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Service King Paint & Body to Pay $2.35 Million for Illegally Disposing Hazardous Waste

The Company Also Mishandled Confidential Customer Information

An undercover inspection that began in 2016 revealed that Service King Paint & Body facilities in San Diego and across California were illegally disposing hazardous waste generated during auto body repair operations and violating laws related to storing and managing hazardous waste. Service King, a Texas limited liability company, currently owns and operates 42 auto body repair facilities throughout California, including five Service King auto repair shops in San Diego County.

As a result of the investigation, which was led by the Alameda County District Attorney’s Office, Service King Paint & Body, LLC will pay $2.35 million as part of a settlement of a civil environmental prosecution alleging the auto body repair company mishandled hazardous waste and confidential customer information.

“This case reflects the importance of businesses such as the auto body repair industry to abide by environmental laws that are in place to protect and conserve our natural resources and to keep our communities healthy,” said District Attorney Summer Stephan. “We are proud to work with our district attorney partners and environmental regulators across the state to enforce California’s environmental laws to ensure these hazardous wastes are handled properly.”

The settlement with Service King follows other recent California statewide settlements of environmental hazardous waste violations involving the auto body repair and automotive repair industries. In 2018, California District Attorneys settled cases with Cooks Collision for $1.53 million, and AutoNation for $3.38 million, involving similar environmental and consumer protection violations.

The investigation began in 2016 when Alameda County District Attorney investigators conducted undercover inspections of Service King trash containers, which revealed the illegal disposal of large quantities of hazardous auto body sanding dust, sanding pads, automotive paints, clear coats, solvents, non-empty aerosols, and other hazardous substances used during the auto body repair process, as well
as confidential customer information. District Attorney Investigators from San Diego, Santa Clara, San Bernardino, and Orange counties then conducted additional inspections at Service King auto body repair shops throughout California and found similar unlawful disposals.

As part of the settlement, Service King is ordered to pay $1.35 million in civil penalties, $350,000 in costs of investigation, and $150,000 towards supplemental environmental projects. Service King has also been ordered to spend $500,000 on equipment designed to limit the release of hazardous auto body wastes into the environment and recycle solvents and waste water produced during the automotive painting process. The settlement also requires Service King to employ an additional full-time employee in California who will be responsible for environmental compliance and training.

The case was brought by the District Attorney’s offices of San Diego, Alameda, Santa Clara, San Bernardino, Orange, Los Angeles, Placer, Riverside, Sacramento, Sutter, and Yolo counties, where Service King’s auto body repair shops are located. Service King cooperated with the District Attorneys’ investigation and took steps to improve its compliance with the environmental and consumer protection laws brought to its attention by the prosecutors.

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**About the San Diego County District Attorney’s Office**

The San Diego County DA’s Office prosecutes all felony crimes in the county and misdemeanor crimes committed outside the City of San Diego. The office files about 40,000 criminal cases a year and balances prosecution with numerous crime prevention programs. District Attorney Summer Stephan leads the office of more than 1,000 dedicated employees who pursue fair and equal justice, and support victims daily across San Diego County.