

# OSU fined \$10,400 for 7 DEQ violations

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*University plans steps to fix problem areas*

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The state Department of Environmental Quality has fined Oregon State University \$10,400 for seven hazardous waste violations.

The violations, discovered during January and February inspections, are considered serious, according to the DEQ, and were referred to the department's enforcement section, which issued the fines.

The DEQ performed inspections at OSU Jan. 23, Jan. 24 and Feb. 12. Inspectors found a number of violations, including failure to identify sources of hazardous waste, clearly mark hazardous waste containers, correctly date hazardous waste containers and close containers. In one case, inspectors found three drums filled with radioactive and hazardous waste in storage that were not marked as hazardous, and other unmarked containers holding lead paint chips, paint thinner and sulfuric acid.

In addition, some items were listed as concerns, not violations. The inspectors questioned the state of an area that formerly was used to store hazardous waste but is now being used as a solid waste and recycling storage area.

The DEQ report stated that a metal drum with PCB in it was found at the site, and that it required special handling.

"OSU should re-evaluate the continued use of this area," the report stated. "The site is currently open and it is possible for anyone to dump waste at the site."

Inspectors also questioned the labeling of waste from the OSU facilities paint shop and the disposal of fixer solution from photo processing on campus. They recommended that OSU implement a pollution prevention program to help reduce energy use and reduce pollutants from the university.

The university was informed of the violations March 5. OSU Associate Vice President for Finance and Administration Jim Lloyd sent the agency a response April 1 in which he detailed measures the university would take to correct the violations. Most of the solutions included correctly labeling waste containers, determining the source of all hazardous waste streams, and implementing a 10-minute rule for closing containers.

"One of the challenges at any University involves maintaining the large number of waste collection sites in compliance when used by a continuously changing force of employees and students," wrote Lloyd. "We will strive to more strongly emphasize this point during student labs. We would like to point out that a great deal of thought and attention has gone into the waste disposal process in the student labs which includes closable funnels, well labeled containers, and segregation of waste."

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Steve LeBoeuf, manager of environmental health and safety at OSU, said the report was actually a positive one for the university.

"This is fairly typical," he said. "It was a very good inspection. We were not illegally disposing of anything."

LeBoeuf said it's fairly common to find violations such as poor labeling or open containers at a university. He issues such as labeling and quickly shutting waste containers are sometimes secondary for researchers out in the field.

"Jim Lloyd sat in on the last meeting we had (with DEQ) and asked, 'Is there any way we can be perfect?' " LeBoeuf said. The answer, according to LeBoeuf, was no.

LeBoeuf said the biggest source of hazardous waste on campus comes from the science labs, followed by the facilities shops on campus.

Conservation is an important step in trying to decrease pollutants on campus, he said.

"One of the things we strive for is to get people to minimize," he said. "Typically in the past, buying a gallon is cheaper than buying 10 grams. So they buy the gallon and use 10 grams, and it sits around for eons."

Cheryll Hutchens, natural resource specialist for DEQ, said OSU produces more than 2,200 pounds of hazardous waste a month. She said DEQ attempts to inspect places that produce such large amounts of waste at least every three to five years. She doesn't know how many violations OSU had during its last inspection, but said it has been responsive to DEQ's requests.

"They have corrected them in the past," she said.

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