



West Berkeley Alliance for Clean Air and Safe Jobs

THE Complaint Process

The smell of burning pot handle/burning vehicle brake emanating from West Berkeley has troubled areas of the East Bay since the early 1980's. Pacific Steel Casting Company's (PSC's) odor is attributed to phenol, formaldehyde, and various toxic substances. This sheet documents how to effectively file an odor nuisance complaint.

- 1) *Familiarize* yourself with Pacific Steel Casting Company's emissions. When you happen to be near 2nd and Gilman streets, circle the blocks around 1333 Second Street and learn what the emissions from PSC smell like.
- 2) Any time you smell PSC's emissions in your area call Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) at 1-800-334-6367. They have an answering service available 24/7.
- 3) Say that you want to make a complaint about Pacific Steel Casting plants 1, 2, and 3 where you believe the odor originates. Give your name and full address, including apartment number. If you feel ill and/or intend to seek medical help, tell the inspector.
- 4) Describe the "burning pot handle/burning brakes" smell coming from PSC.
- 5) Stay where you are and try to be patient until an inspector comes (this may take a long time, depending how far away from you and how busy the inspector is when you call in).
- 6) Tell the inspector:
 - ~ What time you started smelling the burning pot handle/burning brake odor
 - ~ How strong the smell was then and is now
 - ~ How the smell bothers you (you feel compelled to: go inside, close windows, leave the area, etc.)
 - ~ What physical symptoms you experience, if any (i.e. irritated eyes or throat, nausea, headache, etc.).
- 7) If you and the inspector both smell the odor, it is a confirmed complaint. Five confirmed complaints called in within a 24 hour period allows the inspector to issue a notice of violation to Pacific Steel Casting Company.
- 8) Once you have had one face-to-face confirmed complaint, thereafter when you call to complain, you can say you cannot wait for the inspector, but you'd like the inspector to leave a Complaint Declaration form for you. You need to complete this form and get it to the inspector. (If the inspector confirms that the smell originated at PSC, within 60 minutes of your phoned complaint, it can be a confirmed complaint when you submit the completed Complaint Declaration form.)
- 9) *Please* keep a log! Each time you smell PSC, write in the log:
 - ~ Date
 - ~ Time
 - ~ Description (Burning Brakes/Pot Handle, etc.) and Intensity of Odor (Very Strong, Strong, Easily Noticeable, Faint, or Very Faint)
 - ~ If you called BAAQMD
 - ~ If an inspector came
 - ~ If the complaint was confirmed

Important: If *at all possible* write an individual statement to BAAQMD (not a form letter!) about each complaint you make including the log information (see above) and your signature. Keep a copy of all of your complaint log sheets, notes, phone calls, medical records and expenses. This information is vital when there is a public hearing or legal action. Thank you so much!

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

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WANT CLEAN AIR?

Call: 1-800-334-6367
every time (24/7) that you smell
the odor!

Alleged Pacific Steel Casting Company Odor Log

Name and Address of person/organization keeping log:

	Date	Time	Odor description (Burning Brakes/ Pot Handle, etc.) and Intensity (Very Strong, Strong, Easily Noticeable, Weak, Very Weak)	Called BAAQMD?	Did an inspector come? Was a Complaint Declarationform used?	Did the inspector notify you it was a confirmed complaint?
1						
2						
3						
4						
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