

UNITED STATES
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 6
DALLAS, TX

IN THE MATTER OF:

North Texas Pathology Laboratories, LLC

RESPONDENT

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Administrative Compliance Order on Consent
USEPA Docket No. RCRA-06-2020-0941

ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLIANCE ORDER ON CONSENT

I. PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

1. This Administrative Compliance Order on Consent (“ACOC”) is entered into by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6 (“EPA”) and Respondent, North Texas Pathology Laboratories, LLC, (“Respondent”), and concerns the facility located at 7501 Lakeview Parkway, Suite 160, Rowlett, TX 75088 (the “Facility”).
2. Notice of this action has been given to the state of Texas, under Section 3008(a)(2) of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (“RCRA”), 42 U.S.C. § 6928(a)(2)¹.
3. For the purpose of these proceedings, Respondent admits the jurisdictional allegations herein; however, Respondent neither admits nor denies the specific factual allegations and conclusions of law contained in this ACOC. This ACOC states a claim upon which relief may be granted.

¹ On December 26, 1984, the State of Texas received final authorization for its base Hazardous Waste Management Program (49 FR 48300). Subsequent revisions have been made to the Texas Hazardous Waste Program and authorized by the EPA. Except as otherwise provided, all citations found within this order are to the “EPA-Approved Texas Statutory and Regulatory Requirements Applicable to the Hazardous Waste Management Program” dated December 2015, incorporated by reference under 40 C.F.R. § 272.2201(c)(1)(i) effective on April 10, 2020. 85 Fed. Reg. 20190 (April 10, 2020); 40 C.F.R. 272.2201: Texas State-Administered Program: Final Authorization. References and citations to the “EPA-Approved Texas Statutory and Regulatory Requirements Applicable to the Hazardous Waste Management Program” may vary slightly from the State of Texas’ published version. The corresponding C.F.R. citations are also provided

4. Respondent waives any right to contest the allegations and its right to appeal the proposed final order contained in this ACOC and waives all defenses which have been raised or could have been raised to the claims set forth in the ACOC.
5. Respondent consents to the issuance of the ACOC without adjudication of the issues of law or fact, and consents to the specific stated Compliance Order, Section VIII, of this ACOC.

II. JURISDICTION

6. This ACOC is issued by the EPA pursuant to Section 3008(a) of RCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 6928(a), as amended by the Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments of 1984 ("HSWA") and is simultaneously commenced and concluded through the issuance of this ACOC under 40 C.F.R. §§ 22.13(b) and 22.18(b)(2) and (3).
7. Respondent agrees to undertake and complete all actions required by the terms and conditions of this ACOC. In any action by the EPA or the United States to enforce the terms of this ACOC, Respondent agrees not to contest the authority or jurisdiction of the EPA to issue or enforce this ACOC and agrees not to contest the validity of this ACOC or its terms or conditions.

III. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

8. This ACOC provides for the resolution of EPA Region 6's investigation of Respondent's Facility.

IV. STATUTORY AND REGULATORY AUTHORITY

9. Federal regulation of hazardous waste is primarily based on RCRA, enacted on October 21, 1976 to amend the Solid Waste Disposal Act, and the HSWA to further amend the Solid Waste Disposal Act. RCRA establishes a "cradle-to-grave" program to be administered by

the Administrator of EPA and authorized states for regulating the generation, transportation, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste. See 42 U.S.C. § 6901 et seq.

10. RCRA's Subchapter III (RCRA §§ 3001-3023, 42 U.S.C. §§ 6921-6940, known as "Subtitle C") required EPA to promulgate regulations establishing performance standards applicable to facilities that generate, transport, treat, store, or dispose of hazardous wastes. Together, RCRA Subtitle C and its implementing regulations, set forth at 40 C.F.R. Parts 260 – 279, comprise EPA's RCRA hazardous waste program.
11. Pursuant to its authority under RCRA, EPA has promulgated regulations at 40 C.F.R. Parts 260 through 272 applicable to generators, transporters, and treatment, storage, and disposal facilities.
12. The relevant RCRA statutory and regulatory requirements to this ACOC require that generators of solid waste and hazardous waste must, among other things:
 - A. Determine whether their generated solid wastes are hazardous, pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 262.11;
 - B. Comply with the statutory notification requirements of Section 3010 of RCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 6930;
 - C. Comply with the manifest requirements, pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 262.20; and
 - D. Determine its generator status by meeting the exemption conditions set forth at 40 C.F.R. § 262.34 or comply with the specific requirements set forth at 40 C.F.R. § 270.10.

V. FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

13. Respondent is an authorized company in the state of Texas, is conducting business in the state of Texas, and is located at 7501 Lakeview Parkway, Suite 160, Rowlett, Texas 75088.

14. Respondent is a “person” within the meaning of Section 1004(15) of RCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 6903(15); and 30 Texas Administrative Code (“TEX.ADMIN.CODE”) § 3.2(25), [40 C.F.R. § 260.10].
15. The Facility identified in Paragraph 1 of this ACOC is a “facility” within the meaning of 30 TEX.ADMIN.CODE § 335.1(59), [40 C.F.R. § 260.10].
16. North Texas Pathology Laboratories, LLC performs pathological laboratory testing at the Facility.
17. During the period of December 2019 to June 2020 EPA conducted a RCRA investigation and record review (“Investigation”) of Respondent’s performance as a generator of hazardous waste. Respondent submitted those documents requested which disclosed the quantity of hazardous waste generated at the Facility.
18. During the Investigation, EPA discovered that North Texas Pathology Laboratories, LLC, at a minimum, generated and offered for transport and treatment “solid wastes” and “hazardous wastes” as defined in 30 TEX.ADMIN.CODE §§ 335.1 (138) and (69), [40 C.F.R. §§ 261.2 and 261.24].
19. Based on its Investigation, EPA determined that Respondent generated the hazardous waste at the facility in quantities that exceeded the threshold amount of 100 kilograms of hazardous waste per month, which qualified Respondent for, at a minimum, the small quantity generator (“SQG”) status established under 30 TEX.ADMIN.CODE, Chapter 335, Subchapter C, [40 C.F.R. Part 262], for the periods that such wastes remained onsite.
20. North Texas Pathology Laboratories, LLC is a “generator” of “hazardous wastes” at the Facility, as those terms are defined in Sections 1004(5) & (6) of RCRA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 6903(5) & (6), 30 TEX.ADMIN.CODE §§ 335.1(65) & (69), [40 C.F.R. Parts 260 and 261].

21. As a generator of hazardous waste, North Texas Pathology Laboratories, LLC is subject to Sections 3002 and 3010 of RCRA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 6922 and 6930, and the regulations set forth at 30 TEX.ADMIN.CODE Chapter 335, Subchapter C, [40 C.F.R. Parts 262 and/or 270].

VI. Notification Requirements

22. The allegations in Paragraphs 1-21 are realleged and incorporated herein by reference.
23. Pursuant to Section 3010(a) of RCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 6930(a), any person generating a characteristic or listed hazardous waste shall file with the Administrator or authorized State a notification stating the location and general description of such activity and the identified characteristic or listed hazardous wastes handled by such person. No identified characteristic or listed hazardous waste subject to this subchapter may be transported, treated, stored, or disposed of unless notification has been given as required by Section 3010(a) of RCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 6930(a).
24. EPA alleges that on at least one occasion North Texas Pathology Laboratories, LLC did not file with the Administrator an initial or subsequent notification to accurately state the general description of its hazardous waste activities and its generation and management of hazardous waste during 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 in violation of Section 3010(a) of RCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 6930(a).
25. EPA alleges that on at least one occasion in 2015 through 2020, Respondent failed to comply with its notification requirements in violation of Section 3010(a) of RCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 6930(a).

VII. Failure to Operate Within Its Stated Generator Status

26. The allegations in Paragraphs 1-25 are realleged and incorporated herein by reference.

27. EPA alleges that Respondent operated as a Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generator (“CESQG”).
28. Pursuant to 30 TEX.ADMIN.CODE § 335.78(b), [40 C.F.R. § 261.5(b)], as long as a CESQG complies with the applicable requirement under 30 TEX.ADMIN.CODE §§ 335.78(e), (f), (g), and (j), [40 C.F.R. §§ 261.5(e), (f), (g) and (j)] the generator’s hazardous waste is not subject to regulation under 30 TEX.ADMIN.CODE, Chapter 335, Subchapters C, [40 C.F.R. Parts 262 through 268 and 270].
29. EPA alleges that on at least one occasion in 2015 through 2020, North Texas Pathology Laboratories, LLC exceeded the CESQG status and, for the period such hazardous waste remained onsite, operated at a minimum as a SQG in violation of one or more of the requirements for SQG under 30 TEX.ADMIN.CODE, Chapter 335, Subchapter C, [40 C.F.R. Part 262 through 268 and 270].
30. Respondent failed to comply with the SQG requirements in violation of 30 TEX.ADMIN.CODE Chapter 335, Subchapters C, [40 C.F.R. Parts 262 through 268 and 270].

VIII. COMPLIANCE ORDER

31. Pursuant to Section 3008(a) of RCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 6928(a), Respondent is hereby ordered to take the following actions, and within ninety (90) calendar days of the effective date of the settlement agreement, Respondent shall provide in writing the following:
 - A. Respondent shall certify that it has assessed all of its solid waste streams to determine the accurate waste codes and has developed and implemented Standard Operating Procedures (“SOP”) to ensure that North Texas Pathology Laboratories, LLC is operating in compliance with RCRA and the regulations promulgated thereunder, including, but not

limited to, procedures for: (a) making hazardous waste determinations; (b) managing hazardous wastes; (c) reporting, transporting, and disposing of hazardous waste; (d) preparing the manifests; and (e) meeting the requirements of the land disposal restrictions;

B. Respondent shall certify that it has accurately and adequately complied with its RCRA Section 3010 Notification; and

C. Respondent shall provide, with its certification, a copy of Respondent's SOPs as described in subparagraph A above.

32. In all instances in which this ACOC requires written submission to EPA, the submittal made by Respondent shall be signed by an owner or officer of North Texas Pathology Laboratories, LLC and shall include the following certification:

"I certify under the penalty of law that this document and all of its attachments were prepared by me or under my direct supervision in accordance with a system designed to assure that qualified personnel properly gathered and evaluated the information submitted. Based on my inquiry of the person or persons who manage the system, or those persons directly responsible for gathering the information, the information submitted is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, true, accurate, and complete. I am aware that there are significant penalties for submitting false information, including the possibility of fine and imprisonment for knowing violations."

Copies of all documents required by this ACOC shall be sent to the following:

U.S. EPA, Region 6
1201 Elm Street, Suite 500
Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division (ECDSR)
ATTN: Angela Hays
Dallas, Texas 75270-2102

Where possible, documents and certifications required by this section shall be sent by email to Angela Hays, at hays.angela@epa.gov.

IX. TERMS OF SETTLEMENT

i. Modification

33. The terms, conditions, and compliance requirements of this ACOC may not be modified or amended except upon the written agreement of both parties, and approved by a Regional Judicial Officer, and such modification or amendment being filed with the Regional Hearing Clerk.

ii. Indemnification

34. Neither EPA nor the United States Government shall be liable for any injuries or damages to person or property resulting from the acts or omissions of Respondent, their officers, directors, employees, agents, receivers, trustees, successors, assigns, or contractors in carrying out the activities required by this ACOC, nor shall EPA or the United States Government be held out as a party to any contract entered into by Respondent in carrying out the activities required by this ACOC.

iii. Record Preservation

35. Respondent shall preserve, during the pendency of this ACOC, all records and documents in its possession or in the possession of its divisions, employees, agents, or successors, which in any way relate to this ACOC regardless of any document retention policy to the contrary.

iv. Cost

36. Each party shall bear its own costs and attorney's fees. Furthermore, Respondent specifically waives its right to seek reimbursement of its costs and attorney's fees under the Equal Access to Justice Act (5 U.S.C. § 504), as amended by the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act (P.L. 04-121), and any regulations promulgated pursuant to those Acts.

v. Reservation of Rights

37. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this ACOC, EPA retains all of its authority to take, direct, or order any and all actions necessary to protect public health or the environment or to prevent, abate, or minimize an actual or threatened release of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants, or hazardous or solid waste or constituents of such wastes, on, at, or from the Facility, including but not limited to the right to bring enforcement actions under RCRA, CERCLA, and any other applicable statutes or regulations.
38. EPA reserves all of its statutory and regulatory powers, authorities, rights, remedies, both legal and equitable, that may pertain to Respondent's failure to comply with any of the requirements of this ACOC.
39. This ACOC shall not be construed as a covenant not to sue, release, waiver, or limitation of any rights, remedies, powers, claims, and/or authorities, civil or criminal, which EPA has under RCRA, CERCLA, or any other statutory, regulatory, or common law authority of the United States. Further, this ACOC does not resolve Respondent's liability for Federal civil penalties for the violations and facts set forth herein.

vi. Termination and Satisfaction

40. When Respondent believes that it has complied with all the requirements of this ACOC, including compliance with the Compliance Order, Respondent shall so certify in writing and in accordance with the certification language set forth in Section VIII (Compliance Order). Unless the EPA, Region 6 objects in writing within sixty (60) days of EPA's receipt of Respondent's certification, then this ACOC is terminated on the basis of Respondent's certification.

vii. Electronic Signatures and Service

41. The EPA and Respondent agree to the use of electronic signatures for this matter. The EPA and Respondent further agree to electronic service of this ACOC, pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 22.6, by email to the following addresses: Complainant: Clarissa Howley Mills, at mills.clarissa@epa.gov; and Respondent: Tonya L. Meier, at tmeier@grayreed.com

viii. Effective Date of Settlement

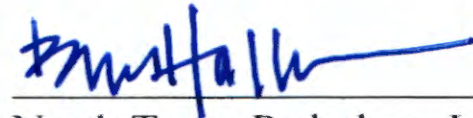
42. This ACOC shall become effective upon filing with the Regional Hearing Clerk.

RCRA-06-2020-0941
North Texas Pathology Laboratories, LLC

**THE UNDERSIGNED PARTIES CONSENT TO THE ENTRY OF THIS
ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLIANCE ORDER ON CONSENT:**

FOR THE RESPONDENT:

Date: 09/15/20



North Texas Pathology Laboratories,
LLC

FOR THE COMPLAINANT:

Date: _____

Cheryl T. Seager, Director
Enforcement and
Compliance Assurance Division

FINAL ORDER

Pursuant to the Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties, 40 C.F.R. Part 22, the foregoing ACOC is hereby ratified. This Final Order shall not in any case affect the right of the EPA or the United States to pursue appropriate civil penalties, injunctive or other equitable relief or criminal sanctions for any violations of law, including those violations alleged herein. 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. The Respondent is ordered to comply with the Compliance Order, Section VIII, and the Terms of Settlement, Section IX, as set forth in this ACOC. Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 22.31(b) this Final Order shall become effective upon filing with the Regional Hearing Clerk.

Date: 9/21/2020

Thomas Rucki
Regional Judicial Officer

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that a true and correct copy of the foregoing Administrative Compliance Order on Consent 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:

mills.clarissa@epa.gov

Copy via Email to Respondent:

tmeier@grayreed.com

EPA Region 6