

EXCELLENCE IN ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AWARD 2018

Steve Van Stockum, Director

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Annual HMBP Submission Automation
**Leveraging Technology to Increase
Compliance and Staff Productivity**

**County of Riverside
Department of
Environmental Health**



Overview

The Riverside County Department of Environmental Health, Hazardous Materials Management Branch was presented with a new challenge after the January 1, 2013, effective date of Assembly Bill 2286. The Assembly Bill brought the requirement for all regulated Hazardous Materials facilities to submit Hazardous Materials Business Plans electronically, for certification on an annual basis, to the statewide information management system known as the California Environmental Reporting System (CERS).

The CERS system is efficient on many levels, with data made readily available to persons with access and a need to know, including program evaluators. With the available data, program evaluators were able to more easily identify which Certified Unified Program Agencies (CUPA) were, or were not, meeting the annual business plan certification and submission requirement. Certified Unified Program Agencies throughout the state started to receive deficiencies in this area.

As a Certified Unified Program Agency, the Riverside County Department of Environmental Health, Hazardous Materials Management Branch has the responsibility of overseeing the Business Plan program for all areas of the County, with the exception of the incorporated cities of Riverside and Corona. The permitted facility list within that area consists of nearly 7,000 facilities. The specific challenge of the new requirement in Riverside County was in the form of a timeline issue. The annual certification and submittal requirement would be difficult to verify, when considering that the established inspection cycle per facility in Riverside County is one inspection every three years. During program evaluations of 2011 and 2014, the Riverside County Department of Environmental Health, Hazardous Materials Management Branch, like many other Agencies, had received a deficiency in this area. A more efficient system was needed.

Innovation in Action

In June of 2016, the Hazardous Materials Management Branch managers approached the Riverside County Information Technology staff to discuss the program needs. A system was needed to verify the business plan submissions within a 12 month rolling window, and begin a correction process for those facilities that were not meeting the requirement. The idea emerged to utilize and draw information from the two different database systems that were already available to the Hazardous Materials Management Branch, CERS and Envision Connect, and develop a completely or partially automated solution.

Riverside County Information Technology staff and the Hazardous Materials Management Branch managers worked diligently to create, test and hone an automation package that would perform virtually all of the necessary components with very minimal user interaction. Months of testing and double checking of results led to the confidence of an effective system that was ready to begin as of June 2017.

Solution

The system as designed runs the business plan data on a 30-day interval. Without verification of an approved business plan, the system begins the automation of an escalating enforcement cycle. In all fairness to the regulated facilities, a submission reminder printing is done on every annual invoice, and there is time given for correction at every step, giving every opportunity for a facility to avoid the enforcement steps. On that topic, a second phase of the system was incorporated to include courtesy

emails to notify facilities of the upcoming submission due dates, prior to the initiation of any formal enforcement actions. Those courtesy emails are sent at 60 days prior, and then again at 30 days prior, to their submission deadline. For those facilities not in compliance, the cycle consists of up to four parts:

1. Notice to Comply, including 30 day timeframe
2. Notice of Violation, including 30 day timeframe
3. Final Notice of Violation, including 30 day timeframe
4. Show Cause Hearing (AEO) Notification

The final Notice of Violation and Show Cause Hearing Notification letters are both sent via Certified Mail. The system automates the creation and application of a USPS barcode to those letters.

Additionally, the Notices of Violation automatically record daily activities in Envision Connect, including violations of increasing classification and enforcement actions, and automatically close those violations once a business plan submission is detected. These violations get transmitted to CERS so that CalEPA and its Boards can see the Department's progress in this area.

The enforcement process continues through the Show Cause Hearing if warranted. That stage will, of course, take time for the Hazardous Materials Management Branch staff to coordinate and setup. However, the end result of regulated businesses getting back into compliance is success for all involved.

Department Savings and Results

The new system displayed its effectiveness during the recent 2017 program evaluation. While receiving deficiencies in the 2011 and 2014 evaluations for not meeting the annual business plan certification and submission requirement, our Department was the only CUPA in the State to meet the requirement in their 2017 audit.

In addition to now being able to meet statutory requirements, the Hazardous Materials Management Branch had immediate cost savings after going live with this project in June of 2017. Since the system began, there have been 2,976 facilities that had not submitted an update to their business plan. All of those facilities will have received a Notice to Comply.

Based on past staff workload analysis, the process of verification, generation, and filing of a letter to address this particular violation takes approximately 10 minutes. Assuming an 8-hour productivity window per day, the generation of the 2,976 letters would take approximately 62 days, or over 15 full weeks for one inspector if they were to be created manually. At this point, the employee work requires only a click of a mouse to print all of the required documents currently, and the physical act of mailing the notices. A future goal is to have the system fully automated, which will eliminate even more employee work time.

The time saved increases exponentially with each subsequent letter due to the necessity to code inspections, violations, and enforcement actions. A cost savings worksheet is attached to reinforce the monetary impact of the new system.

Another benefit in the system is the automatic attachment of each generated Notice to Comply or Notice of Violation to a facility's Envision Connect record. As such, rather than needing to take time to find a file

and sort through a potential large number of documents, there is a quick method to reference and review any notice that may be in question by staff or from the public.

Finally, and most importantly, the system is producing results in the form of facility compliance. Of the first year's Notices to Comply, Notices of Violation, and Final Warning letters that have been mailed out, over 46,000 unique elements have been submitted to the Hazardous Materials Management Branch. That number continues to grow as the system continues along the rolling 12 month schedule.

Summary

The automated submission system results in fair compliance with the Hazardous Materials Business Plan statute without increasing staff workloads. The system has proven to be successful, and our Department is confident and excited about the increased productivity and cost savings involved in the project. Discussions of the system continue to generate inquiries and interest from several groups throughout the State, including state oversight Boards, and every CUPA Envision Connect client in southern California. The Riverside County Department of Environmental Health, Hazardous Materials Management Branch looks forward to the continued benefits of the system, and takes great pride in responding to inquiries as the system continues to equal results.

ATTACHMENTS

HMBP Progressive Enforcement Automation Workbook

NTC

NOV1

NOV2

HMBP Progressive Enforcement Automation Workbook

This spreadsheet contains the summary of the number of letters sent as a part of this initiative. The report also summarizes the estimated dollar amount saved since initiative inception.

Letter Sent	Total Number Sent	Total Hours Saved	FTE Positions per Year	Approximate Dollar Amount Saved
Notice to Comply (NTC)	3,177	529.50	0.35	\$127,609.50
Notice of Vioaltion (NOV1)	1,296	324.00	0.21	\$78,084.00
Final Warning (NOV2)	656	218.67	0.14	\$52,698.67
Show Cause (NOV3)	326	108.67	0.07	\$26,188.67
POD Receipts (recvd)	495	41.25	0.03	\$9,941.25
Grand Total	5,950	1,222.08	0.80	\$294,522.08

The dollar amount saved is based off of our billable per hour rate.



County of Riverside
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

P.O. BOX 7909 • RIVERSIDE, CA 92513-7909

STEVE VAN STOCKUM, DIRECTOR

<<print date>>

<<address block>>

<<address block>>

<<address block>>

<<address block>>

NOTICE TO COMPLY

Facility ID: <<facility id>>

Facility Name: <<facility name>>

Facility Address: <<facility street address>>, <<facility city>>, CA <<facility zip>>

To Whom It May Concern:

All facilities regulated under the Hazardous Materials Business Plan program are required to annually recertify and resubmit Hazardous Materials Business Plan (HMBP) information online in the California Environmental Reporting System (CERS).

VIOLATION: Failure to annually recertify the facilities Hazardous Materials Business Plan. California Health and Safety Code Sections 25508 and 25508.2; California Code of Regulations, Title 27, Section 15188.

OBSERVATION: As of <<print date>>, an annual HMBP recertification and submission has not been received by Riverside County Department of Environmental Health.

CORRECTIVE ACTION: Immediately log in to CERS at <http://cers.calepa.ca.gov> and submit an updated HMBP. Assistance with the CERS system can be found online at <https://cersbusiness.calepa.ca.gov/help>.

CORRECT BY: <<print date + 30 calendar days>>

If you have any questions regarding this Notice to Comply or if you require assistance, please contact a hazardous materials specialist at (888) 722-4234.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Gates, MISM, REHS
Enforcement Officer
Hazardous Materials Management Branch (CUPA)



County of Riverside
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

P.O. BOX 7909 • RIVERSIDE, CA 92513-7909

STEVE VAN STOCKUM, DIRECTOR

<<print date>>

<<address block>>

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<<address block>>

NOTICE OF VIOLATION

Facility ID: <<facility id>>

Facility Name: <<facility name>>

Facility Address: <<facility street address>>, <<facility city>>, CA <<facility zip>>

To Whom It May Concern:

All facilities regulated under the Hazardous Materials Business Plan program are required to annually recertify and resubmit Hazardous Materials Business Plan (HMBP) information online in the California Environmental Reporting System (CERS).

VIOLATION: Failure to annually recertify the facilities Hazardous Materials Business Plan. California Health and Safety Code Sections 25508 and 25508.2; California Code of Regulations, Title 27, Section 15188.

OBSERVATION: As of <<print date>>, an annual HMBP recertification and submission has not been received by Riverside County Department of Environmental Health. A Notice to Comply was previously sent to your facility on/about <<NTC date>> directing the submission of a HMBP.

CORRECTIVE ACTION: Immediately log in to CERS at <http://cers.calepa.ca.gov> and submit an updated HMBP. Assistance with the CERS system can be found online at <https://cersbusiness.calepa.ca.gov/help>.

CORRECT BY: <<print date + 30 calendar days>>

If you have any questions regarding this Notice of Violation or if you require assistance, please contact a hazardous materials specialist at (888) 722-4234. Failure to submit a complete HMBP may result in additional enforcement action.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Gates, MISM, REHS
Enforcement Officer
Hazardous Materials Management Branch (CUPA)

Office Locations • Blythe • Corona • Hemet • Indio • Murrieta • Palm Springs • Riverside •

Phone: (888)722-4234

www.rivcoeh.org

County of Riverside Environmental Health
Hazardous Materials Management Branch
PO Box 7909
Riverside, CA 92513-7909

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County of Riverside
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

P.O. BOX 7909 • RIVERSIDE, CA 92513-7909

STEVE VAN STOCKUM, DIRECTOR

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<<mail block 4>>

CERTIFIED MAIL: XXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX

NOTICE OF VIOLATION

FINAL ENFORCEMENT WARNING

Facility ID: <<facility ID>>

Facility Name: <<facility name>>

Facility Address: <<facility street address>>, <<facility city>>, CA <<facility zip>>

Our records currently indicate that your facility has failed to electronically recertify and resubmit your Hazardous Materials Business Plan (HMBP) online in the California Environmental Reporting System (CERS). This recertification and resubmission is required by California Health and Safety Code, Sections 25508 and 25508.2 and California Code of Regulations, Title 27, Section 15188. A Notice to Comply was previously sent to your facility on <<NTC date>> advising you of the requirement. This was followed with a Notice of Violation dated <<NOV date>> directing compliance.

The Riverside County Department of Environmental Health Hazardous Materials Management Branch is preparing to initiate enforcement proceedings against your facility for failing to recertify and resubmit a HMBP into CERS. California Health and Safety Code Section 25515 authorizes the Department to assess civil penalties of up to five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for each day in which this violation remains uncorrected.

You are hereby ordered to immediately log in to CERS at <http://cers.calepa.ca.gov> and submit an updated HMBP. Assistance with the CERS system can be found online at <http://cersbusiness.calepa.ca.gov>. Your submission must be received prior to <<print date + 14 calendar days>> or further enforcement action will be taken.

If you have any questions regarding this Notice of Violation or if you require assistance, please contact a hazardous materials specialist at (888) 722-4234.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Gates, MISM, REHS
Enforcement Officer
Hazardous Materials Management Branch

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