

EPA News Release

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Philip Services to Accelerate Closure of Georgetown Hazardous Waste Facility, Pay \$136,115

Philip Services Corporation will voluntarily expedite closure of its Georgetown neighborhood hazardous waste facility as part of a settlement with the EPA of a \$773,000 complaint filed by the agency last year for numerous violations of groundwater monitoring and analysis requirements of its permit.

Philip, which does business in Washington as Burlington Environmental Inc., has agreed to pay a \$136,115 penalty and will spend at least \$2,152,500 to expedite closure of the Georgetown facility by December 31, 2003, which otherwise wouldn't close until its current operating permit expires in 2011. The company also agrees to comply with the corrective action permit intended to address cleanup at the Georgetown facility.

Early closure of the Georgetown facility is expected to result in significant environmental benefits. The settlement requires Philip to implement early closure of the Georgetown facility in a manner that will maximize the environmental benefits of pollution prevention and pollution reduction. Georgetown facility operations will be transferred from its mixed residential/commercial/ industrial neighborhood in Seattle to two existing facilities in industrial communities in Tacoma and Kent.

Currently the company is investigating the extent of historic benzene and solvent contamination under the Georgetown community. Some of the contamination has reached an underground aquifer that drains to the Lower Duwamish waterway. EPA is overseeing the investigation and cleanup of the contaminant plume.

The company operates hazardous-waste storage, transfer and treatment plants in Kent, Tacoma and the Georgetown neighborhood, and also operates a laboratory in Renton that analyzes the waste being handled at its operations. The Washington Department of Ecology will continue to have oversight authority for the operating permits at those facilities.

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Philip's customers include hundreds of businesses and local government entities such as the EPA, the Department of Defense, and The Boeing Company.

"While there are pros and cons to a business leaving a community, this could ultimately be the best thing for the Georgetown community," said Rick Albright, Director of EPA's Office of Waste and Chemicals Management in Seattle. "The facility there has had problems and this gives the community something of a fresh start. The closure will be early, but the monitoring and clean-up will continue."

"We look forward to working on this transition," said Greg Sorlie, manager of Ecology's Hazardous Waste and Toxic Reduction program. "We welcome Philip's investment in making hazardous waste services available in Washington that protect public safety, health and the environment."

While Philip agrees to the terms of this consent agreement and final order it does not admit liability for the violations alleged in EPA's August complaint.

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