EPA FINES TWO GOVERNMENT CONTRACTORS

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BOSTON - Two government contractors working at the U.S. Department of Energy facility in Windsor, Conn. will pay $26,350 in penalties for mishandling PCB wastes, the New England office of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said today.

Electric Boat Corporation and KAPL, Inc. (Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory Inc., a Lockheed Martin Company) were under contract to strip PCB-contaminated paint from storage tanks at the DOE facility on Day Hill Road.

Electric Boat will pay $13,600 for improperly disposing of the PCB-contaminated clothing. KAPL, Inc. will pay $12,750 for failing to ensure that EPA requirements were met for the use and disposal of personal protective equipment, and for failing to notify the EPA promptly of releases of PCBs.

"Companies dealing with hazardous waste hold a civic and public health responsibility to follow environmental regulations to the letter of the law," said John P. DeVillars, administrator of the EPA's New England office. "These penalties should send a message to others in the business that we are maintaining a vigilant watch over those who handle PCBs and other toxic materials."

Electric Boat's personnel were required to use disposable protective clothing during paint removal, and the clothing was required to be shipped for disposal (with other PCB contaminated wastes) to a chemical waste management facility in New York. Instead, Electric Boat sent the personal protective equipment to a New Bedford, Mass. laundry facility.

Electric Boat, a General Dynamics Company in Groton, Conn., is a subcontractor for PCB paint removal to KAPL, Inc., the operations contractor at the DOE facility. The facility is run by the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program, a program jointly administered by the Navy and DOE.

The EPA learned of the violations in 1997 when DOE reported the mistakes that had been made in violation of its federal permit issued by the EPA pursuant to the Toxic Substances Control Act.

PCBs are no longer manufactured but remain in use as non-conductive, fire-resistant additives to coolant liquids in heavy electrical equipment, and in this case added to paint. They are extremely stable chemical compounds in the environment, and are suspected carcinogens. Exposure to PCBs can cause liver problems and chloracne, a persistent skin rash.
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