



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY NEWS RELEASE

Department of Toxic Substances Control

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Third Transporter Sting Operation in 2005 Nets Eight

Ventura – The third undercover operation this year designed to catch illegal haulers who are willing to transport hazardous waste without benefit of insurance, license or authorizations from the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) led to the prosecution of eight haulers for crimes related to the illegal transportation of hazardous waste in a joint effort with Ventura County officials.

The suspects were charged with a variety of crimes, which included transporting hazardous waste without valid registration, without insurance, and without proper shipping documents. Such violations of the law are punishable with fines and up to one year in jail. Additionally, three suspects had their vehicles impounded.

“We will continue to work with local enforcement and environmental regulators to ensure safe transportation of hazardous waste transported on California roads and highways as part of our efforts to protect the public and the environment from those who pose a danger to all Californians. This effort is consistent with the Governor Schwarzenegger’s plans to strongly pursue and enforce laws that protect public health and our environmental resources,” said DTSC Director Timothy Swickard.

Charges were filed by the Ventura County District Attorney’s Office against eight individuals. This sting operation was a cooperative effort between DTSC’s Criminal Investigations Branch, Ventura County District Attorney’s Office, Ventura City Police Department, Ventura County Environmental Health Division-Hazardous Materials/CUPA Program and the Ventura County Fire Department.

This is the third undercover operation conducted this year. Previous stings were held in Orange and Alameda counties. The undercover operation has proven to be effective at catching illegal haulers and taking them off the road. Throughout the State, these stings have specifically targeted illegal haulers of hazardous waste.

In Ventura County, Criminal Investigators with the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) contacted individuals/companies who were identified by the health department as illegal haulers of hazardous waste or who advertised their ability to do hauling jobs. 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 850 pounds of flammable hazardous waste.

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Most of the individuals transported the waste without appropriately securing the load, having appropriate insurance to cover the transportation of hazardous waste, using a California Uniform Hazardous Waste manifest, appropriately labeling the hazardous waste, having a hazardous materials endorsement, and/or having an emergency response guide for the hazardous waste. Three individuals did not possess valid driver's licenses. One individual was found to have open containers of alcohol in his vehicle.

In addition, one individual brought to the sting site a flammable liquid which was stored in a food container that was not appropriate for the storage of chemicals. The flammable liquid was leaking from the food container to the back of the suspect's vehicle and onto the roadway.

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 the proper disposal of hazardous waste. Through the proper handling of hazardous waste, threats to public health and the degradation of the environment can be avoided.

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.