

PERCHLORATE FACT SHEET

The California Environmental Protection Agency has prepared this fact sheet to provide general information about the role of the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), and the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) in managing perchlorate, a drinking water contaminant.

OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH HAZARD ASSESSMENT

OEHHA is responsible under law for developing a Public Health Goal (PHG) for perchlorate and other drinking water contaminants. A PHG is the level of a contaminant in drinking water that would not be expected to pose a significant acute or long-term human health risk. PHGs are based strictly on public health criteria and are not regulatory requirements. Under law, the Department of Health Services is required to set the regulatory Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for a contaminant as close to the corresponding PHG as is economically and technically feasible.

STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD

The Water Boards are the principal state agencies with primary responsibility for the coordination and control of water quality in the state. Water Code Section 13304 authorizes the Water Boards to require cleanup of all wastes discharged and restoration of affected water. Perchlorate sites are a high priority for the Water Boards because of the impact that perchlorate has had on water supply wells. Water Boards have identified approximately 30 site-specific sources of perchlorate and responded by initiating investigations and cleanup at several sites in the Central Valley, Los Angeles, and Santa Ana Regional Board areas. Water Boards have been involved in perchlorate cleanups since 1997 at Aerojet near Sacramento. SWRCB/RWQCBs and DTSC are working jointly to share data and streamline regulatory oversight of a statewide problem.

DEPARTMENT OF TOXIC SUBSTANCES CONTROL

State and federal law vest DTSC with the authority to require the cleanup of any site in California where a toxic substance has been released, including perchlorate.

Corrective Action Orders at Hazardous Waste Management Facilities. Under Chapter 6.5 of the Health and Safety Code, DTSC oversees cleanup activities at hazardous waste generator facilities, hazardous waste management facilities, and illegal operations in order to protect human health and the environment. Any facility that generates hazardous waste or has a permit or a grant of authorization to store, treat, or dispose of hazardous waste is required to perform corrective action (cleanup) where hazardous wastes or constituents have been released into the soil, ground water, surface water, or air. Cleanup at these facilities involves investigating the extent of contamination, assessing the risks from exposure, and developing and implementing remediation plans with public involvement. There are currently seven known sites involving perchlorate contamination.

Site Remediation. Under Chapter 6.8 of the Health and Safety Code, DTSC conducts and oversees the remediation of properties throughout the State—including former

Perchlorate Fact Sheet
Page 2

industrial plants, military bases, small businesses, and landfills—that are contaminated with some level of toxic substances in order to protect public health and the environment. DTSC’s site evaluation and cleanup process includes the discovery, investigation, and cleanup of properties where uncontrolled releases of hazardous substances have occurred. Work is currently underway on hundreds of contaminated properties throughout the State, approximately 15 of which are known to involve perchlorate.

For More Information: Please visit the following websites for additional information on perchlorate and its effects.

www.dtsc.ca.gov

www.oehha.ca.gov

www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/ddwem/chemicals/perchl/actionlevel.htm

www.epa.gov/safewater/ccl/perchlor/perchlo.html