



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

10-07

**Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor**

**Maureen Gorsen, Director**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TOXIC SUBSTANCES CONTROL  
TAKES ENFORCEMENT ACTION AGAINST  
ROMIC ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGIES OF EAST PALO ALTO**  
*Order Shuts Down Hazardous Waste Treatment Operations*

**SACRAMENTO, Calif.** – The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) today announced it has issued an enforcement order to Romic Environmental Technologies Corp. of East Palo Alto. The order charges Romic with such state violations as unsafe operations that resulted in a June 2006 release and reckless disregard for the risk of serious injury to an employee in March 2006. The order further alleges that Romic violated a civil judgment brought by DTSC and filed in April 2005.

The order prohibits Romic from handling, treating and storing hazardous bulk liquid waste in containers greater than 85 gallons. In addition, the company is prohibited from storing bulk liquid waste in tanks. Romic has agreed to end these activities.

The order was issued as part of DTSC's ongoing investigations of Romic and includes violations where two employees were seriously burned in May 2004 and March 2006, in addition to a 4,000 gallon chemical release of solvents at the facility in June 2006.

“Our department has found that specific areas of Romic's operations pose an unacceptable risk to public health and the environment,” said DTSC Director Maureen Gorsen. “Therefore, we are prohibiting Romic from handling, treating and storing hazardous bulk liquid waste.”

Closure of Romic's treatment operations have been sought by the East Palo Alto community for many years. DTSC hopes that Romic's cooperative and prompt compliance with this order will allow for expedited remediation and redevelopment of the 10 acre bay front property.

Prior to this action, an order was issued to Romic on June 15, 2006 that prohibited fuel blending of any hazardous waste received from off-site in containers or tanker trucks at Romic's East Palo Alto facility until DTSC completed its investigation of a chemical release earlier that month, on June 5. In this instance, 4,000 gallons of used mixed solvent began reacting inside the tanker truck and resulted in the release of a fine mist that settled over an empty lot owned by Romic, portions of Bay Road, and adjacent parcels that included a PG&E substation and wetlands area south of Cooley Landing. The

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tanker truck's contents contained volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds including hydroxylamine, monoethanolamine, toluene, and acetonitrile. In addition, DTSC settled an enforcement case in April 2005 against Romic for \$849,500 for hazardous waste violations occurring at the facility from 1999 to 2004, one the largest settlements DTSC has reached with a Bay Area company.

DTSC is continuing its investigation into the June 2006 solvent release. DTSC inspectors are also investigating an incident that occurred in Bakersfield in January 2007 where leaking fuel from a truck containing drums being shipped from Romic subsequently shut down a highway exit ramp for several hours.

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FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES: Contact the Department of Toxic Substances Control phone: (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.

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TOXIC SUBSTANCES CONTROL  
ENFORCEMENT ORDER ISSUED TO  
ROMIC ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGIES  
EAST PALO ALTO  
MAY 30, 2007**

**FACT SHEET**

The order cites Romic Environmental Technologies for violations of state hazardous waste laws and details multiple violations of the statutes, including:

- Disregarding the risk of fire explosion or injury by failing to ensure that management of fuel blended hydroxylamine waste streams would not produce the accidental chemical release that occurred on June 5, 2006 when Romic placed incompatible wastes/materials in the same container and tank. In addition, the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) cited Romic for conducting treatment of the wastes in an unauthorized tanker trailer where approximately 3,400 gallons of hydroxylamine acetonitrile waste was added to 1,000 gallons of biosludge. The company was also cited for failing to conduct compatibility testing before the hazardous waste was combined in the tank.
- Failing to maintain or operate its facility to minimize the possibility of any unplanned sudden releases of hazardous waste that could threaten human health, in that Romic failed to drain the Thin Film Unit prior to starting maintenance of the unit, resulting in severe burns to an employee on May 20, 2004.
- Disregarding the risk of fire, explosion or serious injury, by failing to comply with hazardous waste requirements that ensure that a hazardous waste storage tank had been completely emptied, purge and isolated, and that no flammable vapors were present prior to a Romic employee performing cutting operations on March 2, 2006. As a result, an employee was severely burned when vapors inside the tank ignited. In addition, Romic was cited in connection with the company's Emergency Coordinator failing to adequately and appropriately arrange for care of the injured employee when the Emergency Coordinator did not call 911, but instead drove the employee to the hospital.
- Failing to notify DTSC of the burn incidents within the appropriate timeframes.
- Failing to notify DTSC of planned changes that would affect hazardous waste permitted units and failing to apply for and receive permit modifications approval prior to changes in tanks 103 and 104.
- Failing to receive a permit modification from DTSC prior to the installation of knife valves above the sight glass on Thin Film Evaporators #1, #2, and #3.
- Exceeding the maximum capacity for storing hazardous waste in certain tanks.
- Storing hazardous waste in excess of time limits in sampling area.
- Improperly storing various hazardous waste types in sampling area.
- Failing to conduct equipment inspections of vehicles used for transferring hazardous waste within to various areas within the facility.
- Failing to properly manage a leaking container.
- Storing in unauthorized containers in unauthorized areas.
- Failing to keep accurate operating records.

## **ENFORCEMENT ORDER ISSUED TO ROMIC ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGIES (continued)**

- Failing to note in the inspection log the presence of approximately 6 inches liquid in containment sumps in the truck wash area.
- Failing to record pertinent information in the inspection logs (i.e., illegible labels, no labels, etc.).
- Failing to provide specified courses in the company's training plan.
- Failing to provide annual review of training.
- Failing to prepare and maintain a written training description of continuous training needed by staff handling hazardous waste.

Under the enforcement order, Romic is required to:

- Stop receipt of all hazardous waste in bulk within 30 days, including tankers, tanker trailers, intermediate bulk containers, totes, supersacks, bins, tri-walls, and containers in excess of 85 gallons.
- Stop all hazardous waste treatment activities within 45 days.
- Immediately stop handling all hazardous waste, except storing drums with a capacity of 85 gallons or less.
- Notify all of its customers in writing of the significantly reduced operating conditions that are imposed by the order within five days.
- Immediately conduct daily inspections of hazardous waste containers.
- Empty and dispose of all hazardous waste from bulk units within 60 days.
- Initiate closure of all hazardous waste management units within 60 days, except for storage areas for containing 85-gallon drums or smaller. Closure of these units must be completed within six months, and Romic must submit a closure report and certification documents to DTSC within eight months.
- With 30 days of completing closure activities, Romic must submit to DTSC a notice of intent to close the company's Rail Terminal Facility located at 695 Seaport Blvd. in Redwood City.