

Environmental Management Department

EMD NEWS & NOTES

Winter 2009 Edition

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In This Issue

- EMD Initiates Major Reorganization Plan (pg 1)
- Foodborne Disease Outbreak Investigation Training (pg 1)
- \$2.4 Million Penalty For Environmental Violations (pg 2)
- EMD Hosts Chinese Delegation (pg 2)
- Fats, Oils and Grease (Fog) (pg 3)
- Emergency Response Training For Environmental Health Professionals (pg 3)
- Asian-Owned Business Operators (pg 3)
- Effective Communication (pg 3)

CHANGING ECONOMIC TIMES

Our Winter edition of **News & Notes** is a collection of articles that speak to the changing economic times the world is experiencing. A reorganization within our Department that will demonstrate some cost savings to our fee payers; cross training opportunities so we can do more with fewer resources; a visit from a Chinese delegation that heard how Sacramento County regulates food safety so that they may try what works for us but on a scale that protects thirty-one million Chinese citizens; and articles about our training and enforcement activities as we work with the businesses we regulate to create better communication and a level playing field. Like all Sacramento County Departments, this is a busy time with many challenges!



Val F. Siebal, Director

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EMD INITIATES MAJOR REORGANIZATION PLAN

Effective January 1, 2009, EMD implemented a major reorganization that combines the Hazardous Materials and Water Protection Divisions into a single, newly named Environmental Compliance Division. The Division will consist of over 60 full-time positions and have responsibility for 17 regulatory programs. EMD will be able to improve program delivery and realize financial efficiencies by aligning closely related regulatory programs under a single Program Manager. For example, the Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) Underground Storage Tank (UST) Program which oversees the installation and operation of USTs is now tied to the Site Assessment and Mitigation team which is responsible for the cleanup of former UST sites. As a result, the complete "cradle to grave" oversight of USTs within Sacramento County is now under a single Program Manager. Another instance of expected enhancement opportunities is the close connection between the Stormwater Program (from the former Water Protection Division) and the CUPA Program (from the former Hazardous Materials Division). These regulatory areas share many similar concerns, common violations and enforcement issues.

According to EMD Director Val Siebal, "This reorganization will not only enhance customer service, but will allow EMD to improve the utilization of employees, inter-program communication, and realize a savings in overhead costs".

FOODBORNE DISEASE OUTBREAK INVESTIGATION TRAINING

Epi-Ready Team Training is a nationwide initiative intended to provide up-to-date foodborne disease outbreak investigation and surveillance training to public and private sector environmental health professionals as well as to other professionals that have collaborated in conducting foodborne disease outbreak investigations. This two-day training, sponsored by the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA), is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and is coming to Sacramento. Several Environmental Specialists will actively participate in this training which will include group exercises, Q&A sessions, and didactic lectures.

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FOODBORNE DISEASE OUTBREAK INVESTIGATION TRAINING,

Continued from page 1

Because this Epi-Ready Training Course is so well done and extremely reputable, the Course scheduled for Sacramento is now full and the demand throughout California is high. The Training Coordinators have worked hard to ensure that other professionals statewide can participate at no cost and have arranged for four remote video-conference locations—Los Angeles, San Diego, and Martinez, (CA) and Reno (NV).

GEORGIA-PACIFIC CHEMICALS AGREES TO PAY \$2.4M PENALTY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL VIOLATIONS

EMD reached a settlement with Georgia-Pacific (GP) Chemicals for violations of the State Health and Safety Code relating to the management and treatment of hazardous waste at the company's Elk Grove plant. Terms of the agreement include the payment of \$2.4M in penalties over a 2½ year period. In addition, GP Chemicals is required to complete several corrective actions to come into compliance with state law. According to EMD's Director Val Siebal, the amount of the penalty is believed to be the largest ever paid to a city or county in the nation as a result of an environmental administrative enforcement action.



GP Chemicals is a global chemical manufacturer that realizes over a half billion dollars in annual sales. The company produces a variety of wood adhesives and industrial resins at its local plant located on E. Stockton Boulevard. The production processes generate large amounts of distillate and caustic waste. EMD issued an Administrative Enforcement Order (AEO) to GP Chemicals in July 2008 stating that the company illegally treated these hazardous wastes without obtaining the required authorizations from the County or the State of California. In addition, EMD documented that GP Chemicals then disposed of the resulting waste to the sewer system. GP Chemicals also failed to properly characterize its waste and did not complete required daily inspections and five year assessments of their multiple hazardous waste tank systems. GP Chemicals has already taken several steps to correct some of the violations listed in the Administrative Enforcement Order (AEO) and is working with EMD and the State to remedy all other noncompliant practices.

EMD is certified by the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal-EPA) to provide regulatory oversight of hazardous material generators within Sacramento County. This authority includes conducting tri-annual inspections and, in severe cases of noncompliance, initiating administrative enforcement action with stipulated fines and penalties.

EMD HOSTS CHINESE DELEGATION

On November 25, 2008, EMD Director Val Siebal, Environmental Health (EHD) Division Chief John Rogers, EHD Program Manager Alicia Enriquez, and Environmental Specialist Jane Auyeung presented information about the food safety system in the United States, covering the roles of federal, state, and local governments, to a twenty-three member delegation from Chongqing. Chongqing is the largest of four municipalities in China with more than thirty-one million residents.

The delegates included seven high ranking officials that work directly for the municipality, directors representing seven districts and eight counties and a private consultant. Delegation members are responsible for programs that impact public health, including food safety and sanitation for food manufacturers, local food facilities, powdered milk, and food additives.

An educational packet consisting of a "How to Get a Green" instructional DVD and various handouts written in both English and Chinese detailing information on major violations was provided to each delegate. Members of the delegation also received information in Mandarin about Sacramento County's Retail Food Protection Program, specifically EMD's Green/Yellow/Red Placard food safety rating system for retail food facilities. The delegation was particularly interested in:

1. Food facility inspection procedures
2. Food code standards
3. Sacramento's Green/Yellow/Red Placard System
 - A. Increased compliance
 - B. Public and operator reaction
 - C. Inspections and re-inspections
 - D. Educational classes
 - E. Compliant response
4. Requirements to become an Environmental Health Specialist



The presentation offered the delegates many ideas for improvements and changes in their programs and they expressed deep appreciation for the information. Word of Sacramento County's placard system has not only spread throughout the United States, but is being recognized internationally as well!

FATS, OILS AND GREASE (FOG)



The Environmental Health Division (EHD) entered into an agreement with the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District (SRCSD) in May of 2008 for the distribution of their award winning Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) Information Kit. The Kit is an essential part of their FOG Control Program required by the

State Water Resources Control Board in an attempt to reduce the number of sanitary sewer overflows and main line blockages.

Sanitary sewer overflows often contain high levels of suspended solids, pathogenic organisms, toxic pollutants, nutrients, oil, and grease. These overflows threaten public health, pollute our rivers and streams, adversely affect aquatic life, and impair the recreational use and aesthetic enjoyment of our surface waters.

Environmental Health Division staff has distributed approximately 2,400 information kits to restaurant owners throughout the County. The collaboration between the Environmental Health Division and SRCSD maximizes County resources and creates an effective way to implement the FOG Control Program within the regulated community.

Business operators and residents can do their part to prevent sewage overflows and protect our environment by:

- Recycling used cooking oil.
- Placing all food waste into the trash and not down the drain.
- Wiping or scraping food debris from dishes prior to washing.
- Using mild temperature (120-140F) water when washing dishes.
- Preventing outdoor spills and overflows from entering the storm drain system.

For more information on the FOG Control Program, please contact (916) 875-FATS or visit www.stoptheclog.com.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE TRAINING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

EMD staff look forward to participating in Environmental Health Training in Emergency Response to be held in February 2009. Several other jurisdictions from Northern California will be represented at this two-day course which will be held in Sacramento. Several EMD staff members received this training in 2008 and will now participate as presenters. This training is unique in that most emergency response training is designed for law enforcement or incident response personnel. This training was developed by the Environmental Health staff at the Centers for Disease

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EMERGENCY RESPONSE TRAINING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, *(continued on from previous column)*

Control and Prevention (CDC) following Hurricane Katrina. The training has been offered with great success throughout the nation. The course developer and presenters from the CDC will participate and provide the training. The training, to be held at the County's McClellan Park facility, is being coordinated by Marcy Barnett, the California Department of Public Health's Emergency Preparedness Liaison, and will include a tour of the County's Emergency Operations Center.

ASIAN-OWNED BUSINESS OPERATORS

In July 2008, the Environmental Health Division (EHD) created a Working Group of Asian-owned Business Operators in order to share ideas and address concerns relating to cultural practices and traditional Asian cuisine which may often lead to violations of the California Health and Safety Code. Fifteen people representing nine facilities attended the first meeting, and as a result of the continuing meetings, several Environmental Specialists have been invited by business owners to tour their facilities and gain an in-depth understanding regarding typical preparation practices for Asian foods. This Working Group is part of an ongoing effort to foster better communication and improve food safety in the Asian business community.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

In late January 2009, EHD staff will have an opportunity to engage in a unique training course which has been designed for their needs. Environmental Specialists (ES) spend a great deal of time interacting with the business community, providing education on public health principles and enforcing state and local safety codes. A four-year science degree is necessary in order to become an ES or a Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS). It is very likely that a college graduate with a science degree may not have received training regarding working in a regulatory environment and how best to deliver a difficult message. At EMD, a vast amount of hands-on training is provided to new ES staff on how to offer excellent customer service, explain the public health logic behind the laws, and assist business operators with prioritizing items that need to be rectified in terms of risk. Business operators are faced with many stress factors, including the current state of the economy, and are often not prepared to hear that a major violation must be corrected. Correcting the violation may mean spending money to replace a water heater because of the lack of hot water or it may mean repairing a walk-in refrigerator so that it works properly.

Dr. David Dyjack, Ph.D., Dean of the School of Public Health, Loma Linda University, has created a training course that is tailored to meet the needs of public health and regulatory professionals. This four-hour training course was developed through grant funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and will be provided at no cost to EMD. We are pleased to have this opportunity and look forward to applying the tips and skills in our day-to-day experiences.

EMD ACTIVITY SUMMARY

EMD Program Element	July–Dec 2008
Food Placarding	Total: 6,980
Green (Pass)	6,432
Yellow (Conditional Pass)	428
Red (Closed)	120
Inspections	Total: 16,346
Food Protection	8,315
Farm Labor Camps	26
Public Swimming Pools/Spas	1,900
Solid Waste Facilities (landfills/transfer stations)	132
Liquid Waste	114
Medical Waste	52
Small Water Systems	12
Water & Monitoring Wells	476
Underground Storage Tank (UST) Facilities	288
UST Installations, Upgrade/Repair & Removal	138
Businesses/Facilities Generating Hazardous Waste	580
Businesses/Facilities Storing Hazardous Materials	941
Stormwater	1,769
Waste Tire	164
Tobacco Retailers	323
Commercial Recycling	1,116

EMD Program Element	July–Dec 2008
Investigations	Total: 531
Food Borne Illness Complaint	79
Incident Response	292
Stormwater Complaint	146
Waste Tire	0
Childhood Lead	14
Workshop Attendance	Total: 738
Food Safety Education (Food School)	499
Hazardous Materials Business Plan	39
How To Get A Green Placard	200
Stormwater Compliance Workshop (General)	0
Permits, Plans & Reviews	Total: 12,670
Hazardous Materials Business Plans	2,472
Monitoring Wells	186
Food Facilities	579
Public Swimming Pools/Spas	250
UST Installations, Upgrades/Repairs & Removals	109
Land Use	10
Cross Connection Permits (Blue Tags)	9,064
Information Management	Total: 75,965
Documents Imaged	75,854
Public Record Reviews	111

County of Sacramento Board of Supervisors

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Countywide Services Agency

Jim Hunt, Acting Administrator

Ann Edwards-Buckley, Deputy Administrator

Val Siebal, EMD Director

HELLOS, GOODBYES & SERVICE RECOGNITION

for October – December 2008

New Hires

Trena Burt
Cody Lee
Tuan Nguyen

Promotions

Daniel Abellon
Rebecca Knoche
Mike Simpson

Service Awards

Susan Genovese—10 years
Amanda Hakim—10 years
Terry Kochiamba—15 years
Chris Pace—15 years

Retirements

Steve Kalvelage

SPECIAL THANKS...

EMD would like to extend special thanks and recognition to BEREC, the Business Environmental Resource Center, for its skill and assistance in designing and developing the format for **EMD NEWS & NOTES**.

BEREC is part of Sacramento County's Department of Economic Development & Intergovernmental Affairs. BEREC partners with EMD, and other local governmental entities, to enhance County service delivery.

EMD NEWS & NOTES is EMD's periodic newsletter providing information on EMD activities and services that enhance our community.

EMD is a Department within the Countywide Services Agency of Sacramento County which serves the businesses and residents of the County. EMD is committed to protecting public health and the environment by ensuring compliance with environmental regulations.

For more information about EMD's News & Notes newsletter, or to offer your feedback, please contact Linda Jimenez by email at jimenezl@sacounty.net