaged.

The company announced Tuesday morning that it would embark on new efforts to clean up pieces of fiberglass that might land on Nantucket and, with the help of the U.S. Coast Guard, maintain a "safety zone" of 500 meters around the impacted turbine about 15 miles away from the islands.

Vineyard Wind still has not publicly identified what caused the problem, describing it only as a "blade damage incident that took place on Saturday, July 13, 2024." A spokesperson for the company said Monday that GE, which manufactured and installed the turbine blades, is investigating.

So far, the company said Tuesday, crews have recovered "three large fragments" from the damaged turbine blade. The Nantucket Current published photos Monday evening of larger turbine pieces floating in the water.

Vineyard Wind plans to continue monitoring the offshore area with "aerial overflights and vessel patrols" to monitor for any additional floating debris.

Any blade pieces that could land on Nantucket's southern beaches will likely be "pieces 1 square foot or less," Vineyard Wind said. The company urged any beachcombers not to move debris themselves and instead to contact Ian Campbell at (781) 983-8943 or icampbell@vineyardwind.com, or to report the

location online.

“The debris consists of non-toxic fiberglass fragments ranging in size from small pieces to larger sections, typically green or white in color,” Vineyard Wind said, adding, “Although the fiberglass fragments are not hazardous to people or the environment, Vineyard Wind recommends that only its employees or contractors collect and remove the debris.”

Search teams will inspect beaches in the morning and evening, with plans to visit Miacomet Beach, Nobadeer Beach, Madequecham Beach, Pebble Beach, Tom Nevers Beach, Low Beach and Sconset Beach “or other areas where debris may wash ashore.” The company will deploy two teams of four people each for “several days.”

Vineyard Wind, the joint venture between energy giant Avangrid and Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners, is the first major offshore wind project delivering power to the regional energy grid. So far, the 10 operational turbines are delivering 136 megawatts, and project officials plan to ramp that up to 62 turbines offering a combined 806 megawatts.