



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
NEWS RELEASE

Department of Toxic Substances Control

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For Immediate Release

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Sting Operation Nets Eight Who Illegally Transported Hazardous Waste

Santa Ana --- Charges have been filed by the Orange County District Attorney's Office against eight individuals for crimes related to the illegal transportation of hazardous waste during a sting operation conducted in Santa Ana.

Criminal Investigators with the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) contacted individuals/companies who advertised they could dispose of chemicals and other waste. After verifying that these individuals/companies did not possess valid registrations to transport hazardous waste, the DTSC investigators set up appointments with these individuals to pick up and dispose of over 1000 pounds of flammable hazardous waste. The sting was conducted over a two day period in September 2003.

As a result of the sting operation, eight individuals have been charged with felony and misdemeanor violations of the Hazardous Waste Control Laws. Those charged with felony violations are:

- Nicholas Shepis, 66, of Fountain Valley, with Alpha Environmental, Case #04CF0792
- Bruce Ball, 54, of Crestline, with Alpha Environmental, Case #04CF0972
- David Reynolds, 41, of Santa Ana, with Alpha Environmental, Case #04CF0972
- Daniel Degroodt, 42, of Westminster, Case #04CF0905
- Larry Bateman, 64, of Placentia, Case #04CF0903
- Eligio Carino, 37, of Anaheim, Case #04CF0903
- Gustavo Castilla, 43, of Costa Mesa, Case #04CF0904

The individual charged with the misdemeanor violation is:

- Luis Diaz, 39, of Anaheim, Case #04M02691

Most of the individuals transported the waste without appropriately securing the load, using placards, having appropriate insurance to cover the transportation of hazardous waste, using a California Uniform Hazardous Waste manifest, appropriately labeling the hazardous waste, closing the lids to the hazardous waste containers, having a hazardous materials endorsement, and/or having an emergency

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response guide for the hazardous waste. One individual used an unregistered vehicle to transport the hazardous waste.

Nicholas Shepis, with Alpha Environmental Disposal in Fountain Valley, was previously convicted of illegally transporting hazardous waste without a registration. In July of 2003, a transporter registration he obtained was revoked. During the sting operation in September 2003, his driver, David Reynolds, is alleged to have illegally used a third party's valid registration number on a hazardous waste manifest in order to avoid detection. Shepis, Reynolds, and Bruce Ball were also charged with conspiring to transport hazardous waste without a registration number and recklessly mixing hazardous waste without first testing to ensure that it was safe to do so. A pretrial is scheduled for Shepis, Reynolds, and Ball on May 20, 2004, in Orange County Central Court.

DTSC regulates the generation, storage, transportation, and disposal of hazardous waste within the State of California. DTSC ensures compliance with the Hazardous Waste Control Laws through regulations, inspections, and criminal investigations.

Business generated hazardous waste must generally be transported by a registered hazardous waste transporter and a California Uniform Hazardous Waste manifest must be used. This helps track shipments and ensures that hazardous waste is properly disposed of. Through the proper handling of hazardous waste, threats to public health and the degradation of the environment can be avoided.

This sting operation was a cooperative effort between DTSC's Criminal Investigations Branch, the Orange County District Attorney's office, the Fullerton Police Department, the California Highway Patrol, the California Department of Fish and Game, and the Orange County Health Care Agency.

To find out if a hazardous waste transporter is registered or to find additional information about DTSC, please visit DTSC's web site at www.dtsc.ca.gov. For complaints involving the illegal dumping, storage, or transportation of hazardous waste, please call 1-800-69-TOXIC.

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The Department of Toxic Substances Control's mission is to restore, protect, and enhance the environment and ensure public health, environmental quality and economic vitality by regulating hazardous waste, conducting and overseeing cleanups, and developing and promoting pollution prevention.