



SOUTH COAST AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT PRESS RELEASE

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South Coast AQMD Requires Sterigenics to Pay Over Half a Million For Permit Violations

DIAMOND BAR – The South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD) recently finalized a settlement with Sterigenics U.S., LLC (Sterigenics), a medical sterilization operation with facilities in Vernon and Ontario, for permit and other rule violations. As part of the settlement, Sterigenics will pay a \$587,800 penalty.

Violations settled at the Vernon facility include the failure to keep the air pollution control system in good operating conditions at all times, as well as violations of other permit conditions. Violations settled at the Ontario facility include the failure to maintain permitted equipment in good operating conditions at all times and breakdown events for air pollution control devices.

Sterigenics conducts sterilization of medical equipment using ethylene oxide (EtO), a flammable, colorless gas. EtO is also sometimes used to make products including antifreeze, textiles, solvents, detergents, and adhesives. The most significant public health risk associated with EtO is long-term exposure (i.e., over a number of years) due to an increased risk of certain cancers, including lymphoid and breast cancer. Other short-term health effects may also occur from exposure to EtO, though not at levels that have been found near these facilities.

Sterigenics's Vernon facility is housed in two buildings between 49th and 50th Street on Gifford Avenue in an industrial area in Vernon, California. Sterigenics also conducts sterilization of medical equipment at a facility located at 687 Wanamaker Avenue in Ontario, California.

On June 7, 2022 and September 29, 2022, the Sterigenics Vernon and Ontario facilities were designated as Potentially High Risk Level Facilities, respectively. Monitoring near both facilities showed emissions exceeded cancer risk thresholds of greater than 100 chances in a million.

As a Potentially High Risk Level Facility, Sterigenics Vernon and Ontario were required to develop an Early Action Reduction Plan that includes measures that can be taken immediately to reduce health risks. In addition, the facilities were required to conduct a Health Risk Assessment (HRA) and submit a Risk Reduction Plan (RRP). The Vernon HRA was approved on June 12, 2024 and a public meeting to discuss its results was held on August 7, 2024. The Ontario HRA is currently under review by South Coast AQMD.

South Coast AQMD continues to take action to identify sources and reduce emissions. These actions include:

- Air monitoring efforts at and near facilities and the surrounding community.
- Notification of illegal discharge of hazardous waste, if applicable.
- Thorough inspections of facilities to determine compliance with South Coast AQMD rules, regulations and permit requirements.
- Evaluating measures to reduce leaks or fugitive emissions, including enhanced leak detection and air pollution control device testing.
- Adopting Amended Rule 1405 to further reduce EtO emissions from sterilization and related operations.

More information on South Coast AQMD's activities related to Sterigenics can be found at:

www.aqmd.gov/eto.

South Coast AQMD is the regulatory agency responsible for improving air quality for large areas of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino 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](#), [X](#) (formerly known as Twitter) and [Instagram](#).

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