

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS HANDLING IN SOLANO COUNTY

2009-2010 Grand Jury Report

REASONS FOR INVESTIGATION

The 2009-2010 Solano County Grand Jury elected to visit a hazardous material site located on Virginia Street in Vallejo, California. This site is regulated by the City of Vallejo. There were several findings and recommendations set forth in the 2008-2009 Grand Jury Report regarding this hazardous materials site. The responses to the 2008-2009 report indicated that several of the recommendations would not be implemented as they were not warranted.

GRAND JURY ACTIONS

- Interviewed members of the Solano County Board of Supervisors
- Toured the hazardous materials site in Vallejo
- Interviewed the Assistant Fire Chief for the City of Vallejo
- Interviewed the City Manager for the City of Vallejo
- Interviewed the Solano County Director of Resource Management

BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY

On August 25, 2009, the Grand Jury had a pre-arranged tour of the Vallejo site where hazardous materials are stored on a temporary basis. The site is located in a residential neighborhood and the Grand Jury wanted to determine the level of safety for the surrounding area. The site is surrounded by an eight foot chain link fence with wooden slats and locked gates. Within this site is another secured enclosure. This enclosure contains the barrels of hazardous waste, i.e. paint and automobile fluids. The site is secured and locked by an eight foot chain link fence.

The Grand Jury noted that the areas of previous concern were cleaned up, and waste barrels were labeled. The procedures now in place address the concerns cited in the previous report.

Some of the procedures are as follows:

- If there is an incident, the Vallejo Fire Department responds
- If the material(s) is unknown, the Hazardous Material Team collects and removes the material directly from the site
- If the material is non-toxic, Public Works will take it to the Virginia Street site
- The site is only used to hold low-level contaminants, such as used automotive fluids or discarded paint
- There are no public drop-offs at the site

- There are no signs stating the site's function. It is not desirable to advertise its existence due to the possibility of citizens depositing hazardous substances in front of the site
- Waste containers remain on-site until full and are then transported to the American Canyon disposal site in Napa County
- The California Environmental Protection Agency requires an annual report for documenting stored materials and the disposal procedures

The Grand Jury observed the following:

- The fenced storage area is several feet away from the sidewalk and is contained within another fenced and secured area
- The storage containers are labeled
- Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS), as required by Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration law are visible
- The yard is unattended although authorized City personnel have access
- There is an access log on site

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding 1 - The Vallejo hazardous materials site is located in a residential neighborhood. There is no informational signage at this site. The California Health and Safety Code, Chapter 6.95, does not require signage at this type of facility.

Recommendation 1 – The City of Vallejo should continue to adhere to the requirements of California Health and Safety Code, Chapter 6.95.

Finding 2 - There are no permanent on-site personnel to handle potential emergencies and only a limited number of authorized personnel have a key to access the site.

Recommendation 2 - The City of Vallejo should post telephone numbers inside and outside the storage yard to contact authorized staff or 911 in case of an emergency.

COMMENTS

Investigation determined that residents are not currently leaving containers of hazardous materials on the sidewalk outside of the Vallejo storage facility. All drums with hazardous materials are labeled and checked periodically to ensure that the label is still attached and legible.

The Solano County Grand Jury wishes to thank the City of Vallejo for their diligence in cleaning and maintaining the site.

RESPONDING AND AFFECTED PARTIES

Solano County Office of Emergency Services
Vallejo City Manager
Vallejo Fire Chief

COURTESY COPIES

Solano County Department of Resource Management
Solano County Board of Supervisors
Solano County Sheriff/Coroner's Office
Napa County Administrator
Napa County Grand Jury
California Environmental Protection Agency



Front view of Hazardous Waste Site



Labeled barrels inside secured fence



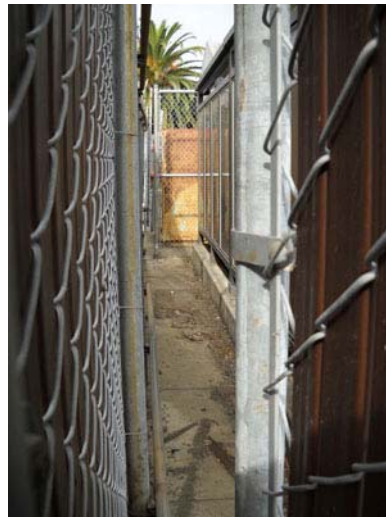
Secured perimeter fence on the North sidewalk of Virginia Street looking East



Secured perimeter fence on the North sidewalk of Virginia Street looking west



Secured gate entrance to enclosure



Space between perimeter fence and interior enclosure



Appropriately labeled barrels