



NEWS

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Air District settles \$4 million case with Tesoro Refinery

Martinez facility cited for air quality violations

SAN FRANCISCO - The Bay Area Air Quality Management District today announced that Tesoro Refining & Marketing Co. has agreed to pay \$4 million to settle alleged air pollution violations at its Golden Eagle Refinery in Martinez.

During a routine inspection, an Air District inspector discovered that Tesoro's practice was to periodically drain process waste fluid to its on-site sewer and water treatment system. When drained, volatile air contaminants, primarily butane and propane, would immediately evaporate off of the liquid and pollute the air. Butane and propane hydrocarbon emissions contribute to the formation of ozone and smog.

"We require Bay Area refineries to control their emissions at every step of their process," said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. "Through the Air District's aggressive enforcement program, these violations were discovered and this uncontrolled release of air pollution stopped."

The Air District conducted a full investigation and documented draining violations from 2007 through 2014. This draining caused a significant amount of air pollution and was in violation of Tesoro's permit and Air District regulations which require the use of abatement technology to remove volatile air contaminants from process waste prior to draining fluids to the on-site sewer. Sewer drains must also be controlled to prevent air contaminants from escaping to the air. Tesoro bypassed its abatement technology and drained the process fluids directly into the on-site sewer.

Several of the violations occurred in 2013, after the Air District discovered that Tesoro had a practice of draining process waste to the sewer and confirmed to Tesoro that this practice was both unlawful and dangerous. Further violations occurred in late 2013 and early 2014, after Tesoro committed that it would cease the unlawful draining practice. Tesoro cooperated with the Air District's investigation of the incidents.

The violations also include leak detection and repair violations discovered during the Air District's investigation of the draining events.

Tesoro has stopped the practice of draining process fluids into the on-site sewer system to prevent future violations.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (www.baaqmd.gov) is the regional agency responsible for protecting air quality in the nine-county Bay Area.

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