

WHAT DO YOUR FEES PAY FOR?

The Hazardous Materials Management Division (HMMD), a unit of the Department of Environmental Health, Community Health Agency, of the County of Riverside, was created in 1985 in response to public concern about toxic substances. There are currently four regional offices of the Hazardous Materials Management Division. The main office is located in the city of Riverside. Regional offices are also located in Corona, serving the west County area, in Indio, serving the Desert communities, and in Hemet serving the south County area.

In order to support the work of the Division, fees were developed which are designed to cover the cost of insuring that businesses are in compliance with the most current laws regarding the use, handling, and disposal of hazardous materials. These fees provide the funding for a variety of activities. Those activities fall into three primary categories: 1) Permitting and Inspection, 2) Program Administration, and 3) Risk Management.

The permitting and inspecting function incorporates a variety of activities. Staff is assigned on the basis of geographic areas, in order to provide businesses with a more effective and efficient community liaison. This format also results in more user friendly inspection and enforcement activities by allowing operators to work with one Specialist for all their permitted activities. Staff have enhanced opportunities with the community for information, education and consultation regarding Hazardous Materials programs, current methods and technologies, reduction of waste streams, improved storage and handling procedures, new products and alternatives to current operating methods.

Administrative staff support the work of the field staff by providing clerical support, accounting services, records management, legislative review and updating, and maintaining the computer database. The administrative section is responsible for all interactions with County Administration. It is the administrative staff who develop the permitting fees, based on information received from the field staff regarding the amount and type of services being provided to the community.

California Accidental Release Prevention Program examines several different areas related to prevention and mitigation of a release of extremely hazardous materials. This includes the development and implementation of a Risk Management Plan (RMP). The RMP requires that a facility examine release scenarios that could affect the public and environment outside of their facility, their internal safety programs to minimize releases and on-going activities to prevent a release. This program is an adjunct to the Hazardous Materials Handlers Program.

The programs which form the structure of the Hazardous Materials Management Division are:

- Hazardous Waste Generators (County Ordinance 615)
- Underground Storage Tanks (County Ordinance 617)
- Hazardous Materials Handlers/Disclosure (County Ordinance 651)
- Emergency Response and Investigations

The first three programs are funded by fees from permitting; and some fees are also used to provide partial support for Emergency Response and Investigations. The Emergency Response and Investigations program is also funded through grants, contracts, or other fiscal mechanisms. Most services provided by the HMMD are available at all offices of the Division throughout the County.

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