

U. S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 7
11201 RENNER BOULEVARD
LENEXA, KANSAS 66219

2019 FEB 27 PM 2: 22

BEFORE THE ADMINISTRATOR

In the Matter of:

Rick Ahring Construction Services, Inc.,

Respondent.

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Docket No. TSCA-07-2018-0167

CONSENT AGREEMENT AND FINAL ORDER

Preliminary Statement

1. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7 (the "EPA" or "Complainant"), and Rick Ahring Construction Services, Inc. ("Respondent") have agreed to a settlement of this action before the filing of a complaint, and thus this action is simultaneously commenced and concluded pursuant to Rules 22.13(b) and 22.18(b)(2) of the Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties and the Revocation/Termination or Suspension of Permits, 40 C.F.R. §§ 22.13(b) and 22.18(b)(2).

Jurisdiction

2. This proceeding is an administrative action for the assessment of civil penalties instituted pursuant to Section 16(a) of the Toxic Substances Control Act ("TSCA"), 15 U.S.C. § 2615(a).

3. This Consent Agreement and Final Order serves as notice that the EPA has reason to believe that Respondent has violated Section 409 of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2689, by failing to comply with the regulatory requirements of 40 C.F.R. Part 745, Subpart E, *Lead-Based Paint Renovation, Repair and Painting Rule*, promulgated pursuant to 15 U.S.C. §§ 2682, 2686, and 2687.

Parties

4. Complainant, by delegation from the Administrator of the EPA and the Regional Administrator, EPA, Region 7, is the Chief of the Toxics and Pesticides Branch, Water, Wetlands, and Pesticides Division, EPA, Region 7.

5. Respondent is Rick Ahring Construction Services, Inc., a corporation in good standing doing business in the state of Missouri.

Statutory and Regulatory Background

6. Congress passed the Residential Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Act of 1992 (the “Act”), 42 U.S.C. §§ 4851 to 4856, to address the need to control exposure to lead-based paint hazards. One of the stated purposes of the Act is to implement a broad program to reduce lead-based paint hazards in the Nation’s housing stock. 42 U.S.C. § 4851a(2). The Act amended TSCA by adding *Title IV—Lead Exposure Reduction*, Sections 401 to 412, 15 U.S.C. §§ 2681 to 2692.

7. Section 402 of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2682, requires that the Administrator of the EPA promulgate regulations governing the training and certification of individuals and contractors engaged in lead-based paint activities, including renovation of target housing. Section 406 of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2686, requires that the Administrator of the EPA promulgate regulations requiring persons who perform for compensation a renovation of target housing to provide a lead hazard information pamphlet to the owner and occupant prior to commencing the renovation. Section 407 of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2687, requires that the regulations promulgated pursuant to the TSCA include recordkeeping and reporting requirements to insure effective implementation.

8. Pursuant to Section 402(a) of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2682(a), the EPA promulgated regulations at 40 C.F.R. Part 745, Subpart L, *Lead Based Paint Activities*. See Lead; Requirements for Lead-Based Paint Activities in Target Housing and Child-Occupied Facilities, 61 Fed. Reg. 45778, 45813 (Aug. 29, 1996). Pursuant to Section 406(b) and Section 407 of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2686(b) and 2687, the EPA promulgated regulations at 40 C.F.R. Part 745, Subpart E, *Residential Property Renovation*. See Lead; Requirements for Hazard Education Before Renovation of Target Housing, 63 Fed. Reg. 29908, 29919 (June 1, 1998). Finally, pursuant to Section 402(c)(3) of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2682(c)(3), the EPA amended and re-codified regulations at 40 C.F.R. Part 745, Subparts E and L, and added additional regulations at 40 C.F.R. Subpart L (“Renovation, Repair, and Painting Rule”). See Lead; Renovation, Repair, and Painting Program, 73 Fed. Reg. 21692, 21758 (Mar. 31, 2008).

9. The regulations set forth at 40 C.F.R. Subpart E, *Residential Property Renovation*, including the Renovation, Repair, and Painting Rule, require that owners and occupants of target housing and child-occupied facilities receive information on lead-based paint hazards before renovations begin, establish work practice standards for renovations that disturb painted surfaces in target housing and child-occupied facilities, and requires that firms and individuals performing, offering, or claiming to perform such renovations are properly trained and obtain EPA certification.

10. The requirements set forth in the regulations at 40 C.F.R. Subpart E, *Residential Property Renovation*, apply to all renovations performed for compensation in target housing and child-occupied facilities, unless otherwise excluded as set forth in 40 C.F.R. § 745.82.

11. The regulation at 40 C.F.R. § 745.83 defines “renovation” as the modification of any existing structure, or portion thereof, that results in the disturbance of painted surfaces, unless that activity is performed as part of an abatement as defined by 40 C.F.R.

§ 745.223. The term renovation includes, but is not limited to, the removal, modification, or repair of painted surfaces or painted components (e.g., modification of painted doors, surface restoration, window repair, surface preparation activity (such as sanding, scraping, or other such activities that may generate paint dust)); the removal of building components (e.g., walls, ceilings, plumbing, windows); weatherization projects (e.g., cutting holes in painted surfaces to install blown-in insulation or to gain access to attics, planing thresholds to install weather stripping); and interim controls that disturb painted surfaces.

12. Section 401(17) of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2681(17), defines “target housing” as any housing constructed prior to 1978, except housing for the elderly or persons with disabilities or any zero-bedroom dwelling (unless any child who is less than six years of age resides or is expected to reside in such housing).

13. The regulation at 40 C.F.R. § 745.83 defines “firm” as a company, partnership, corporation, sole proprietorship, or individual doing business, association, or other business entity; a Federal, State, Tribal, or local government agency; or a nonprofit organization.

14. The regulation at 40 C.F.R. § 745.83 defines “person” as any natural or judicial person including any individual, corporation, partnership, or association; any Indian Tribe, State, or political subdivision thereof; any interstate body; and any department, agency, or instrumentality of the Federal Government.

15. The regulation at 40 C.F.R. § 745.87(a) provides that failure or refusal to comply with any provision of 40 C.F.R. Part 745, Subpart E, is a violation of Section 409 of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2689. In addition, Section 409 of TSCA provides that it shall be unlawful for any person to fail to comply with, *inter alia*, any provision of 40 C.F.R. Part 745, Subpart E.

16. Section 16(a) of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2615(a), and 40 C.F.R. § 745.87(d), authorize the EPA Administrator to assess a civil penalty for each violation of Section 409 of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2689. Each day that such a violation continues constitutes a separate violation. The Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act of 1990, 28 U.S.C. § 2461, as amended by the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996, 31 U.S.C. § 3701, and implementing regulations at 40 C.F.R. Part 19, increased the statutory maximum penalty to \$37,500 for violations that occurred after January 12, 2009. Congress amended TSCA in June 2016, increasing the statutory maximum penalty to \$37,500. P.L. No: 114-182. Most recently, the 2018 Civil Monetary Penalty Inflation Adjustment Rule, 83 Fed. Reg. 1190 (Jan. 10, 2018), promulgated pursuant to the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act Improvements Act of 2015, 28 U.S.C. § 2461, increased these statutory maximum penalties to \$38,892 for violations that occur after November 2, 2015.

General Factual Allegations

17. On or about July 7, 2017, and pursuant to Section 11 of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2610, representatives of the EPA conducted an inspection of Respondent’s renovation activity records for two properties: 1108 SW Skyline Drive, Blue Springs, Missouri (“Skyline Drive Property”), and 8603 East 84th Terrace, Raytown, Missouri (“84th Terrace Property”, together

“the Properties”). The purpose of the inspection was to evaluate Respondent’s compliance with TSCA and the requirements of the Renovation, Repair, and Painting Rule. A copy of the inspection report was mailed to Respondent on August 1, 2017.

18. Respondent is, and at all times referred to herein was, a corporation doing business in the state of Missouri under the name Rick Ahring Construction Services, Inc.

19. Respondent, at all times referred to herein, was a “person” and “firm” as defined by 40 C.F.R. § 745.83.

20. The EPA inspection found that on or around March 15, 2017 to June 28, 2017, Respondent engaged in a “renovation” of the Skyline Drive Property as defined by 40 C.F.R. § 745.83. The renovation work included extensive fire damage repair, replacing wood trim, and sanding and refinishing hardwood floors.

21. The EPA inspection found that on or around November 23, 2016 to March 29, 2017, Respondent engaged in a “renovation” of the 84th Terrace Property as defined by 40 C.F.R. § 745.83. The renovation work included extensive fire damage repair, demolishing sheetrock ceilings and walls, and replacing windows.

22. At all times relevant to this Consent Agreement and Final Order, Respondent’s renovations at the Properties were “renovations for compensation” as defined by 40 C.F.R. § 745.82(a).

23. At all times relevant to this Consent Agreement and Final Order, the Properties were “target housing” as defined by Section 401(17) of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2681(17). The EPA inspection and subsequent investigation revealed that the Skyline Drive Property was built in 1964 and the 84th Terrace Property was built in 1960.

24. At all times relevant to this Consent Agreement and Final Order, the Properties were owned by a party other than Respondent and not occupied.

25. As a result of the EPA inspection and additional information obtained by the agency, Complainant has determined that violations of the Renovation, Repair, and Painting Rule, 40 C.F.R. Part 745, Subpart E, and Section 409 of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2689, occurred as a result of Respondent’s renovation activities at the Properties.

Allegations of Violation

26. Complainant hereby states and alleges that Respondent has violated TSCA, and federal regulations promulgated thereunder, as follows:

Count 1

27. The facts stated in Paragraphs 17 through 25 above are herein incorporated.

28. Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 745.89(a)(1), firms that perform renovations for compensation must apply to the EPA for certification to perform renovations. With certain exceptions not relevant here, 40 C.F.R. § 745.81(a)(2)(ii) prohibits firms from performing, offering, or claiming to perform renovations without certification from the EPA in target housing or child-occupied facilities.

29. The EPA inspection revealed that Respondent failed to apply for and obtain EPA certification prior to commencing the renovation for compensation on the Properties. Furthermore, the renovations did not qualify for one of the exceptions identified in 40 C.F.R. § 745.82.

30. Respondent's failure to apply to the EPA for certification pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 745.89(a)(1) prior to performance of the renovation on the Properties is a violation of 40 C.F.R. § 745.81(a)(2)(ii). Respondent, therefore, violated Section 409 of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2689.

Counts 2 & 3

31. The facts stated in Paragraphs 17 through 25 above are herein incorporated.

32. Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 745.89(d)(2), firms performing renovations must ensure that a certified renovator is assigned to each renovation performed by the firm and discharges all of the certified renovator responsibilities identified in 40 C.F.R. § 745.90.

33. The EPA inspection revealed that Respondent did not assign a certified renovator to the renovations performed on either of the Properties.

34. Respondent's failure to ensure that a certified renovator was assigned to the renovations that the firm performed on each of the Properties are violations of 40 C.F.R. § 745.89(d)(2). Respondent, therefore, violated Section 409 of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2689.

Counts 4 & 5

35. The facts stated in Paragraphs 17 through 25 above are herein incorporated.

36. Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 745.84(a)(1), firms performing renovation activities in any residential dwelling unit of target housing must provide the owner of the unit with the EPA pamphlet entitled *Renovate Right: Important Lead Hazard Information for Families, Child Care Providers and Schools* ("EPA Pamphlet") no more than 60 days before beginning the renovation.

37. The EPA inspection revealed that Respondent did not provide the owners of the Properties with the EPA Pamphlet before beginning renovation activities on the Properties.

38. Respondent's failure to provide the owner of each of the Properties with the EPA Pamphlet before beginning renovation activities are violations of 40 C.F.R. § 745.84(a)(1). Respondent, therefore, violated Section 409 of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2689.

Counts 6 & 7

39. The facts stated in Paragraphs 17 through 25 above are herein incorporated.

40. Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 745.86(a), firms performing renovations must retain and, if requested, make available to the EPA all records necessary to demonstrate compliance with the Renovation, Repair, and Painting Rule, 40 C.F.R. Part 745, Subpart E, and Section 409 of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2689, for a period of three years following completion of the renovation.

41. The EPA inspection revealed that Respondent failed to retain all records necessary to demonstrate compliance with the Renovation, Repair, and Painting Rule for a period of three years following completion of renovations at the Properties, including documentation of lead-safe work practices performed during renovations, documentation of on-the-job training of non-certified workers, and documentation of lead-based paint testing.

42. Respondent's failure to retain all records necessary to demonstrate compliance with the Renovation, Repair, and Painting Rule for a period of three years following completion of renovations at each of the Properties are violations of 40 C.F.R. § 745.86(a). Respondent, therefore, violated Section 409 of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2689.

CONSENT AGREEMENT

43. For the purpose of this proceeding, as required by 40 C.F.R. § 22.18(b)(2),
Respondent:

- (a) admits the jurisdictional allegations set forth herein;
- (b) neither admits nor denies the specific factual allegations stated herein;
- (c) consents to the assessment of a civil penalty, as stated herein;
- (d) consents to the issuance of any specified compliance or corrective action order;
- (e) consents to any conditions specified herein;
- (f) consents to any stated Permit Action;
- (g) waives any right to contest the allegations set forth herein; and
- (h) waives its rights to appeal the Final Order accompanying this Consent Agreement.

44. Respondent consents to the issuance of this Consent Agreement and Final Order and consents for the purposes of settlement to the payment of the civil penalty specified herein.

45. Respondent and the EPA agree to conciliate this matter without the necessity of a formal hearing and to bear their respective costs and attorneys' fees.

Penalty Payment

46. Respondent agrees that, in settlement of the claims alleged herein, Respondent shall pay a civil penalty of **Twelve Thousand Four Hundred Seven Dollars (\$12,407)** as set forth below.

47. Respondent shall pay the penalty within thirty (30) days of the effective date of the Final Order. Such payment shall identify Respondent by name and include the Docket Number TSCA-07-2018-0167, and shall be by certified or cashier's check made payable to the "United States Treasury" and sent to:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Fines and Penalties
Cincinnati Finance Center
PO Box 979077
St. Louis, Missouri 63197-9000

or by alternate payment method described at <http://www.epa.gov/financial/makepayment>.

48. A copy of the check or other information confirming payment shall simultaneously be sent to the following:

Regional Hearing Clerk
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
11201 Renner Boulevard
Lenexa, Kansas 66219; and

Kate Reitz, Attorney
Office of Regional Counsel
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
11201 Renner Boulevard
Lenexa, Kansas 66219.

49. Respondent understands that its failure to timely pay any portion of the civil penalty may result in the commencement of a civil action in Federal District Court to recover the full remaining balance, along with penalties and accumulated interest. In such case, interest shall begin to accrue on a civil or stipulated penalty from the date of delinquency until such civil or stipulated penalty and any accrued interest are paid in full. 31 C.F.R. § 901.9. Interest will be assessed at a rate of the United States Treasury Tax and loan rates in accordance with 31 U.S.C. § 3717. Additionally, a charge will be assessed to cover the costs of debt collection including processing and handling costs, and a non-payment penalty charge of six (6) percent per year compounded annually will be assessed on any portion of the debt which remains delinquent more than ninety (90) days after payment is due. 31 U.S.C. § 3717(e)(2).

Effect of Settlement and Reservation of Rights

50. Full payment of the penalty proposed in this Consent Agreement shall only resolve Respondent's liability for federal civil penalties for the violations alleged herein. Complainant reserves the right to take any enforcement action with respect to any other violations of TSCA or any other applicable law.

51. The effect of settlement described in the immediately preceding paragraph is conditioned upon the accuracy of Respondent's representations to the EPA, as memorialized in paragraph directly below.

52. Respondent certifies by the signing of this Consent Agreement that it is presently in compliance with all requirements of TSCA and its implementing regulations.

53. Full payment of the penalty proposed in this Consent Agreement shall not in any case affect the right of the EPA or the United States to pursue appropriate injunctive or other equitable relief or criminal sanctions for any violations of law. This Consent Agreement and Final Order does not waive, extinguish or otherwise affect Respondent's obligation to comply with all applicable provisions of TSCA and regulations promulgated thereunder.

54. Complainant reserves the right to enforce the terms and conditions of this Consent Agreement and Final Order.

General Provisions

55. By signing this Consent Agreement, the undersigned representative of Respondent certifies that he or she is fully authorized to execute and enter into the terms and conditions of this Consent Agreement and has the legal capacity to bind the party he or she represents to this Consent Agreement.

56. This Consent Agreement shall not dispose of the proceeding without a final order from the Regional Judicial Officer or Regional Administrator ratifying the terms of this Consent Agreement. This Consent Agreement and Final Order shall be effective upon the filing of the Final Order by the Regional Hearing Clerk for Region 7 of the EPA. Unless otherwise stated, all time periods stated herein shall be calculated in calendar days from such date.

57. The penalty specified herein shall represent civil penalties assessed by the EPA and shall not be deductible for purposes of Federal, State, and local taxes.

58. This Consent Agreement and Final Order shall apply to and be binding upon Respondent and Respondent's agents, successors, and/or assigns. Respondent shall ensure that all contractors, employees, consultants, firms, or other persons or entities acting for Respondent with respect to matters included herein comply with the terms of this Consent Agreement and Final Order.

RESPONDENT
RICK AHRING CONSTRUCTION SERVICES, INC.

Date: 2-19-18

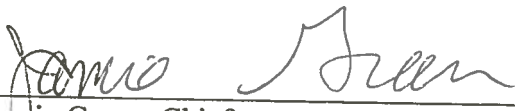
By: 

RICK AHRING
Print Name

OWNER
Title


COMPLAINANT
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Date: 2/26/18



Jamie Green, Chief
Toxics and Pesticides Branch
Water, Wetlands, and Pesticides Division

Date: 2/26/18



Kate Reitz
Office of Regional Counsel

FINAL ORDER

Pursuant to Section 16(a) of TSCA, 42 U.S.C. § 2615(a), and the Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties and the Revocation/Termination or Suspension of Permits, 40 C.F.R. Part 22, the foregoing Consent Agreement resolving this matter is hereby ratified and incorporated by reference into this Final Order.

Respondent is ORDERED to comply with all of the terms of the Consent Agreement. In accordance with 40 C.F.R. § 22.31(b), the effective date of the foregoing Consent Agreement and this Final Order is the date on which this Final Order is filed with the Regional Hearing Clerk.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Karina Borrromeo
Karina Borrromeo
Regional Judicial Officer

Feb. 27, 2018
Date

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 7

IN THE MATTER OF)
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Rick Ahring Construction)
 Services)
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_____)

Docket No. TSCA-07-2018-0167

ORDER

Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 22.5(a)(1), facsimile/electronic filing of page (9) of the Consent Agreement and Final Order (CAFO) is authorized in this proceeding.

Dated: Feb. 27, 2018

Karina Borromeo

Karina Borromeo

Regional Judicial Officer

Region 7

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that that a true and correct copy of the foregoing Consent Agreement and Final Order was sent this day in the following manner to the addressees:

Copy via Email to Complainant:

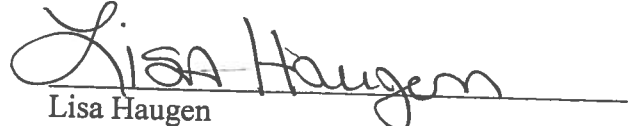
reitz.katherine@epa.gov

AND

Copy via Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested to Respondent:

Mr. Richard L. Ahring
Rick Ahring Construction Services, Inc.
27109 E. Argo Road
Independence, Missouri 64057

Dated this 27 day of February, 2018.


Lisa Haugen
Hearing Clerk, Region 7