



# Haz Mat Release

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
FIRE DEPARTMENT HEALTH HAZARDOUS MATERIALS DIVISION



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## PREPARING FOR THE BIG ONE

By Barbara C. Yu

With the recent earthquakes and fire storms in Southern California, we are reminded that we live in a precarious region prone to natural disasters. We are also vulnerable to man-made disasters such as possible terrorist acts at numerous critical infrastructures in our region. Health HazMat Division (HHMD) is moving towards improved disaster preparedness with its recently published Business Continuity Plans.

As a primary emergency response agency for accidental hazmat and hazwaste releases, HHMD can be quickly at the scene of an incident to efficiently mitigate these disasters. HHMD has a database that includes the names and locations of businesses handling hazardous materials as well as the technical staff trained to respond to these disasters.

HHMD Inspection Section and Data Operation Unit staff collect the hazmat and hazwaste facility information, while the California Accidental Release Prevention Program unit oversees the prevention of accidental releases from certain high risk facilities. Our Emergency Operations Section, in conjunction with the Hazmat Task Force, mitigates these releases. For long term environmental cleanups, our Site Mitigation Unit provides oversight. When there is a question of illegal hazmat /hazwaste activities, our Investigations Unit becomes involved in the process.

The HHMD Business Continuity Plan brings together all of the personnel, information, and equipment resources needed to respond to any disaster and ensures that our operations transition smoothly between our normal daily chores to emergency operations following a disaster and then back to our normal functions. The Plan provides information on:

1. The order of succession, stating who will be in charge;
2. The automatic delegation of authority ( which may be different from what we are familiar with);
3. The essential services and personnel needed to continue our operations;



### Drills and coordination with other agencies.

4. The dispatching plan which determines where personnel are needed;
5. Alternate work sites to report to if HHMD headquarters and/or satellite offices are impacted;
6. Vital records needed to continue operations and
7. The Division's disaster communications plan.

Each year, we have our annual Division disaster drill. In the past two years, we have practiced different components of the Business Continuity Plan. This year, the drill will incorporate more elements. With practice, our Division will be ready for any disaster that may strike.

## STATE DELEGATES CORRECTIVE ACTION TO LA COUNTY CUPA

By Shahin Nourishad

The State Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) amended Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR) in August 2006, to delegate Corrective Action (CA) authority to Certified Unified Program Agencies (CUPA). To obtain delegation, each CUPA must file a comprehensive application with DTSC and provide information and documentation on the training, experience and qualifications of their staff, who will be providing CA oversight at contaminated facilities.

Los Angeles County CUPA filed an application with DTSC in June 2007, and was delegated CA authority in May 2008. DTSC has determined that the Los Angeles County CUPA is qualified at the Tier 2 level (highest Tier) to implement and enforce environmental assessment and corrective action. Pursuant to CA authority, Los Angeles County CUPA is qualified to:

- Inspect permit-by-rule facilities
- Review phase I environmental assessments
- Enforce compliance with phase I requirements
- Issue and enforce an order for corrective action



*SMU personnel supervising a clean up operation.*

To date, the Los Angeles County CUPA is the only agency that applied for and was delegated CA authority in California. More CUPAs are now in the application process following LA County's leadership.

The delegation of CA authority will enable the Los Angeles County CUPA Site Mitigation Unit to provide oversight on a wider range of sites (i.e., Tiered Permits) and issue enforcement orders for mitigation of hazardous waste releases at CUPA facilities. The CA delegation is another venue in addition to DTSC and the Regional Water Quality Control Board for residents and businesses of Los Angeles County seeking oversight in a cost-effective and timely manner for cleanup of their contaminated properties. □

## DAMAGE INSPECTIONS TRAINING

By Bill Westcott

HMD's Damage Inspections (DINS) Committee recently conducted new DINS training classes on June 11 and August 13 2008. A total of 38 HHMD technical staff attended. The class was based on the curriculum for Firescope's "Damage Inspections Technical Specialist" class. The class covered the duties and responsibilities of the Damage Inspections Technical Specialist as well as safety considerations and personal protective equipment requirements. Data collection and the use of Global Positioning System (GPS) were also taught. A mock incident/field exercise was held, ending with a report writing exercise. In addition, all personnel interested in participating in DINS are required to attend basic Wildland Fire Safety and Fire Shelter training.

For those who have completed these requirements and have all the necessary personnel protection equipment, keep your pager on and be ready to deploy.



*Supervisor Bill Westcott showing the personal protective equipment for DINS.*

DINS has done damaged assessments since 2007. Some of these incidents are: Island incident, Fairwood Fire incident, Buckweed incident, East Basin Fire, Sesnon Fire, Marek Fire, and the most recent ones, the Sayre Fire and the Freeway Complex Fire. □

## BILL'S CORNER

By Division Chief Bill Jones

**W**e are all living in a world deeply entrenched in computers and electronics with capabilities and features yet to be implemented within this Department. But the time is rapidly approaching where information such as State-required reports from businesses will be submitted electronically over a web-based medium and information collected or stored will become more available to outside interested parties and stakeholders. E-mails are now read 24/7 with Blackberry devices and enhanced communication tools are becoming more widely available to staff. Digital photographs, videos of classes and seminars available on the internet, databases of any configuration and field tablets are all realities rapidly approaching implementation in our Department.

So what does this mean to us? What is our plan for the future? What outside forces are pushing us in a specific direction? For one, HHMD has just undergone a major upgrade to our Envisions software with features and capabilities that most will see as enhancements. But there are many other things shaping our computer and electronic future, including:

1. AB 2286 (signed into law and effective January 1, 2009) which provides funding through CUPA fees to create a State data-warehouse and a bridge between businesses and the State, businesses and local agencies, and the State and local agencies. This bridge will eventually allow direct access of local business information to State and federal agencies and outside requestors. On the horizon is connectivity □ to inspection and enforcement information directly through this type of bridge for Environmental Protection Agency and/or State data analysis.
2. The media is spending more time "data mining" for information about inspections, compliance, enforcement and follow-up activities, including where staff are possibly not performing up to par. This happened recently in a local agency and raises concerns about what type of information should be "posted" or made easily available on the web.
3. More time and energy will be required to learn how to utilize these tools. Staff that are not able to adjust and learn to use of these enhancements may find work more difficult.
4. The accuracy, completeness and quality of data is becoming extremely important as file information is



electronically captured instead of on paper. We are seeing some personnel who don't provide any details in their Envision inputs for example, and others that put in too much detail.

5. Performance and other work indicators are certainly more available as tools for supervisors to oversee and monitor staff work. This type of information traditionally often came in yearly or perhaps quarterly reports. Now, the information is readily available in real time for corrections or coaching to take place.
6. Equipment used to respond to terrorism-related incidents have certainly advanced technologically and has increased the equipment available for emergency responders. Recently, in conjunction with the Department of Public Health Radiation Management, new telemetry equipment is now available to send radiation levels to offices and distant locations for analysis and recommendations in real time.

All of this is good, of course, but caution and diligence must be maintained. E-mail was once seen as a major benefit, but to many, it has become a daily routine of sifting through junk or unnecessary messages. A prudent course is not to be first in line for new computers, electronics and technology. Sometimes it's good to let someone else work out the bugs, which always seem to exist with new equipment or capabilities. As a Department, we have done well to measure our forward progress to protect our interests and that of the public good. On the other hand, some may wonder why we don't move faster in certain areas. "Why can't we have the field tablets tomorrow so we can do our jobs better?", some may ask. New features are coming, but with the plans and necessary infrastructure to support them.

Finally, we all must be aware of the information we are inputting into the various databases and "systems". Eventually, much of the information is going to be available even outside our Department. Keep this in mind as we evolve to the next generation of technology. □

## ABOVEGROUND PETROLEUM STORAGE TANK UPDATE

By Lance Ralston

**A**B 1130 became effective on January 1, 2008, and transferred responsibility for implementation, enforcement, and administration of the Aboveground Petroleum Storage Tank (APST) Program to the local Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA). Previously, this program was administered by the Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCB) and the CUPA only checked to see whether a written Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure (SPCC) Plan existed and to make referrals to the RWQCB if there was none. Biannual fees that were being charged by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) were placed into an Environmental Trust Fund. These funds are now being used for grant funding for the CUPAs to recover the costs of APST Program implementation for the first two years. AB 1130 places a moratorium on the implementation of local fees for the APST program until January 2010. As the Los Angeles County CUPA, our Department will receive \$215,000 in grant funding to recover implementation costs during this moratorium period.

Any facility where the total aggregate volume of the above ground tanks that contain petroleum related products is in excess of 1,320 gallons is subject to the APST Program and must prepare and maintain a SPCC plan. Facilities with total aggregate volume of at least 10,000 gallons are subject to triennial inspections by the CUPA to



*Aboveground Storage Tank for diesel fuel*

verify program compliance.

CUPA inspectors are required to be trained on APST program requirements and pass a written certification examination. The California Environmental Protection Agency is preparing a training program to be delivered in 18 to 24 training sessions throughout the State together with the CUPA inspector test. The training sessions were originally scheduled to be delivered during the summer of 2008, but various difficulties in development have caused a delay until May 2009.

In the meantime, Inspectors can help to identify and/or verify the fee categories for the approximately 450 APST facilities known to be operating within the Los Angeles County CUPA jurisdiction. The same six fee categories used by the SWRCB will be utilized by the County. The Technical Services Unit has identified the fee categories of APST facilities within the Envision database. □



### spotlight on health – Flu Pandemics

**T**he recent emergence of diseases such as Auto Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), and Avian Flu (H5N1) have pushed infectious diseases to the top of the medical and political agendas. The deadly SARS crisis in Ontario, Canada, in 2003, in which 44 people died and 375 were sickened, jolted the mind of our political leaders to the dangers of outbreak of infectious diseases. It also holds valuable lessons that we must learn to protect ourselves against future outbreaks, including a global influenza pandemic predicted by many scientists.



The influenza pandemic, which occurred between 1918-1919, demonstrated that influenza could kill millions of people worldwide, and cause societal disruption on an unprecedented scale. Experts are concerned that if H5N1 gains the ability to pass from birds to humans, it may cause a similar pandemic. Since late 2003, there have been 385 human cases recorded infected with H5N1, with more than 245 deaths in 15 countries in Africa, Asia and Europe. In 2008, there have been 36 cases and 28 deaths (predominantly in Indonesia, although Egypt, China, and Vietnam continue to experience cases and deaths). While we do not know exactly what a flu pandemic will look like or when it will come, we do know enough to be able to put systems in place so that we will be ready to react if one should occur. To learn more about HHMD preparedness, view our health executive advisories in the shared drive. □

## OUR TAKE ON THE ENVIRONMENT

By *Dan Zenarosa*

**D**id you know that our choices in the workplace profoundly affect our environment? Consider:

- It takes 24 trees to produce one ton of office paper. Using recycled paper can save 17 trees.
- Shutting down our computers after office hours prevents the release of 2,016 pounds of carbon dioxide a year from power generating plants.
- Fixing a leaking faucet can save as much as 20 gallons of water per day.
- Driving a hybrid electric vehicle produces up to 90 percent fewer emissions than a conventional car, which means less smog and greenhouse effects.

To promote environmental conservation, Los Angeles County CEO William Fujioka, advocated the reduction of paper based correspondence and required all County vendors to use paper with a minimum 15 percent recycled content in March 2008.

In June 2008, Prevention Services Bureau Deputy Fire Chief Scott Poster announced the Bureau's commitment to preserving the environment for future generations by soliciting suggestions and assistance from its employees.

In HHMD, where approximately 80 percent of the technical staff are State registered environmental health specialists, the importance of conservation was emphasized with the creation of an environmental management plan. Some of its recommendations are:

- Turning off computer and office lights when out of



the office for meetings and trainings.

- Reporting leaking taps, toilets, urinals or pipes to the building maintenance coordinator.
- Saving paper by design. Resize page layouts, line spacing, and font size to maximize words per page.
- Using e-mail as much as possible and filing information electronically rather than in hard copy.
- Creating a "used materials area" within the office that would store and recycle usable items such as binders, folders, envelopes, and boxes.
- Purchasing recycled products when possible.
- Buying fuel efficient, lower emission, hybrid cars.
- Carpooling when several people will be attending the same meeting, training, or traveling to the same location.

All of us have responsibility in protecting and conserving our environment. Our choices can mean so much for our own quality of life and for our children's future. □

## THE METROLINK DISASTER

**O**n September 12, 2008, a Union Pacific freight train and a Metrolink commuter train collided in Chatsworth, California, derailling several cars and killing 25 people. LA County Fire Department was on the scene including the HHMD Emergency Response Team, which supervised the fuel spills clean up, decontamination, and disposal of biomedical waste. Fire Chief P. Michael Freeman said, "the Metrolink crash shows us that we truly have heroes among heroes". The HHMD staff on the scene were: Chief Bill Jones, Manager Walter Uroff, Stan Townsend, Darin Childers, Nosa Omoruyi, Don Thompson, Martha Delgado, Ismael Gonzalez, Don Ellis, Beverly Migues, Linda Schweizer, Miguel Garcia, and Sal Molleda.



## UPDATES ON ADMINISTRATIVE ENFORCEMENT ORDERS

By John Vincent

The Administrative Enforcement Order (AEO) has become an effective enforcement tool for HHMD to bring about compliance with applicable laws and regulations on hazardous materials and hazardous waste. Its aim is to compel compliance and to terminate illegal activities that are detrimental to public health and the environment. AEO's are initiated by an Inspector's findings when the violations are egregious, willful and intentional, negligent, chronic or recalcitrant, and pose a significant threat to public health and the environment.

The current AEO tracking database began in July 2005. Since then, there have been 70 settled cases generated from the different programs and offices within the Division. From January to July 2008, the number of settled AEO's has gone up to 35. Most notable among these cases are the following:

1. Weatherford International, a valve and pump repair facility in the oil production industry, agreed to settle for failing to perform a waste determination on waste grit blast (containing nickel) and disposing of hazardous waste to the municipal trash.
2. Entreprise Arms in Irwindale settled for failing to properly dispose waste solvents, failing to label hazardous waste containers, and failing to submit their contingency plan and hazardous materials inventory. The AEO also included unpaid CUPA permit fees.
3. Southwestern Industries in the Southwest district settled for failing to keep hazardous waste stored in closed and secure containers and to provide their employees with adequate employee training.
4. The following four companies all settled for failing to provide a professional engineer certification for their hazardous waste treatment system and tanks: RL Anodizing, Burbank Plating Service Corporation, Aero Electric Connector, and Aero Dynamic Plating Company.
5. The MC Gill Corporation, a manufacturer of aircraft parts and equipment, has settled for the following violations: failure to operate a facility to prevent unplanned releases to the environment; failure to



*Special Operation Section Manager David Baltazar and Investigation Unit Supervisor Tony Payne conducting an AEO hearing.*

properly label hazardous waste containers; failure to keep hazardous waste containers closed when not actively adding or removing hazardous waste; failure to provide documentation of ongoing hazardous waste and materials management training of employees consistent with their job description; and failure to inspect containers on a weekly basis.

6. Kentmaster, a manufacturer of machinery used in meat packing plants settled for failure to maintain the facility to minimize the unplanned release of hazardous waste to the environment, exceeding hazardous waste accumulation time; failure to properly label all hazardous waste containers; and failure to adequately train employees. In addition to payment of costs and penalty, two management level employees were ordered to attend the California Compliance School.

7. Paulee Body Shop, an auto repair shop settled for illegally disposing hazardous waste (waste paint and contaminated materials) to the municipal trash and exceeded the accumulation storage time for hazardous waste.

The days of finger wagging and repeated admonitions to the business owner are over. The California Health and Safety Code, specifically section 25187 and 25404.1 gave authority to the regulating agency to issue orders to achieve compliance. Hopefully, through the AEO process, there will be consistency in the enforcement of environmental laws and regulations and, consequently, provide a deterrent effect within the regulated community. □

## Fiscal Year 2008-09 Fee Ordinance

By Lance Ralston

**A**s part of the HHMD financial plan to improve the financial stability and solvency of HHMD, several ordinance changes were suggested by the Financial Management Division (FMD) and the Treasurer Tax Collector (TTC). These suggestions were incorporated into the ordinance submitted for consideration to the Board of Supervisors (BOS).

Originally the fee ordinance contained a proposed fee increase for Fiscal Year 2008-09 that incorporated a calculation that considered the fee effects of facilities that went out of businesses, moved, or changed hands, or otherwise should never have been billed. But rather than increasing fees on businesses, the Fire Chief proposed that Fire Stations be used to check on and update the billable status of HHMD facilities during their annual occupancy inspections. Procedures and policies to implement this assistance from the Fire Stations are already being developed and implemented.

Without the consideration of fee effects from facilities that have gone out of business, moved, or changed



*Meeting of the Board of Supervisors*

hands, the fee changes were minimal due to some cost savings derived from changes in overhead rates and employee benefits. Therefore, the fees for FY 2008-09 will remain the same as in FY 2007-08.

HHMD and FMD have been working hard to improve fee collection efforts by working with the TTC to accept delinquency referrals from FMD. County Counsels for the Fire Department and TTC have come into agreement on the ordinance changes necessary to affect these referrals. The ordinance was submitted to the BOS and heard at the public hearing on August 26, 2008. The ordinance is now effective for the FY 2008-09 billing year. □

## Envision Connect Upgrade

By Michael Whitehead

**T**he Information Management Division (IMD) of the Los Angeles County Fire Department upgraded the Envision database on August 18, 2008 to a web-based version called Envision Connect. Like its Windows version, Envision Connect enables HHMD to create and update facility records, owner records unified program permits, inspection records, enforcement records, site remediation records, complaints, service requests, hazardous materials records, and other information required by the California Environmental Protection Agency, for the regulated facilities in its jurisdiction.

The process of learning Envision Connect for personnel included a full week-and-a-half of practical training, using a test version of the database provided by the IMD, the creation of a committee, daily teleconference meetings between HHMD and software designer Decade Software Company, and assistance by the HHMD Technical Services Unit to the Inspectors and data entry staff needing guidance with the Envision Connect applications. Envision Connect has some advantages over the Windows version, the primary one



being the improvement of speed at completing daily time and activity reports, facility records, and owner records in the district offices at Sylmar, Lomita, El Monte, Pico Rivera, and Culver City. Another advantage provided by the program is the ease of generating statistical reports of routine inspections, complaint inspections, violation records, and general demographic reports of the regulated community. Finally, Envision Connect has the ability to allow Inspectors who are in the field, or away from their office work station, to create and update time and activity records via laptop computers from an off-site location.

Unfortunately, Decade Software Company and IMD have to repair quite a few problems on Envision Connect. These problems have been assessed by Technical Services Unit and by IMD and referred to Decade Software Company during teleconferences and web-based meetings. When the few problems are finally corrected, Envision Connect should turn out to be a valuable improvement in managing the various unified program applications. □

## ENCOUNTER WITH ALUMINUM POWDER

By Jojo Comandante

**D**ANGER! Explosion Hazard: Keep Away from Water! If this sign or label is on any container of hazardous material, automatically assume the worst could happen if handled improperly. Extreme caution should be taken in handling the container, and ensure to avoid adding water to the container.

On July 22, 2008, the Sheriff's Department requested assistance from the Health Hazardous Materials Division (HHMD) to handle an abandoned container of aluminum powder in a foreclosed, abandoned house in Lancaster. When the HHMD Emergency Response Team (ERT) arrived, the Sheriff's Bomb Squad had already made entry and assessed the condition of the container. It was an open top 15-gallon metal drum with about 20 pounds (one-third full) of atomized aluminum powder. Warning signs on the container said, "Keep away from water, heat, open flame, and sparks". All the literature indicates that aluminum powder is flammable and may form an explosive mixture in air. The Bomb Squad planned on detonating the powder, one pound at a time.

Considering the logistical problems with exploding a flammable solid one pound at a time in a residential area, the ERT explored other options. Aluminum is not as water reactive as sodium and it was already exposed to air when it was reported. Forming dust clouds from an explosion would even be more dangerous. The ERT suggested to the Bomb Squad to leave the drum alone for disposal on the next day and to stabilize it with a solvent, such as cooking oil or copious amounts of water. The Bomb Squad frowned on the idea of leaving it alone. So, small portions of the powder were tested with cooking oil and water. The powder was tested first with the cooking oil but these did not mix readily. No reaction was observed. Next, several drops of water



*Aluminum powder in a 15 gal. metal drum container*

were carefully added to the watch glass containing the small amount of aluminum powder. There was no heat generated and there was no reaction. The container was taken by an environmental contractor for incineration on July 28, 2008.

Professor Nosang Myung of the University of California -Riverside, offered this explanation. Aluminum powder can be oxidized in air and water, generating heat, and explosive hydrogen gas in the case of water. In the above situation, the powder may already have been slowly oxidized in air and therefore would not react with water anymore. Also, the particle size of aluminum dictates its reactivity. The smaller the particle, the more reactive it would be. The aluminum powder in the above situation may not have the right particle size for reactivity. Although an explosive reaction did not occur in this incident, safety dictates that the warning against water getting in contact with aluminum powder should be strictly observed.

In hindsight, the best alternative for the above incident would have been to close the drum and make sure that the powder would not form any dust cloud. Seal the container and have it ready for pick-up for disposal, or even for recycling. □

## HEART WALK SAVES LIVES!!

**O**ver 300 Los Angeles County Fire Department employees and their families and friends participated in the Start! Heart Walk of the American Heart Association on September 27, 2008 at the Exposition Park in Los Angeles. This is the second year that our Department has participated in this annual fundraising event to fight heart disease and stroke. On the picture from left to right are HHMD staff who participated that day: George TerAsvadsarian, Karen Coddling and daughter, Chief Bill Jones, Victor Nanadiego and wife, and Dan Zenarosa and wife. Others who were present, but not included in this photo: Kim Clark, Kenji Mayeda, Beverly Migues, and Estela Contreras with her three daughters.



## HHMD Financial Plan Summary

By Lance Ralston

One of the primary goals given to HHMD last fiscal year was to develop a financial plan that would address the financial aspects of our operations, ensure financial stability, and would minimize its impact to the Consolidated Fire Protection District.

The components of the HHMD financial plan can be broken down into nine broad areas for discussion:

**Improvements in the billing process**— A major improvement will be to move the billing dates up to the beginning of the fiscal year. This will reduce the lost revenues associated with changes in the billing information. Another improvement involves the simplification of the installment payment system. It has been proposed to allow everyone 60 days to pay their invoices. This will mean, there will be only one inquiry: did the facility pay within 60 days? This will simplify the accounting process. The referral of delinquent accounts to the Treasury Tax collectors Office (TTC) for collection has been under development for some time. An ordinance has been developed with the concurrence of County Counsel to resolve the remaining legal issues and institute the TTC referral process.

**Handling service request**— HHMD receives and processes over 2,500 service requests each year. Over 80 percent of service requests are billing-related such as mail returns, businesses that moved, changes in ownership, or defunct businesses. Recently, HHMD initiated a successful clean up of all backlogged service requests prior to billing.

**Billing and collections by other billing entities on behalf of the Division**— Regular meetings have been initiated with other agencies that serve as billing entities for HHMD facilities. Protocols, cross reference fields, and quarterly updates have been established to keep HHMD and Los Angeles City databases in sync and reduce billing problems.

**Participating Agency (PA) interactions**— Regular meetings are being held to discuss PA and billing-related matters. A single date has been established for PA billing file submissions and protocols are being developed to refer PA debt to TTC for collection activities with all other delinquent account invoices.

**Tracking mechanisms to determine how we are doing financially**— The tracking mechanism to monitor the progress of invoicing and collection by the various



jurisdictions associated with HHMD has been revamped to provide a snapshot of the HHMD financial status throughout the billing year and compares the current year's invoicing, collections, and costs with previous years.

**Envision database improvements**— The Envision database is used to manage the programs administered by HHMD and was upgraded to Envision Connect on August 4, 2008. This web-based version of Envision offers customized workflows and allows to easier implementation of electronic submission technology for regulated business and field inspection systems in the future.

**New Business Project (NBP)**— HHMD has been involved with the NBP for a number of years. A number of new businesses have been incorporated into the HHMD database through a variety of sources and methods. This will reduce the number of businesses that may be operating illegally without the proper permit.

**Emergency Operation Section (EOS) Costs**— EOS costs and cost recovery has presented perplexing problems. The \$4.9 million EOS costs out of the \$18 million HHMD budget has been loaded onto the Hazardous Waste (HW) program and represents 38% of the program's costs. This places an extra burden on the HW facilities that end up paying for EOS costs. A number of options are being explored to resolve this issue.

**New Programs**— The latest new program, transferred by legislative mandate to the local Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA), is the Aboveground Petroleum Storage Tank (APST) program. HHMD has identified about 450 APST facilities within its jurisdiction. The legislation transferred authority for this program to CUPA effective January 1, 2008.

HHMD will continue to meet these challenges and will continue to develop its financial plan to achieve financial stability. □

## Chlorine Gas Cylinders Found in Lancaster By Darin Childers

**O**n March 27, 2007, a joint audit inspection of the Los Angeles County Agricultural Commissioner/Weights and Measures' (ACWM) Hazardous Materials Program was conducted by representatives of the State Office of Emergency Services (OES) and HHMD's California Accident Release Prevention (Cal-ARP) Program personnel. During this visit, four 1-ton chlorine gas cylinders were found on a dirt lot adjacent to onion fields near Avenue K and East 90<sup>th</sup> Street in the unincorporated city of Lancaster. Because of this sighting, a Cal-ARP inspector was assigned to inspect and determine the ownership of the chlorine gas cylinders.

On May 3 and 4, 2007, inspections were conducted at Wheeler Farms and Calandri Sunrise Farms, to verify the handling of regulated substances, and the status of their Cal-ARP licenses. Multiple chlorine sites were found located near roadside areas between Palmdale and Lancaster, many without fenced protection. In addition, several one-ton chlorine cylinders were found across from homes at some of these locations. Notices of violations (NOV) were issued to both onion farm operators for failure to submit a Regulated Substance (RS) registration, and a Risk Management Plan (RMP) in accordance with Title 19 of the California Code of Regulations. The State's threshold quantity for regulating chlorine gas is 100 pounds.

On August 2, 2007, a second NOV was issued by our Cal-ARP personnel to both onion farms for the removal of their combined 44 one-ton chlorine cylinders under the County's nuisance abatement program. A copy of the GPS mapped sites and photos were given to Inspector Gary Mork from ACWM, who maintains Hazmat reporting for the farms. HHMD requested that the operators remove the chlorine gas cylinders from sites close to residential homes.

On September 6, 2007, a revisit inspection was conducted to check on NOV compliance. The one-ton chlorine gas cylinders were found again on multiple sites throughout the Antelope Valley, operated by Wheeler and Calandri Sunrise farms. A third NOV was issued restating all standing overdue violations along with a date for an office hearing. A revisit inspection on September 20, 2007 showed Calandri Sunrise farms had removed all chlorine cylinders from the onion fields.



*One ton chlorine cylinders in Calandri Sunrise farms.*

As of December 6, 2007, Wheeler farms continued operating in violation with 8 one-ton chlorine gas cylinders located at a drop site near Plant 42 airport in Palmdale. These cylinders were identified with sample numbers, and photographs taken for evidence. The inspected onion farm sites had one to three tons of chlorine gas cylinders on site.

Both onion farm operators appeared for a structured Administrative Enforcement Order hearing at the HHMD headquarters on February 20, 2008. The hearing resulted in settlements with specified fines for both farms.

At present, both onion farms have been deleted from the Cal-ARP program due to the removal of chlorine gas from their sites. The California Environmental Protection Agency through the Department of Pesticide is now investigating all onion farms throughout the state, including the deliveries by their suppliers. □

## The 11th Annual California Unified Program Agency (CUPA) Conference



**T**he CUPA conference will be held at Hyatt Regency Garden Grove in Orange County this coming January 26-29, 2009. Again, this will be a great opportunity to learn and update our knowledge in our profession. For further details, check out [www.calcupa.net](http://www.calcupa.net).

## METROLINK TERRORISM DRILL

By Jojo Comandante

Could the 1995 Sarin chemical attack at the Tokyo Subway happen here in Los Angeles? On May 10, 2008, HHMD participated in an elaborate terrorism drill jointly sponsored by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) and the 9<sup>th</sup> Civil Support Team (CST) of the California National Guard. The exercise simulated an unknown source of white smoke discovered by a subway patron at the North Hollywood station. The Federal Bureau of Investigation, L.A. Police Department, L.A. County Sheriffs Department (LASD), L.A. City Fire Department, L.A. County Public Health, and L.A. County Fire Department HazMat Squad also participated in the drill.

The drill started out as a tabletop exercise on May 8, 2008. Representatives from MTA and the responding agencies discussed the possible scenarios that could lead to a terrorist attack. The Metro Rail System, which boasts over 73 rail miles and over 300,000 weekday boarding, has built-in safeguards against attacks. All stations are equipped with video cameras that are constantly monitored at the control room. In addition to regular uniformed MTA and LASD officers on patrol, the rail system also has undercover deputies from the Sheriff's Department who ride the trains. In the subway, there are areas of rescue assistance where passengers can assemble safely in case of an evacuation. The trains are equipped with a "dead man switch" that stops the train when the operator becomes disabled. All these factors were considered while forming the scenario.



Anti-terrorism exercise in North Hollywood subway

After much discussion and debate, the scenario was developed in which a Red Line train is stopped just before the North Hollywood station because of an unknown source of white smoke in the car. The operator is incapacitated and the dead man switch stops the train. Passengers evacuate and head towards the Universal Station with one of them calling 911.

HHMD set up their hazmat equipment to help identify the unknown substance. The HazMat ID field equipment which uses infrared spectroscopy to identify the chemical bonds of nerve agents, blister agents, and other hazardous chemicals was set-up as well as the MicroCat equipment that identify the elements that comprise hazardous chemicals. Other kits, including the 20/20 protein test kit and the anthrax test strips, were also brought out. HHMD played their usual role of technical reference to the HazMat squads. The drill was concluded when the sample of the unknown substance was collected and identified. Overall, the drill was successful in accomplishing better coordination and relationships with all the participating agencies. □

## ABOVE AND BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY

By Barbara C. Yu

Congratulations to Richard Clark of our Site Mitigation Unit, who passed the Engineer-In-Training certification exam with flying colors. This certification is the prerequisite for the Professional Civil Engineering License.

Needless to say, Clark has gone above and beyond the call of his duties as his job as a Hazardous Materials Specialist III does not require him to hold any certification or license in civil engineering. However, he decided on his own to study and prepare for the exam to assist him in his duties overseeing assessment and mitigation work plans for sites contaminated with hazardous substances that are generally prepared by licensed professional engineers.



Clark also holds a Bachelor of Science degree in soil science and a Master's degree in Environmental Studies. □

## CALIFORNIA STATEWIDE EARTHQUAKE DRILL

On November 13, 2008, millions of people in homes, offices, schools, businesses and government offices participated in the largest-ever earthquake preparedness activity in Southern Californians, the Great Shakeout. HHMD conducted their earthquake drill together with other personnel of the Prevention Services Bureau. All district offices were also involved in the drill. The contingency and earthquake plans were tested to see their effectiveness should a disastrous event occur. These plans are found in the Division's Policies and Procedures' Manual.



Practicing and knowing what to do when an earthquake happens, will not only desensitize us from the fear of a big earthquake but it will also condition us to act quickly before it's too late to protect ourselves. No one knows when the next earthquake will occur. But to survive an earthquake, we need to prepare, plan and practice

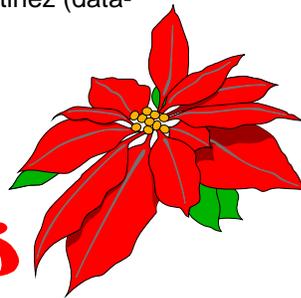
what we are going to do. We also need to identify and reduce the hazards at home and in our workplace. A good place to begin is by stocking our emergency supplies enough to last three-days to one-week. For a listing of emergency supplies, visit the American Red Cross website at <http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster>.

## NEW EMPLOYEES



The new clerical staff in the Administration and Planning Section are from left to right: Ethan Yeh, Maria Adriano, Rebecca Martinez (data-ops supervisor), Bevie Co, and Lawrence Schuster.

*Season's Greetings*



**Bill Jones**

Chief

Health Hazardous  
Materials Division

Haz Mat Release is a collective effort to foster an exchange of information. We welcome any questions or comments.

**Dan Zenarosa**

Editor

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