



## **PROCEDURES RELATING TO A REQUEST FOR A CERTIFIED HAZARDOUS MATERIALS RECORDS SEARCH FINDING REPORT**

### **BACKGROUND:**

The San Bernardino County Fire Department Hazardous Materials Division (County Fire) is the Administering Agency and CUPA (Certified Unified Program Agency) for San Bernardino County. As such, County Fire is responsible for regulating hazardous materials handlers, hazardous waste generators, underground and aboveground storage tank facilities, and stationary sources that handle regulated substances in San Bernardino County (with the exception of sites within the City of Victorville, for which Victorville Fire Department is the Administering Agency/CUPA.)

Further, County Fire's Hazardous Materials Division Site Remediation/Local Oversight Program is responsible for directing cleanup of hazardous materials at hundreds of sites in San Bernardino County. Although most of these are former underground storage tank sites, work is also performed on a contractual basis with individual companies to cleanup contamination from other sources as well. Finally, County Fire's Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Program, in conjunction with city and county firefighters, responds to hazardous materials incidents and illegal hazardous waste disposal complaints.

### **REQUEST FOR A CERTIFIED HAZARDOUS MATERIALS RECORDS SEARCH FINDING REPORT:**

County Fire's Hazardous Materials Division (Division) receives numerous requests for information regarding hazardous materials activities for the purpose of satisfying due diligence requirements, Phase I Environmental Assessments, and other business interests.

In response to this demand, the Division has implemented a process in which individuals may request a Certified Hazardous Materials Records Search Finding Report. The main focus of a Certified Hazardous Materials Records Search Finding Report is to determine whether there exists in the files maintained by County Fire any record relating to contamination or reports of spills at a particular site. A Certified Hazardous Materials Records Search Finding Report should reveal whether there are any facilities at the site that are subject to current or past regulatory activity by County Fire, such as underground storage tanks, hazardous material handlers, hazardous waste generators, and EPCRA or CalARP facilities, as well as any reports of spills, incidents, complaints, or cleanup activity, that can be a useful tool in providing a history of compliance or non-compliance.

Processing a request for a Certified Hazardous Materials Records Search Finding Report involves extensive and detailed research of a variety of current and archival data, automated records, manual logs, and various program files. Geographically over 20,000 square miles, a large number of properties in San Bernardino County are in remote areas for which site addresses cannot be determined and varying descriptions are used. In some areas of the County, address descriptions have changed over time due to annexations and redevelopment, as well as postal service policies. As part of a Certified Hazardous Materials Records Search Finding Report, property locations are verified utilizing Assessor records, maps, and other such resources to help identify records that could otherwise be overlooked.

Once County Fire has completed its records search, usually within two to three weeks of the date in which the request was submitted, a Certified Hazardous Materials Records Search Finding Report will be prepared and issued, which will detail all County Fire records associated with a particular site by type, date, location, and status where applicable. (Any files identified in a Certified Hazardous Materials Records Search Finding Report can be made available for copies and/or review upon request.)

If the completed records search reveals no County Fire record of hazardous material activity at the site, a Certified Hazardous Materials Records Search Finding Report will be issued, noting that "no records" were identified.

## **REQUESTING A CERTIFIED HAZARDOUS MATERIALS RECORDS SEARCH FINDING REPORT:**

To request a Certified Hazardous Materials Records Search Finding Report, an applicant must submit a Request for a Certified Hazardous Materials Records Search Finding Report with the initial fee of \$130.00 per hour. An applicant must submit a separate request form for each site to be searched. Research exceeding one hour will be assessed at the rate of \$130.00 per hour.

### **SITE DESCRIPTION:**

The Request for a Certified Hazardous Materials Records Search Finding Report form must contain a specific site description, usually a situs address. If a situs address does not exist or cannot be found, an applicant must list another type of location identifier such as Assessor Parcel Number (preferable), cross streets or intersections (e.g., NWC 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. & Main St.), and/or legal description, and if possible attach a map to the request form.

### **TURNAROUND:**

A Request for a Certified Hazardous Materials Records Search Finding Report is processed in the order in which it is received and generally takes two to three weeks to complete. Applicants can fax or email the request form to have it posted on the date received, as long as within 48 hours payment is sent by separate mail along with the original request form.

### **REVIEW AND/OR COPIES OF RECORDS:**

Any files identified in a Certified Hazardous Materials Records Search Finding Report can be made available for copying and/or review upon request and by appointment. Please note that most of the files maintained by County Fire are working files and may be signed out to various division program staff. If files are signed out to County Fire staff, there could be a slight delay in the appointment date for inspection/copying, while the files are being retrieved. If numerous files are identified for one site or if records are voluminous, additional time may also be required for County Fire to retrieve the documents. Once files are retrieved and evaluated for any information that cannot be released, a file review appointment can be scheduled. (Records provided for public review are screened and evaluated for information for which disclosure is not required or is prohibited by law, or for which the interest in non-disclosure clearly outweighs the interest served by disclosure).

Copies of records can be made by County Fire at a charge of 10 cents per page. A maximum of 40 pages can be selected for copying by County Fire. In the event that more than 40 pages of copies are requested, the individual who made the request can bring a portable copier or digital camera to the file review appointment, or can arrange for a private copy service to come on site and make the copies. (We are unable to authorize removal of original records from this office).