

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 6
1201 Elm Street, Suite 500
Dallas, Texas 75270

FILED
23 MAY 24 PM 01:22
REGIONAL HEARING CLERK
EPA REGION 6

In the Matter of	§	
	§	
Klock Ventures Inc. d/b/a	§	
Southern Windows and Doors,	§	Docket No. TSCA-06-2024-6169
	§	
Respondent.	§	

CONSENT AGREEMENT AND FINAL ORDER

Preliminary Statement

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6 ("EPA" or "Complainant"), and Klock Ventures, d/b/a Southern Windows and Doors ("Respondent") have agreed to a settlement of this action before the filing of a complaint, and thus this action is simultaneously commenced and concluded pursuant to Rules 22.13(b) and 22.18(b)(2) of the Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties and the Revocation/Termination or Suspension of Permits, 40 C.F.R. §§ 22.13(b) and 22.18(b)(2).

Jurisdiction

1. This proceeding is an administrative action for the assessment of civil penalties initiated pursuant to Section 16(a) of the Toxic Substances Control Act ("TSCA"), 15 U.S.C. § 2615(a).

2. This Consent Agreement and Final Order serves as notice that the EPA has reason to believe that Respondent has violated Section 409 of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2689, by failing to comply with the regulatory requirements of 40 C.F.R. Part 745, Subpart E.

Parties

3. Complainant is the Director of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division of the EPA, Region 6, as duly delegated by the Administrator of the EPA and the Regional Administrator, EPA, Region 6.

4. Respondent is Klock Ventures a company incorporated in the state of Texas and conducting business in the state of Texas.

Statutory and Regulatory Background

5. TSCA was amended with the Residential Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Act of 1992, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4851 to 4856, with the addition of Title IV – Lead Exposure Reduction, Section 401 to 412 of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. §§ 2681 to 2692. One of the stated purposes of the Act is to implement a broad program to reduce lead-based paint hazards in the Nation's housing stock. 42 U.S.C. § 4851.

6. Pursuant to Sections 402, 406, and 407 of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2682, 2686, and 2687, the EPA promulgated the Lead, Renovation, Repair and Painting (RRP) Rule at 40 C.F.R. Part 745, Subpart E - Residential Property Renovation, to ensure that owners and occupants of target housing and child-occupied facilities receive information on lead-based paint hazards before renovations begin; and individuals and firms performing renovations are certified and following work practice standards during the renovations. 40 C.F.R. § 745.80.

7. The requirements set forth in the regulations at 40 C.F.R. Part 745, Subpart E, Residential Property Renovation, apply to all renovations performed for compensation in target

housing and child-occupied facilities, unless otherwise excluded as set forth in 40 C.F.R.

§ 745.82.

8. The regulation at 40 C.F.R. § 745.87(a) provides that failure or refusal to comply with any provision of 40 C.F.R. Part 745, Subpart E, is a violation of Section 409 of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2689. Section 409 of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2689, provides that it shall be unlawful for any person to fail to comply with, inter alia, any provision of 40 C.F.R. Part 745, Subpart E.

9. Section 16(a) of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2615(a), as amended, and 40 C.F.R. § 745.87(d), authorize a civil penalty of not more than \$37,500 per day for violations of Section 409 of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2689. The Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996, 31 U.S.C. § 3701, as amended, and the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act Improvements Act of 2015, 28 U.S.C. § 2461, and implementing regulations at 40 C.F.R. Part 19, increased these statutory maximum penalties to \$48,512 for violations that occur after November 2, 2015, and for which penalties are assessed on or after December 27, 2023.

Definitions

10. The regulation at 40 C.F.R. § 745.83 defines “person” as any natural or judicial person including any individual, corporation, partnership, or association; any Indian Tribe, State, or political subdivision thereof; any interstate body; and any department, agency, or instrumentality of the Federal Government.

11. The regulation at 40 C.F.R. § 745.83 defines “renovation” as the modification of any existing structure, or portion thereof, that results in the disturbance of painted surfaces, unless that activity is performed as part of an abatement as defined by 40 C.F.R.

§ 745.223. The term renovation includes, but is not limited to, the removal, modification, or

repair of painted surfaces or painted components (*e.g.*, modification of painted doors, surface restoration, window repair, surface preparation activity (such as sanding, scraping, or other such activities that may generate paint dust)); the removal of building components (*e.g.*, walls, ceilings, plumbing, windows); weatherization projects (*e.g.*, cutting holes in painted surfaces to install blown-in insulation or to gain access to attics, planning thresholds to install weather stripping); and interim controls that disturb painted surfaces.

12. Section 401(17) of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2681(17), defines “target housing” as any housing constructed prior to 1978, except housing for the elderly or persons with disabilities or any zero-bedroom dwelling (unless any child who is less than six years of age resides or is expected to reside in such housing).

13. The regulation at 40 C.F.R. § 745.83 defines “firm” as a company, partnership, corporation, sole proprietorship, or individual doing business, association, or other business entity; a Federal, State, Tribal, or local government agency; or a nonprofit organization.

EPA Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law

14. Respondent is, and at all times referred to herein was, a “person” as defined by 40 C.F.R. § 745.83.

15. Respondent is, and at all times referred to herein was, a “firm” as defined by 40 C.F.R. § 745.83.

16. Pursuant to Section 11 of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2610, the EPA conducted an inspection on February 16, 2023, to evaluate Respondent’s compliance with TSCA and the RRP Rule.

17. At the time of the EPA inspection, and at all times referred to herein, Respondent was engaged in “renovations” as defined by 40 C.F.R. § 745.83.

18. At the time of the EPA inspection, and at all times referred to herein, Respondent performed “renovations... for compensation” per 40 C.F.R. § 745.82(a) at one property (the “Property”) that was “target housing” as defined by Section 401(17) of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2681(17).

19. On February 05, 2024, the EPA sent Respondent a Notice of Potential Violation and Opportunity to Confer letter. On February 27, 2024, the EPA responded to the documentation and information received from Respondent as a result of the opportunity to confer and articulated the EPA’s position concerning Respondent’s compliance with TSCA. On July 14, 2023, Mr. Ronnie Klock (owner) sold the company, Southern Windows, and Doors.

20. As a result of the EPA inspection and additional information obtained by the EPA, Complainant has determined that violations of the RRP Rule and Section 409 of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2689, occurred as a result of Respondent’s renovation activities at the Properties.

EPA Findings of Violation

21. The facts stated in the EPA Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law above are herein incorporated.

22. Complainant hereby states and alleges that Respondent has violated TSCA and federal regulations promulgated thereunder as follows:

Count 1

23. With certain exceptions not relevant here, 40 C.F.R. § 745.81(a)(2)(ii) prohibits firms from performing, offering, or claiming to perform renovations without certification from

EPA under 40 C.F.R. § 745.89 in target housing or child-occupied facilities. Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 745.89(a)(1), firms that perform renovations for compensation must apply to EPA for certification to perform renovations.

24. Respondent had not applied to the EPA nor obtained certification pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 745.89 from the EPA prior to performing the renovation at the Property.

25. Respondent's failure to obtain certification from the EPA prior to performing a renovation in target housing pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 745.89 is a violation of 40 C.F.R. § 745.81(a)(2)(ii) and Section 409 of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2689.

Count 2

26. Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 745.89(d)(2), firms performing renovations must ensure that a certified renovator is assigned to each renovation performed by the firm and discharges all the certified renovator responsibilities identified in 40 C.F.R. § 745.90.

27. Respondent failed to assign a certified renovator to each of the four (4) renovations performed by the firm at the four (4) Properties.

28. Respondent's failures to assign a certified renovator to the renovations at the Property is a violation of 40 C.F.R. § 745.89(d)(2) and Section 409 of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2689.

Count 3

29. Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 745.84(a)(1), no more than sixty (60) days before beginning renovation activities in any residential dwelling unit of target housing, the firm performing the renovation must provide the owner of the unit with the EPA pamphlet titled *Renovate Right: Important Lead Hazard Information for Families, Child Care Providers and Schools*.

30. Respondent failed to provide the owner of the property with the EPA pamphlet prior to the beginning of the renovation activities.

31. Respondent's failures to provide the EPA pamphlet to the owner of the Property prior to the beginning of the renovation activities is a violation of 40 C.F.R. § 745.84(a)(1) and Section 409 of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2689.

Count 4

32. Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 745.86(a), firms performing renovations must retain, and, if requested, make available to EPA all records necessary to demonstrate compliance with the RRP Rule for a period of 3 years following completion of the renovation.

33. Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 745.86(b)(6), one of the records that must be retained for inspection is documentation of compliance with the requirements of 40 C.F.R. § 745.85, including documentation that a certified renovator was assigned to the project, that the certified renovator provided on-the-job training for all workers used on the project, that the certified renovator performed or directed workers who performed all of the tasks described in 40 C.F.R. § 745.85(a), and that the certified renovator performed the post-renovation cleaning verification described in 40 C.F.R. § 745.85(b).

34. Respondent failed to prepare and retain records documenting compliance with the requirements of 40 C.F.R. § 745.85 as required by 40 C.F.R. §§ 745.86(a) and 745.86(b)(6) for the renovations performed at the Property.

35. Respondent's failure to prepare and retain records documenting compliance with the requirements of 40 C.F.R. § 745.85 for the renovations at the Property is a violation of 40 C.F.R. § 745.86(a) and 745.86(b)(6) and Section 409 of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2689.

CONSENT AGREEMENT

36. For the purpose of this proceeding, as required by 40 C.F.R. § 22.18(b)(2),

Respondent:

- a. admits the jurisdictional allegations set forth herein;
- b. neither admits nor denies the specific factual allegations stated herein;
- c. consents to the assessment of a civil penalty, as stated herein;
- d. consents to the issuance of any specified compliance or corrective action order;
- e. consents to any conditions specified herein;
- f. consents to any stated Permit Action;
- g. waives any right to contest the allegations set forth herein; and
- h. waives its rights to appeal the Final Order accompanying this Consent Agreement.

37. Respondent consents to the issuance of this Consent Agreement and Final Order and consents for the purposes of settlement to the payment of the civil penalty specified herein.

38. Respondent and EPA agree to conciliate this matter without the necessity of a formal hearing and to bear their respective costs and attorneys' fees.

Penalty Payment

39. Respondent agrees that, in settlement of the claims alleged herein, Respondent shall pay a civil penalty of eight hundred dollars (\$800.00), as set forth below.

40. EPA has considered the appropriateness of the penalty pursuant to Section 16(a)(2)(B) of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2615(a)(2)(B) and has determined that based on substantiated ability to pay information, the appropriate penalty for the violation is eight hundred dollars to be paid within thirty (30) days of receiving notice of the effective date of the Final Order.

41. Such payment shall identify Respondent by name and docket number and shall be by certified or cashier's check made payable to the "United States Treasury" and sent to:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Fines and Penalties
Cincinnati Finance Center
PO Box 979078
St. Louis, Missouri 63197-9000

or by alternate payment method described at <http://www.epa.gov/financial/makepayment>.

42. A copy of the check or other information confirming payment shall simultaneously be sent by electronic mail to the following:

Lorena S. Vaughn
Regional Hearing Clerk
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6
1201 Elm Street, Suite 500 (ORC)
Dallas, Texas 75270-2102
vaughn.lorena@epa.gov; and

Stan Lancaster
Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division
Toxics Enforcement Section
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6
1201 Elm Street, Suite 500 (ECDST)
Dallas, Texas 75270-2101
Lancaster.stan@epa.gov

43. Respondent understands that its failure to timely pay any portion of the civil penalty may result in the commencement of a civil action in Federal District Court to recover the full remaining balance, along with penalties and accumulated interest. In such case, interest

shall begin to accrue on a civil or stipulated penalty from the date of delinquency until such civil or stipulated penalty and any accrued interest are paid in full. 31 C.F.R. § 901.9(b)(1). Interest will be assessed at a rate of the United States Treasury Tax and loan rates in accordance with 31 U.S.C. § 3717. Additionally, a charge will be assessed to cover the costs of debt collection including processing and handling costs, and a non-payment penalty charge of six percent (6%) per year compounded annually will be assessed on any portion of the debt which remains delinquent more than ninety (90) days after payment is due. 31 U.S.C. § 3717(e)(2).

44. Pursuant to 26 U.S.C. § 6050X and 26 C.F.R. § 1.6050X-1, EPA is required to send to the Internal Revenue Service ("IRS") annually, a completed IRS Form 1098-F ("Fines, Penalties, and Other Amounts") with respect to any court order or settlement agreement (including administrative settlements), that require a payor to pay an aggregate amount that EPA reasonably believes will be equal to, or in excess of, \$50,000 for the payor's violation of any law or the investigation or inquiry into the payor's potential violation of any law, including amounts paid for "restitution or remediation of property" or to come "into compliance with a law." EPA is further required to furnish a written statement, which provides the same information provided to the IRS, to each payor (i.e., a copy of IRS Form 1098-F). Failure to comply with providing IRS Form W-9 or Tax Identification Number ("TIN"), as described below, may subject Respondent to a penalty, per 26 U.S.C. § 6723, 26 U.S.C. § 6724(d)(3), and 26 C.F.R. § 301.6723-1. In order to provide EPA with sufficient information to enable it to fulfill these obligations, EPA herein requires, and Respondent herein agrees, that:

- a. Respondent shall complete an IRS Form W-9 ("Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification"), which is available at <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>;
- b. Respondent shall therein certify that its completed IRS Form W-9 includes Respondent's correct TIN or that Respondent has applied and is waiting for issuance of a TIN; Respondent shall email its completed Form W-9 to EPA's Cincinnati Finance Center at chalifoux.jessica@epa.gov within 30 days after the Final Order ratifying this Agreement is filed, and EPA recommends encrypting IRS Form W-9 email correspondence; and
- c. In the event that Respondent has certified in its completed IRS Form W-9 that it has applied for a TIN and that TIN has not been issued to Respondent within 30 days after the effective date, then Respondent, using the same email address identified in the preceding sub-paragraph, shall further:
 - i. Notify EPA's Cincinnati Finance Center of this fact, via email, within 30 days after the effective date of this Order; and
 - ii. Provide EPA's Cincinnati Finance Center with Respondent's TIN, via email, within five (5) days of Respondent's issuance and receipt of the TIN.

Effect of Settlement and Reservation of Rights

45. Full payment of the penalty proposed in this Consent Agreement shall only resolve Respondent's liability for federal civil penalties for the violations alleged herein.

Complainant reserves the right to take any enforcement action with respect to any other violations of TSCA or any other applicable law.

46. The effect of settlement described in the immediately preceding paragraph is conditioned upon the accuracy of Respondent's representations to the EPA, as memorialized in paragraph directly below.

47. Respondent certifies by the signing of this Consent Agreement that it is presently in compliance with all requirements of TSCA and its implementing regulations.

48. Full payment of the penalty proposed in this Consent Agreement shall not in any case affect the right of the Agency or the United States to pursue appropriate injunctive or other equitable relief or criminal sanctions for any violations of law. This Consent Agreement and Final Order does not waive, extinguish, or otherwise affect Respondent's obligation to comply with all applicable provisions of TSCA and regulations promulgated thereunder.

49. Complainant reserves the right to enforce the terms and conditions of this Consent Agreement and Final Order.

General Provisions

50. By signing this Consent Agreement, the undersigned representative of Respondent certifies that it is fully authorized to execute and enter into the terms and conditions of this Consent Agreement and has the legal capacity to bind the party it represents to this Consent Agreement.

51. This Consent Agreement shall not dispose of the proceeding without a final order from the Regional Judicial Officer or Regional Administrator ratifying the terms of this Consent Agreement. This Consent Agreement and Final Order shall be effective upon the filing

of the Final Order by the Regional Hearing Clerk for EPA, Region 6. Unless otherwise stated, all time periods stated herein shall be calculated in calendar days from such date.

52. The penalty specified herein shall represent civil penalties assessed by EPA and shall not be deductible for purposes of Federal, State, and local taxes.

53. This Consent Agreement and Final Order shall apply to and be binding upon Respondent and Respondent's agents, successors and/or assigns. Respondent shall ensure that all contractors, employees, consultants, firms, or other persons or entities acting for Respondent with respect to matters included herein comply with the terms of this Consent Agreement and Final Order.

54. The EPA and Respondent agree to the use of electronic signatures for this matter pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 22.6. The EPA and Respondent further agree to electronic service of this Consent Agreement and Final Order by email to the following:

To EPA: *mcdonald.ashley@epa.gov*

To Respondent: *rklock@gmail.com*

RESPONDENT

Klock Ventures, d/b/a Southern Windows and Doors

Date: 5-21-2024

By:


Signature

Ronny C. Klock
Print Name

President
Title

COMPLAINANT

U. S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Date: May 22, 2024


Digitally signed by MARGARET
OSBOURNE
Date: 2024.05.22 14:29:13 -05'00'
Cheryl T. Seager
Director
Enforcement and
Compliance Assurance Division
U.S. EPA, Region 6

FINAL ORDER

Pursuant to Section 16(a) of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2615(a), and the Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties and the Revocation/Termination or Suspension of Permits, 40 C.F.R. Part 22, the foregoing Consent Agreement resolving this matter is hereby ratified and incorporated by reference into this Final Order.

Respondent is ORDERED to comply with all of the terms of the Consent Agreement. In accordance with 40 C.F.R. § 22.31(b), the effective date of the foregoing Consent Agreement and this Final Order is the date on which this Final Order is filed with the Regional Hearing Clerk.

This Final Order shall resolve only those causes of action alleged in the Consent Agreement. Nothing in this Final Order shall be construed to waive, extinguish, or otherwise affect Respondent's (or its officers, agents, servants, employees, successors, or assigns) obligation to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local statutes and regulations, including the regulations that were the subject of this action.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

THOMAS
RUCKI

Digitally signed by
THOMAS RUCKI
Date: 2024.05.22
18:22:44 -04'00'

Thomas Rucki
Regional Judicial Officer

Date _____

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that a true and correct copy of the foregoing Consent Agreement and Final Order was delivered to the Regional Hearing Clerk, U.S. EPA, Region 6, 1201 Elm Street, Dallas, Texas 75270-2102, and that a true and correct copy was sent this day in the following manner to the addressees:

Copy via Email to Complainant:

Mcdonald.ashley@epa.gov

Copy via Email to Respondent:

Ronnie Klock
3521 Dividend St.
Garland, Texas 75042

rklock@gmail.com

LORENA
VAUGHN

Digitally signed by LORENA
VAUGHN
Date: 2024.05.23 13:22:25 -05'00'

Signed
Office of Regional Counsel
U.S. EPA, Region 6