



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

BOBBY JINDAL
GOVERNOR

PEGGY M. HATCH
SECRETARY

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Contact: Greg Langley

Phone: 225-219-3964

New Jersey man and Louisiana man arrested for the illegal disposal of harmful substances

BATON ROUGE – Today, investigators within the Criminal Investigation Division of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality arrested a New Jersey man for felony illegal disposal of harmful substances.

George L. Ryals III, 62, of Newton, New Jersey, President of Stillwater Consultants, LLC (Stillwater) is alleged to have abandoned a large number of compressed gas cylinders containing poisonous gases and other wastes at a warehouse leased by Stillwater Consultants located at 8050 Bryan Road, in Roanoke in Jefferson Davis Parish. A second suspect in the case, Michael Anaker, 55, of Sulphur, was also arrested for identical charges on June 17.

The owner of the leased warehouse, Crop Production Services (CPS), evicted Stillwater Consultants, Ryals and Anaker in June 2009 for failure to pay rent. In July 2009, representatives of CPS visited the property and found that over 500 compressed gas cylinders and several drums of waste oil had been abandoned inside the warehouse. Under DEQ regulations, abandonment of wastes is considered disposal.

In August 2009, the Louisiana State Police, Emergency Services Unit, (LSP/ESU), made entry into the warehouse and found cylinders containing chlorine, cyanogen chloride, cyanogen, phosgene, arsenic pentafluoride, sodium cyanide, and hydrogen cyanide. Many of the cylinders were in poor, deteriorating condition and in danger of leaking. Phosgene, chlorine and hydrogen cyanide (HCN) are extremely hazardous chemicals that were used as chemical warfare agents, especially during World War I.

Due to the hazards discovered onsite, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality made a Declaration of Emergency on Aug. 14, 2009, which required CPS to mitigate and remove the substances that may threaten the health, safety and welfare of nearby citizens. CPS cooperated fully with the subsequent cleanup and investigation. The remediation of the CPS warehouse was completed on Dec. 17, 2009, at a cost of over one million dollars to CPS. Agents from the Louisiana State Police, the United States Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division and the New Jersey Attorney General's Office also participated in the investigation.

If convicted of the crime of knowingly disposing of a substance that endangers or that could endanger human life or health, Ryals and Anaker face possible imprisonment for not more than 10 years with or without hard labor, or a fine of not more than \$100,000, or both.

The mission of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality is to protect the environment and public health. Any persons with knowledge of any spills, releases, odors, fish kills, open burning, waste tires and any other types of environmental incidents may contact the department at 225-219-3640 or Toll Free 1-888-763-5424.

An arrest does not constitute guilt in a criminal case. All evidence compiled during the investigation is presented to the area prosecutors who determine if formal charges are warranted.