



SOUTH COAST AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT PRESS RELEASE

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South Coast AQMD issues violations for chemical spill that impacted the Compton area, schools and public

DIAMOND BAR – The South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD) today issued Notices of Violations (NOVs) to a land developer and a contractor following a chemical spill on September 10, 2020 that impacted the public in areas throughout Los Angeles and Orange Counties.

The NOVs allege that developer Bridge Point Gardena Land, LLC and contractor OFRS, Inc. caused a public nuisance in violation of the agency's Rule 402 and California Health and Safety Code Section 41700. South Coast AQMD's investigation was prompted by both a notification from the Compton Fire Department and community complaints, which resulted in inspectors being dispatched to a jobsite in an empty lot at 223 W. Rosecrans Avenue in Gardena.

Inspectors detected strong mercaptan odors. Mercaptan is an odorant that is added to natural gas to allow the detection of gas leaks. Mercaptan is sulfur-based and foul-smelling. It is also potent – a few drops can cause odors that carry for significant distances. The spill was caused by an attempt to move a small storage tank containing mercaptan. Inspectors were not able to estimate the amount spilled.

Hand-held monitors were used, and no natural gas was detected. Additional samples were collected and are being analyzed at the South Coast AQMD laboratory.

The agency continues to work with the Los Angeles County Fire Department Health Hazardous Materials Division (HazMat) on this investigation.

More than 220 odor complaints have been received so far, including Gaines Elementary School in Paramount, Benjamin Banneker Special Education Center and Avalon Gardens Elementary School in Los Angeles, and multiple schools in the Compton Unified School District. Complaints have been received from residents in the following cities: Anaheim, Bell, Bellflower, Buena Park, Carson, Cerritos, Compton, Gardena, La Palma, Lakewood, Long Beach, Los Angeles, and Paramount.

Once issued, NOVs can result in civil penalties. In some cases, the company can choose to implement voluntary measures to reduce emissions or otherwise prevent further violations. If no settlement is reached, a civil lawsuit may ultimately be filed in superior court.

South Coast AQMD is the air pollution control agency for Orange County and major portions of Los Angeles, San Bernardino and Riverside counties, including the Coachella Valley. For news, air quality alerts, event updates and more, please visit us at www.aqmd.gov, download our award-winning app, or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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