



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
**Department of Toxic Substances Control**

## News Release

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**Barbara A. Lee, Director**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **DTSC Enforcement Action Results in \$1.4 Million in Penalties for Hazardous Waste Operator**

**SACRAMENTO** – A Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) enforcement action against a hazardous waste facility in Rancho Cordova has resulted in \$1.4 million in penalties against the facility’s operator for violations of California’s hazardous waste laws.

Among the violations was a fire at the facility in 2017, caused when employees intentionally ignited hazardous waste that contained naphthalene, which is made from crude oil or coal tar. There were also two earlier fires and an explosion at the facility.

“We take these violations very seriously, and this settlement should serve as a message to other potential violators that we will hold those who break the state’s hazardous waste laws accountable,” said DTSC Director Barbara A. Lee. “Compliance with hazardous waste laws is critical for the safety of the public and the environment.”

The settlement of DTSC’s enforcement action, approved by the Sacramento County Superior Court on Oct. 19, is with General Environmental Management of Rancho Cordova LLC; Stericycle Environmental Solutions Inc.; and Stericycle Inc. (collectively “GEM/Stericycle”) for numerous violations related to the mismanagement of hazardous waste.

The facility handles a wide variety of hazardous waste. A primary part of the business at the facility involves bulking and consolidating hazardous waste.

In addition to the fires and explosion, violations included:

- Failure to properly manage and/or store incompatible hazardous wastes
- Failure to properly bulk and consolidate hazardous waste
- Failure to comply with conditions of the hazardous waste facilities permit issued by DTSC
- Failure to train facility staff who are responsible for safely managing hazardous waste
- Failure to follow the DTSC-approved Emergency Action and Contingency Plan

A majority of the \$1,412,400 penalty will go into DTSC’s Orphan Site fund and will be used to help fund hazardous waste cleanup efforts. The settlement stemmed from a civil complaint filed on behalf of DTSC by the California Attorney General’s Office.

In addition to the penalty, the settlement required GEM/Stericycle to take action to prevent future violations, including enhanced training and documentation, and hiring an independent auditor to conduct hazardous waste audits. The auditor will prepare and submit reports to DTSC that

evaluate GEM/Stericycle's ongoing compliance with hazardous waste laws. In addition, GEM/Stericycle has agreed not to handle reactive waste at the facility. Reactive waste is ignitable and can undergo violent reactions.

GEM/Stericycle has also agreed that the past violations are deemed proven for the purpose of a future DTSC enforcement or permitting action. GEM also does business as PSC Environmental Services of Rancho Cordova LLC.

View documents related to this case [here](#).

FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES: Contact the Department of Toxic Substances Control by phone at (800) 728-6942 or visit [www.dtsc.ca.gov](http://www.dtsc.ca.gov). To report illegal handling, discharge, or disposal of hazardous waste, call the Waste Alert Hotline at (800) 698-6942.

***The Mission of DTSC is to protect California's people and environment from harmful effects of toxic substances by restoring contaminated properties, enforcing hazardous waste law, reducing hazardous waste generation, and encouraging the manufacture of chemically safer products.***