



SOUTH COAST AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT PRESS RELEASE

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South Coast AQMD Issues Violation to Sterigenics Facility in Ontario for Elevated Levels of Ethylene Oxide

DIAMOND BAR – Today, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD) issued a Notice of Violation (NOV) to Sterigenics US, LLC in Ontario, California, for discharging elevated levels of Ethylene Oxide (EtO), potentially posing a significant health risk to the public.

Sterigenics uses EtO to conduct sterilization services for medical device manufacturers. Their Ontario facility is located at 687 Wanamaker Avenue, and its operations run 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The nearest residential area is about 1.4 miles away and the nearest school is about 1.2 miles. On September 29, this facility was designated as a Potentially High Risk Level Facility under agency rules, requiring a plan to reduce emissions and health risks from operations.

South Coast AQMD has an ongoing investigation into emissions of EtO from facilities within its jurisdiction. As part of this effort, air sampling was conducted around the Sterigenics facility in Ontario, and elevated levels of EtO were discovered, prompting more comprehensive air monitoring and further investigation.

On June 18, 2022, a 24-hour sample showed EtO levels at just under 140 parts per billion (ppb) at a neighboring business. Although levels are lower than the June sample, monitoring results over the past several months show consistently high levels of EtO next to the facility well above established health risk thresholds for off-site workers. The agency's Rule 402 and California Health & Safety Code § 41700 prohibit the discharge of air contaminants that endanger the health or safety of the public.

The Sterigenics facility in Vernon also received an NOV for discharging elevated levels of EtO earlier this year. The Sterigenics facility that operates in Vernon is located within two buildings between 49th St. and 50th St. on Gifford Ave in an industrial area. The nearest residential area is about 500 feet away, and the nearest school is 1700 feet away.

EtO is a flammable, colorless gas used to sterilize medical equipment and make products, including antifreeze, textiles, solvents, detergents, and adhesives. Short-term exposure to EtO may cause headaches, weakness, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, difficulty breathing, eye and skin burns, and

reproductive effects. Long-term exposure to EtO over a number of years increases the risk of certain cancers including lymphoid and breast cancer.

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 pursuing actions to minimize EtO emissions from all sterilization facilities within the agency's jurisdiction, including rulemaking that proposes stricter requirements and continuing its ongoing and extensive investigation. For more information on the overall initiative please visit: www.aqmd.gov/eto.

More information on South Coast AQMD's activities related to Sterigenics in Ontario can be found [here](#). Information related to Sterigenics in Vernon can be found [here](#).

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](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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