Prineville appeals DEQ penalty

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DEQ Issues $5,200 Penalty to City of Prineville Railway for Hazardous Waste Management Violations

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has issued a $5,200 penalty against the City of Prinevilleâ€™s â€œCity of Prineville Railwayâ€• for failure to determine whether wastes it generated were hazardous, and failure to immediately clean spills or releases of used oil. The violations occurred at the City of Prineville Railway site at 185 N. 10th St.

An Aug. 17, 2006 inspection at the property revealed that the city generated roughly 40 gallons of used solvent and improperly transported and disposed of it in 2005 without first determining whether the solvent was a hazardous waste. The DEQ inspector also discovered several spills of oil on the property and an oil-stained area beneath a used oil storage tank that had not been cleaned up.

To ensure proper management and disposal of hazardous waste, anyone who generates waste must first accurately determine if wastes generated are hazardous waste. Because the city uses solvent to clean locomotive parts, it is required to make a hazardous waste determination to establish whether the solvents it generates are hazardous waste and, if hazardous, dispose of the solvents at a licensed hazardous waste facility. Mismanagement of hazardous waste may adversely affect air, soil and water quality, thereby increasing the risk to public health.

The cityâ€™s failure to immediately clean up oil spills or releases is a serious violation of Oregon environmental law. It poses a considerable risk to human health and the environment because the property is located immediately adjacent to a water canal that could possibly be contaminated by any unattended releases. Used oil can contain cancer-causing agents, metal contaminants and organic compounds that may filter into the groundwater supply.

The City of Prineville has appealed the penalty and intends to work with DEQ to resolve all issues.