

UPS Pays \$1.7 Million Over California Hazardous Waste Violations

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United Parcel Service (UPS) and its affiliates will pay \$1.7 million to settle a lawsuit over the improper disposal of hazardous waste at landfills across California. The case, brought by district attorneys from 45 counties, alleged that UPS violated state environmental laws by sending mislabeled and dangerous materials to facilities not equipped to handle them.

The lawsuit, filed on July 23 in San Joaquin County Superior Court, followed a multi-year investigation involving inspections at 140 UPS locations statewide. Offices from Riverside, San Bernardino, San Joaquin, and Yolo counties played leading roles in the probe.

According to the complaint, UPS disposed of corrosive, flammable, and toxic substances in ordinary rubbish bins, instead of following the required procedures for hazardous or medical waste. The waste was then delivered to standard landfills, potentially posing environmental and safety risks. Officials did not disclose the origins or exact volume of the materials involved.

Although the company's operations, including trucks, airplanes, and shipping facilities, can generate such waste as part of normal business, UPS's 2024 Global Reporting Initiative sustainability report did not specify how much waste was produced during that period.

In response to the legal action, UPS has taken steps to strengthen its environmental practices. In a public statement, the company emphasized its commitment to employee and community safety and the environment. "We immediately investigated and took corrective actions to address the allegations made by the counties," the statement read. UPS confirmed that it had implemented new training and waste-handling protocols across all California facilities.

The settlement includes \$1.4 million in civil penalties, \$140,000 in cost reimbursements, and \$205,000 allocated to environmental improvement projects. Officials acknowledged the company's cooperation and swift response throughout the investigation.

"UPS, like all California businesses, is required to properly dispose of hazardous waste and medical waste in labeled and segregated containers to ensure that incompatible waste does not mix and cause dangerous chemical reactions or harm to the environment," the Riverside County district attorney's office stated.

The settlement reflects an ongoing effort by California authorities to hold major corporations accountable for environmental compliance and reinforce public safety standards in waste management.