



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

Sent Via Email

Ismael Ramirez
Chief Operating Officer
Ramcast Steel
7570 Woodman Place
Van Nuys, CA 91405
ismael@ramcast.net

RE: Request for Information Pursuant to Section 1445 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 USC § 300j-4) for the Method of Sanitary Wastewater Disposal at Ramcast Ornamental Supply Company (Assessor Identification Number: 2328-001-007)

Dear Ismael Ramirez:

Pursuant to section 1445 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), 42 U.S.C 300j-4, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region IX (EPA) conducted a compliance evaluation inspection of Assessor Identification Number: 2328-001-007 (Property) on October 18, 2022. The purpose of the inspection was to determine the Property's compliance with the SDWA's Underground Injection Control (UIC) regulations provided in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 40, Parts 144 - 148. Specifically, EPA was investigating the potential usage of large capacity cesspools (LCCs) at the Property.

The UIC regulations promulgated by EPA pursuant to the SDWA required that all existing LCCs be closed by April 5, 2005. The UIC regulations categorize LCCs as residential cesspools that serve multiple dwellings or non-residential cesspools that have the capacity to serve 20 or more persons per day. 40 CFR § 144.81(2). Cesspools allow raw sewage to be discharged into the ground and are a public health and environmental concern, particularly with regard to the threat they pose to underground sources of drinking water (USDWs). Additional information on the impact of large capacity cesspools and EPA's efforts to address these impacts can be found at EPA's website:
<https://www.epa.gov/uic/large-capacity-cesspools>.

Since EPA was not able to determine the manner in which the Property managed its sanitary wastewater during the October 18, 2022 compliance evaluation inspection, EPA issued a Request for Information letter on December 16, 2022, requiring a written response about the Property's subsurface wastewater infrastructure. Since the December 2022 letter, you have corresponded with EPA on obtaining answers to the questions listed in the letter but EPA still does not have a clear answer. EPA requires a written response to this correspondence which formally seeks complete information related to the Property's subsurface wastewater infrastructure. The SDWA provides EPA with the authority to request information for the purpose of determining compliance with the SDWA and its UIC regulations. Section 1445 of the SDWA, 42 U.S.C. § 300j-4, and 40 C.F.R. § 144.17.

EPA hereby requires you to provide the following information about the method of sanitary wastewater disposal at the Property:

1. A narrative description of the nature and physical characteristics of each subsurface wastewater disposal unit/system (e.g., cesspool, septic tank, seepage pit) located at the Property or associated with activities at the Property. The description must include the depth, width, and volume of the unit/system (including any associated tanks); and the material, nature and porosity of the lining, floor, and roof/cap/ceiling of the unit (including any associated tanks).
2. For each wastewater disposal unit identified in response to Request #1, a description of how the unit operates to treat and/or dispose of wastewater and whether or not it is currently in use.
3. A map or drawing, made at a minimum 1:10 scale (or some other easily readable scale) of the Property (and surrounding areas if necessary) that clearly identifies the location of each wastewater disposal unit identified in response to Request #1 and the dwellings, buildings or facilities that are contributing wastewater to those unit(s).
4. Copies of the following existing documents pertaining to the wastewater disposal units identified in response to Request #1:
 - a. any blueprints or drawings for the unit(s);
 - b. all permits issued by any local, state, or federal agency for the construction or use of the unit(s); and
 - c. any reports and data from any tests that have been performed on or at the unit(s), including, but not limited to, inspection reports, percolation tests, camera, and video records.
5. A description of each dwelling, building and/or facility that contributes sewage or wastewater to each wastewater disposal unit(s) identified in response to Request #1, and any copies of site plans or as-built drawings for each one.
6. A description of the ownership and operational control of the Property, including, but not limited to, the percentage ownership of each owner, the nature of operational control for each operator, and the contact information for all owners and operators or managers of the Property. Provide copies of any/all documents which support the ownership and/or operational control of the Property, including, but not limited to, leases, sales agreement, management agreements, operator agreements, etc.
7. For each subsurface wastewater disposal unit/system identified in response to Request #1, an identification and/or description of the following:
 - a. the type of business or activity operated on the Property that contributes wastewater to that unit(s), along with a description of the nature of the wastewater (e.g., sewage, rinse water, etc.);

- b. anytime during the past three years, the maximum daily number of persons that cumulatively use or visit the Property, along with an identification of the source of the data.

All submittals made in response to this letter must be accompanied by the following certification, which is to be signed by a duly authorized representative in accordance with 40 C.F.R. §§ 144.32(b) and (d):

"I certify under penalty of law that this document and all attachments were prepared under my direction or supervision in accordance with a system designed to assure that qualified personnel properly gather and evaluate 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."

Your response to this information request must be submitted by **July 16, 2023** to Christopher Chen at chen.christopher@epa.gov. In lieu of submitting the information by email, you may submit your response to the following address if post-marked by June 30, 2023:

Christopher Chen
USEPA, Region 9
Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division
Drinking Water Section (ECAD-3-3)
600 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 940
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Please be advised that failure to submit the information requested pursuant to Section 1445(a) of the SDWA, 42 U.S.C. § 300j-4(a), and 40 CFR §144.17, is a violation of SDWA and may subject you to an enforcement action by EPA, including an action for monetary penalties. Pursuant to Section 1445(c) of the SDWA, 42 U.S.C. 300j-4(c), EPA may seek penalties of up to \$62,689 in any such action.

EPA has promulgated regulations to protect the confidentiality of business information it receives. These regulations are set forth in 40 C.F.R. Part 2, Subpart B. A claim of business confidentiality may be asserted in the manner specified in 40 C.F.R. § 2.203(b) for part or all of the information submitted in response to this letter. EPA will disclose business information covered by such a claim only to the extent authorized by 40 C.F.R. Part 2, Subpart B. If no business confidentiality claim accompanies the information when EPA receives it, EPA may make it available to the public without further notice. You may not withhold any information from EPA on the grounds that it is confidential business information.

This request for information is not subject to review by the Office of Management and Budget under the Paperwork Reduction Act because it is not a "collection of information" under 44 U.S.C. § 3502(3). It is directed to fewer than ten persons and is an exempt investigation under 44 U.S.C. § 3518(c)(1).

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please feel free to contact Christopher Chen at (213) 244-1853 or chen.christopher@epa.gov with any questions and/or concerns.

Sincerely,

Lawrence Torres, Manager
Drinking Water Section
Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division