



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Department of Toxic Substances Control

PRESS RELEASE

See [DTSC's Web site](#) for additional information

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Maureen F. Gorsen, Director

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Contact: Carol Northrup
(510) 407-4817
cnorthru@dtsc.ca.gov

STATE ADDRESSES HAZARDOUS WASTE CLEANUP AT FORECLOSED HOMES

DTSC gives lenders and restoration companies legal and economical options

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) is offering options to lenders who are faced with clearing out the state's unprecedented numbers of foreclosed homes and the abandoned household hazardous materials they often contain.

"We're pleased that DTSC can help to solve one of the potentially harmful byproducts of the state's foreclosure crisis," said DTSC Director Maureen F. Gorsen. "Many California cities and counties have been especially hard hit with abandoned homes, resulting in not only unsightly neighborhood blight, but the high potential for illegal dumping of hazardous waste. Because we believe lenders and the restoration companies alike want to do the right thing, we're providing them with lawful, economical choices for accomplishing that objective."

As the home foreclosure crisis continues to grow, homes left vacant many times contain hazardous materials. These products include pesticides, paint, batteries, cleaning solvents and many other items that may be hazardous waste once they are determined to be wastes.

When lenders foreclose on properties — and contract with restoration companies to prepare them for resale — both are liable for appropriately handling the materials and hazardous waste left behind. Disposing of hazardous waste in the trash or a municipal dump, pouring it down the drain, or otherwise mishandling it, is illegal and subject to fines of up to \$25,000 per day, per incident.

To help avoid these consequences, DTSC recommends options to lenders and restoration companies for handling hazardous waste. The first option entails finding those who can use the materials for their intended purposes so that they do not become wastes at all. If they decide that the materials are waste, they must contract with, or register with DTSC as, a hazardous waste transporter. The lenders and restoration companies could opt to work with their local Certified Unified Program Agencies and DTSC to become a "Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generator," which allows self-transportation of small amounts of hazardous waste to a permitted hazardous waste facility. Again, working with local enforcement agencies and the local household hazardous waste facility, they may be able to arrive at other solutions. DTSC also describes how waste can be consolidated.

For further information on available alternatives for properly disposing of hazardous waste and for a more comprehensive list of those common household items that generally constitute this waste, consult DTSC's fact sheet, "Managing Hazardous Waste at Foreclosed Properties." <http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/ContactDTSC/upload/Fact-Sheet-Managing-Hazardous-Waste-at-Foreclosed-Properties.pdf>

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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 the Department of Toxic Substances Control is to provide the highest level of safety, and to protect public health and the environment from toxic harm.