



State of Louisiana

Department of Environmental Quality



M.J. "Mike" Foster
Governor

J. Dale Givens
Secretary

For Immediate Release
December 17, 2001

CONTACT: Jennifer Betbeze,
Public Information Officer
Phone 225-763-5680
jbetbeze@ldeq.org

PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION ISSUED TO OWNER OF BIOTECH ENVIRONMENTAL, INC.

On November 28 the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) petitioned the 19th Judicial District Court for a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction against Biotech Environmental and its owner Christopher Troy Lee after firefighters found medical waste at a Crowley warehouse fire.

The temporary restraining order was issued and a hearing for the preliminary injunction was set for December 13. At the hearing, Judge Timothy E. Kelley preliminarily enjoined Lee and Biotech Environmental, Inc. from transporting or storing potentially infectious biomedical waste until permits are issued by the state or until further orders of the court.

The court also issued a mandatory injunction to Lee and Biotech Environmental, Inc. to contract with a licensed transporter approved by the state to remove and transport the medical waste stored at 6748 Renoir, Baton Rouge to a permitted medical waste disposal facility.

DEQ issued a Cease and Desist Order to Biotech Environmental, Inc. and Lee on November 16 for improperly storing potentially infectious biomedical waste at warehouses in Baton Rouge and Crowley.

The investigation began on November 9 when a fire was reported at a warehouse on Highway 100 in Crowley. It was observed that the warehouse was filled with biomedical waste. There were no signs posted on the outside of the building to indicate that potentially infectious biomedical waste was inside the building. During the response to the fire, several firefighters sustained injuries from the waste material. DEQ also responded to the incident by limiting the amount of water runoff from the warehouse fire since the medical waste potentially contaminated the water.

DEQ investigated the incident and found that Lee was improperly storing biomedical waste in the warehouse. Further investigation disclosed that Lee was also improperly storing biomedical waste at another warehouse in Baton Rouge without being properly licensed by the state. DEQ declared the Crowley site an emergency on November 14.

Although Lee was authorized to transport biomedical waste by the state, he was not authorized to store this material at any location in the state. Lee's authorization to transport was revoked by DEQ.