



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

EPA reaches agreement with Abbott Labs on clean-air violations

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CHICAGO (Aug. 25, 2004) -- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5 has reached an agreement with Abbott Laboratories on alleged violations of EPA regulations to protect stratospheric ozone at the company's health-care manufacturing plant at 1401 Sheridan Road, North Chicago, Ill. EPA assessed a \$17,903 penalty, and the company agreed to complete an additional environmental project.

"Abbott has agreed to retrofit two refrigeration units to use EPA-approved non-ozone depleting refrigerants," said Acting Regional Administrator Bharat Mathur. "We're pleased because this \$123,000 project does more than the law requires, and goes beyond what EPA had sought." He said Abbott will also retrofit five other units as part of a consent order issued simultaneously.

The agreement resolves an EPA complaint filed at the same time alleging that Abbott failed to repair chillers that leaked excessive amounts of stratospheric ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbon refrigerants, or "CFCs." In addition, EPA alleged the company violated planning, testing, retrofitting and retirement requirements for the chillers.

When CFC refrigerants deplete the stratospheric ozone layer, dangerous amounts of cancer-causing ultraviolet rays from the sun strike the earth. Production of some of these chemicals was stopped in 1995, and federal law strictly controls their use and handling.

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