



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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For Immediate Release: October 11, 2005

05-68

DOH CITES C&C OF HONOLULU FOR HYDROGEN SULFIDE VIOLATIONS AT SAND ISLAND TREATMENT PLANT

The Hawaii State Department of Health Clean Air Branch has issued a Notice of Violation against the City and County of Honolulu Department of Environmental Services for exceeding its hydrogen sulfide air permit limit of 0.025 parts per million at the property line of the Sand Island Wastewater Treatment Plant. A penalty of \$542,000 has been imposed on the City for exceedances that occurred intermittently between February 2003 and December 2004 and were self-reported by the facility.

In addition to the penalty, the Department of Environmental Services has been ordered to take corrective actions to comply with the conditions of the air permit.

Hydrogen sulfide (H₂S) is a gaseous compound formed by the decomposition of organic matter in the absence of oxygen. These conditions are present in septic tanks, cesspools, wastewater pumping stations and treatment plants. At concentration levels of 10-20 parts per million, hydrogen sulfide can cause temporary health effects, such as headaches, dizziness, nausea and irritations to the eyes and respiratory tract. The much lower air permit limit is meant to minimize the nuisance associated with hydrogen sulfide at even lower levels and to provide a larger margin of safety for the public.

The City has twenty days to contest the order, and if it does so, the case will be scheduled for a hearing.

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