



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Department of Toxic Substances Control

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DTSC Orders Battery Recycler Quemetco to Expand Soil Sampling, Clean Up Areas Near City of Industry Facility

SACRAMENTO – The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) today ordered Quemetco Inc. to conduct additional lead sampling in residential areas around its battery recycling facility in the City of Industry. DTSC has also ordered the facility to remove contaminated soil in the industrial areas immediately outside the facility where sampling found high levels of lead.

The new sampling order follows previous lead sampling conducted by Quemetco in 2016 and 2017. That sampling was limited to a quarter-mile radius around the Quemetco facility, and the company was able to obtain access to only a third of the residential and industrial/commercial properties in that area.

Additional sampling is needed to determine whether lead emissions from Quemetco's past operations were deposited in the surrounding community. New DTSC modeling and analysis show that it is possible the facility's historical operations may have deposited lead up to 1.6 miles away from the facility.

As a result, DTSC is requiring Quemetco to provide the Department with a plan to conduct more thorough sampling in the quarter-mile area around the facility and additional sampling outside the quarter mile area – up to 1.6 miles outside of the facility – to determine whether its operations may have deposited lead into a wider area. The plan is subject to DTSC review and approval.

If Quemetco's operations deposited lead in the area, much of it likely pre-dates 2008, which is when Quemetco, under a requirement from the South Coast Air Quality Management District, installed an advanced air pollution control system that greatly reduced emissions of lead and other toxic compounds.

Earlier sampling results in the industrial and commercial areas immediately outside the Quemetco facility found lead levels in soil exceeding 1,000 parts per million, the level considered hazardous waste. On Nov. 16, DTSC ordered Quemetco to clean up those sites, which are primarily along public roads and rights-of-way adjacent to the facility. A draft work plan for the cleanup is due to DTSC this month.

Residential properties in the quarter-mile area around the facility had lead levels ranging from less than 80 parts per million to 348 parts per million. The sampling methodology used a health-protective statistical analysis of all sampling results at a property. While these levels do not require immediate cleanup, any property above 80 parts per million is recommended for further evaluation and potential cleanup. DTSC provided property owners with the sampling results.

If the new sampling finds contamination that presents an immediate threat to people or the environment, DTSC will take action to ensure it is cleaned up. DTSC makes these determinations on a case-by-case basis, depending on site-specific circumstances.

In October, the Attorney General's Office filed a civil complaint against Quemetco on the Department's behalf for 29 alleged violations of the California Hazardous Waste Control Law. The alleged violations include failure to maintain an underground leak-detection system in a building that held lead and failure to maintain a required groundwater monitoring system. Quemetco must file a response in January 2019.

Quemetco has operated its lead acid battery recycling facility in the City of Industry location since 1959. The company has an application pending with DTSC to renew its hazardous waste permit.

DTSC is hosting a community meeting to provide an update on Quemetco's soil sampling and cleanup. The meeting will be held on Dec. 18, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., at Hacienda Heights Community Center located at 1234 Valencia Ave., Hacienda Heights.

Click [here](#) to view Quemetco's RFI Report

Click [here](#) to view DTSC's Review of & Determination Regarding RCRA Facility Investigation

Click [here](#) to view the December 17, 2018, Enforcement Orders for Corrective

Action for the expanded investigation area

Click [here](#) to view the November 16, 2018 Enforcement Orders for Corrective Action

Click [here](#) to view the October 31, 2018 Civil Complaint

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FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES: Contact the Department of Toxic Substances Control by phone at (800) 728-6942 or visit 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.