

Burlington Environmental Pledges Reforms in Settlement with Ecology

Local News

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OLYMPIA - The state's largest dangerous waste processor will fund two years of audits designed to support major reforms at its Tacoma and Kent facilities under a settlement agreement with the Department of Ecology (Ecology). Burlington Environmental LLC (Burlington) also will pay \$58,000 of a \$288,000 penalty for waste-handling violations. The company will apply the remaining \$230,000 towards hiring a third-party firm to conduct audits of Burlington's facilities every other month for two years. The audit firm will evaluate Burlington's facilities and practices as well as monitor its progress in correcting 15 past dangerous waste violations. Certain violations, if discovered during the audits, may be subject to stipulated penalties agreed to by Ecology and Burlington.

The selection and work of Burlington's outside-expert contractor will be subject to Ecology review and approval. "Thousands of Washington businesses depend on the dangerous-waste treatment industry," said K Seiler, who manages Ecology's hazardous waste and toxics reduction program. "Those who provide these environmental services have a duty to meet the highest standards of safety and compliance. We applaud Burlington for taking these steps forward." "Burlington looks forward to this partnership with Ecology," said Gary Crueger, Division Director for Environmental Health and Safety with PSC, which owns Burlington Environmental. "These audit findings will further the company's initiatives and potentially aid in the future development of waste handling regulations applicable to Burlington and others in Washington. We intend to make full use of the audits to improve the compliance and management in our environmental programs to facilitate our core service to the business community." Ecology inspectors observed repeated violations over the past two years involving proper handling, storage, labeling and shipment of dangerous wastes. In some cases, the company had detailed and suitable plans that were neglected or improperly carried out. Burlington serves thousands of businesses throughout Washington and beyond. Among the issues that will be addressed over the next two years: Burlington will take steps to ensure that all wastes are correctly identified upon arrival. This step sets a critical baseline to prevent mistakes in storage and processing and in the selection of a final disposal destination. The company will improve its management of containers to ensure:

- o Safe, proper separation of incompatible materials.
- o Storage of wastes in areas designed for that material's level of risk.
- o Shipment for final disposal within required time limits.

Burlington will train, educate and better supervise employees to understand and follow company plans and policies for different wastes. Burlington will ensure that each container has a legible label that's always in full view - with correct information. Burlington will ensure that the appropriate tests are run on wastes being mixed together. Burlington will train, educate and better supervise employees to understand and follow the facility inspection plans. Ensuring proper safety and environmental practices at hazardous waste processing facilities supports Ecology's priority of preventing and reducing toxic threats to human health and the environment.

Ecology's Web site: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov>