



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Department of Toxic Substances Control

News Release

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Settlement reached in tainted jewelry lawsuit

The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) announced today a \$115,000 settlement of its claims against Eastern Nationwide Supply, Inc. (ENS) and Joia Trading, Inc. for distributing jewelry that contained high levels of lead.

ENS, a New York company, and Joia, located in Southern California, allegedly supplied retailers with jewelry containing high concentrations of lead which is toxic to humans, especially young children.

"It is critical that industry comply with laws regarding toxic metals in jewelry because our children's health is at stake," said Brian Johnson, Deputy Director for DTSC's Hazardous Waste Management Program.

The fines stem from a lawsuit that DTSC brought with the California Attorney General's Office in July 2012 against ENS, Joia Trading Inc., and other companies for selling jewelry containing excess levels of lead in California. The civil complaint alleged that the businesses:

- Violated California's Metal Containing Jewelry law
- Made untrue or misleading statements
- Made false or misleading advertising claims; and
- Engaged in unlawful, unfair or fraudulent business practices in violation of California's unfair competition law.

Prior to filing the lawsuit, DTSC discovered more than 300 styles of tainted jewelry, most of which were imported from Asia, as part of its ongoing efforts to protect consumers from unnecessary toxic chemicals in everyday products.

Under the settlement agreement, which still needs court approval to become final, the companies agree to inform their suppliers of California's lead standards and to have jewelry tested for lead before selling it or making claims about its lead content.

The companies also must pay civil penalties and reimburse DTSC and the Attorney General's Office for a portion of their attorney's fees and testing costs.

The settlement with ENS and Joia is similar to settlements that DTSC and the Attorney General's Office previously reached with 12 other companies named in the original complaint. Total payments under the earlier settlements are \$260,230.

California' law prohibits the manufacture, shipping, sale, or offering for promotional purposes jewelry that contains excessive amounts of lead or cadmium, among other regulated toxic metals. Exposure to lead can cause negative health effects ranging from behavioral problems and learning disabilities to organ failure and even death.

Links of interest:

- DTSC [video of lead](#) in jewelry
- [Consent agreement](#)

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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, identifying and promoting safer ingredients in consumer products, and ensuring stewardship through enforcement, regulation and pollution prevention.