



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 6
1201 ELM STREET, SUITE 500
DALLAS, TEXAS 75270-2102

April 22, 2020

VIA E-MAIL: huss53@hotmail.com.

Zahid Hussein
Vogue Cleaners
1433 Wirt Rd
Houston, TX 77096

RE: Potential RCRA Violations and Opportunity for Settlement

Dear Mr. Hussein,

The United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6 ("EPA"), through its investigation and records review, made certain determinations about Vogue Cleaners and its facility located at 1433 Wirt Rd, Houston, TX. Specifically, EPA has identified potential violations of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act ("RCRA"), and the regulations promulgated thereunder. I therefore write to share with you: (1) the current areas of concern; (2) an option for resolution; and (3) a timeline for resolution.

Current Areas of Concern

As a generator of hazardous waste, Vogue Cleaners 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, Subchapters C and F, [40 C.F.R. Parts 262 and/or 270]. Upon further investigation, EPA may determine that Vogue Cleaners is also subject to Sections 3004 and 3005 of RCRA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 6924 and 6925, and the regulations promulgated thereunder.

Based on EPA's current investigation and records review, Vogue Cleaners is identified as a Very Small Quantity Generator. However, based on manifests received from a registered treatment facility listed in Attachment 1, at least once within the last five calendar years, Vogue Cleaners may have generated hazardous waste in quantities between 100 kilograms and 1,000 kilograms per calendar month, which qualified Vogue Cleaners as a Small Quantity Generator as established under 30 Tex. Admin. Code Chapter 335, Subchapter C, [40 C.F.R. Part 262].

At a minimum, EPA identified the following potential violations:

- i. Failure to meet RCRA notification requirements, in violation of RCRA § 3010(a), 42 U.S.C. § 6930(a);
- ii. Failure to operate within its stated generator status for at least one (1) year, in violation of 30 Tex. Admin. Code Chapter 335, Subchapters C and F, [40 C.F.R. Parts 262 and/or 270].

EPA is prepared to meet and discuss the potential violations, and other areas of concern, with Vogue Cleaners, with the aim of resolving this matter through a timely settlement process.

Option for Resolution

Upon receipt of this letter, if Vogue Cleaners is interested in resolving the matter through settlement, Vogue Cleaners has until 05/06/2020, to inform EPA by letter or e-mail by contacting:

U.S. EPA, Region 6
1201 Elm Street, Suite 500
Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division (ECDSR)
ATTN: Tripti Thapa
Dallas, Texas 75270-2102
e-mail: thapa.tripti@epa.gov
Phone: 214-665-7563

Thereafter, Tripti Thapa will make arrangements to meet with Vogue Cleaners facility representatives either at the EPA office in Dallas, Texas, or via a conference call. During this meeting or conference, Vogue Cleaners may address the potential violations and present evidence that contravenes EPA's evidence. The main goal of this option is to bring the facility into timely compliance with the applicable environmental laws and regulations.

To the extent that Vogue Cleaners qualifies as a "small business" under the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act, enclosed is an Information for Small Businesses sheet that provides information on compliance assistance.

Timetable for Resolution

Given the nature of the potential violations listed above and the current evidence that EPA has in support of these violations, EPA estimates that the parties could have an agreed upon Administrative Order on Consent by 06/27/2020. This is contingent on whether Vogue Cleaners avails itself of the settlement process now offered and works amicably with the EPA. It should be noted that if Vogue Cleaners decides not to accept this streamlined option for settlement, Vogue Cleaners should notify EPA of its decision in writing to Tripti Thapa by 05/06/2020. Thereafter, EPA will exercise its other options for ensuring Vogue Cleaner's timely compliance with RCRA and the regulations promulgated thereunder.

Please direct questions to Tripti Thapa of the Waste Enforcement Branch at 214-665-7563. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Margaret Osbourne
Chief
Waste Enforcement Branch

Enclosure:
Information for Small Businesses

eCC: james.gradney@tceq.texas.gov
john.shelton@tceq.texas.gov

ATTACHMENT 1

Manifest Numbers

003806869SKS

003808405SKS

003807463SKS

U.S. EPA Small Business Resources Information Sheet

The United States Environmental Protection Agency provides an array of resources to help small businesses understand and comply with federal and state environmental laws. In addition to helping small businesses understand their environmental obligations and improve compliance, these resources will also help such businesses find cost-effective ways to comply through pollution prevention techniques and innovative technologies.

Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU)

www.epa.gov/aboutepa/about-office-small-and-disadvantaged-business-utilization-osdbu

EPA's OSDBU advocates and advances business, regulatory, and environmental compliance concerns of small and socio-economically disadvantaged businesses.

EPA's Asbestos Small Business Ombudsman (ASBO)

www.epa.gov/resources-small-businesses/asbestos-small-business-ombudsman or 1-800-368-5888

The EPA ASBO serves as a conduit for small businesses to access EPA and facilitates communications between the small business community and the Agency.

Small Business Environmental Assistance Program

<https://nationalsbeap.org>

This program provides a "one-stop shop" for small businesses and assistance providers seeking information on a wide range of environmental topics and state-specific environmental compliance assistance resources.

EPA's Compliance Assistance Homepage

www.epa.gov/compliance

This page is a gateway to industry and statute-specific environmental resources, from extensive web-based information to hotlines and compliance assistance specialists.

Compliance Assistance Centers

www.complianceassistance.net

EPA sponsored Compliance Assistance Centers provide information targeted to industries with many small businesses. They were developed in partnership with industry, universities and other federal and state agencies.

Agriculture

www.epa.gov/agriculture

Automotive Recycling

www.ecarcenter.org

Automotive Service and Repair

www.ccar-greenlink.org or 1-888- GRN-LINK

Chemical Manufacturing

www.chemalliance.org

Construction

www.cicacenter.org

Education

www.campuserc.org

Food Processing

www.fpeac.org

Healthcare

www.hercenter.org

Local Government

www.lgean.org

Surface Finishing

<http://www.sterc.org>

Paints and Coatings

www.paintcenter.org

Printing

www.pneac.org

Ports

www.portcompliance.org

Transportation

www.tercenter.org

U.S. Border Compliance and Import/Export Issues

www.bordercenter.org

EPA Hotlines and Clearinghouses

www.epa.gov/home/epa-hotlines

EPA sponsors many free hotlines and clearinghouses that provide convenient assistance regarding environmental requirements. Examples include:

Clean Air Technology Center

(CATC) Info-line www.epa.gov/catc or 1-919-541-0800

Superfund, TRI, EPCRA, RMP, and Oil Information Center

1-800-424-9346

EPA Imported Vehicles and Engines Public Helpline

www.epa.gov/otaq/imports or 1-734-214-4100

National Pesticide Information Center

www.npic.orst.edu or 1-800-858-7378

National Response Center Hotline to report oil and hazardous substance spills - <http://nrc.uscg.mil> or 1-800-424-8802

Pollution Prevention Information Clearinghouse (PPIC) -

www.epa.gov/p2/pollution-prevention-resources#ppic or 1-202-566-0799

Safe Drinking Water Hotline -

www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/safe-drinking-water-hotline or 1-800-426-4791

Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) Hotline

tsc hotline@epa.gov or 1-202-554-1404

Small Entity Compliance Guides

<https://www.epa.gov/reg-flex/small-entity-compliance-guides>

EPA publishes a Small Entity Compliance Guide (SECG) for every rule for which the Agency has prepared a final regulatory flexibility analysis, in accordance with Section 604 of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA).

Regional Small Business Liaisons

www.epa.gov/resources-small-businesses/epa-regional-office-small-business-liaisons

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Regional Small Business Liaison (RSBL) is the primary regional contact and often the expert on small business assistance, advocacy, and outreach. The RSBL is the regional voice for the EPA Asbestos and Small Business Ombudsman (ASBO).

State Resource Locators

www.envcap.org/statetools

The Locators provide state-specific contacts, regulations and resources covering the major environmental laws.

State Small Business Environmental Assistance Programs (SBEAPs)

<https://nationalsbeap.org/states/list>

State SBEAPs help small businesses and assistance providers understand environmental requirements and sustainable business practices through workshops, trainings and site visits.

EPA's Tribal Portal

www.epa.gov/tribalportal

The Portal helps users locate tribal-related information within EPA and other federal agencies.

EPA Compliance Incentives

EPA provides incentives for environmental compliance. By participating in compliance assistance programs or voluntarily disclosing and promptly correcting violations before an enforcement action has been initiated, businesses may be eligible for penalty waivers or reductions. EPA has two such policies that may apply to small businesses:

EPA's Small Business Compliance Policy

www.epa.gov/enforcement/small-businesses-and-enforcement

EPA's Audit Policy

www.epa.gov/compliance/epas-audit-policy

Commenting on Federal Enforcement Actions and Compliance Activities

The Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act (SBREFA) established a SBREFA Ombudsman and 10 Regional Fairness Boards to receive comments from small businesses about federal agency enforcement actions. If you believe that you fall within the Small Business Administration's definition of a small business (based on your North American Industry Classification System designation, number of employees or annual receipts, as defined at 13 C.F.R. 121.201; in most cases, this means a business with 500 or fewer employees), and wish to comment on federal enforcement and compliance activities, call the SBREFA Ombudsman's toll-free number at 1-888-REG-FAIR (1-888-734-3247).

Every small business that is the subject of an enforcement or compliance action is entitled to comment on the Agency's actions without fear of retaliation. EPA employees are prohibited from using enforcement or any other means of retaliation against any member of the regulated community in response to comments made under SBREFA.

Your Duty to Comply

If you receive compliance assistance or submit a comment to the SBREFA Ombudsman or Regional Fairness Boards, you still have the duty to comply with the law, including providing timely responses to EPA information requests, administrative or civil complaints, other enforcement actions or communications. The assistance information and comment processes do not give you any new rights or defenses in any enforcement action. These processes also do not affect EPA's obligation to protect public health or the environment under any of the environmental statutes it enforces, including the right to take emergency remedial or emergency response actions when appropriate. Those decisions will be based on the facts in each situation. The SBREFA Ombudsman and Fairness Boards do not participate in resolving EPA's enforcement actions. Also, remember that to preserve your rights, you need to comply with all rules governing the enforcement process.

EPA is disseminating this information to you without making a determination that your business or organization is a small business as defined by Section 222 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act or related provisions.