

September 11, 2007

Advisory: Recalled Canned Goods Contaminated with *Clostridium botulinum*

Ohio EPA is issuing this advisory to solid waste management businesses, landfill operators, solid waste haulers, leachate haulers, transfer facility operators and recycling facility operators to notify them of the potential impacts of the Castleberry Food Company recall of canned goods contaminated with the bacterium *Clostridium botulinum*.

Background Information

In July 2007, approximately 90 types of canned chili, beef stew, corned beef hash, dog food and other canned products manufactured by Castleberry Food Company in Augusta, Georgia were recalled because of an outbreak of foodborne botulism. These canned products were sold under a variety of brand names. The recall now covers two years and tens of millions of cans that were distributed in all 50 states. Not since 1971 has a recall for canned goods tainted with *Clostridium botulinum* reached this magnitude. Consumers were given specific instructions for disposal of the products, which included throwing them in the trash. Castleberry has hired a third party to help transport recalled products from stores, distribution centers, food service operations and other businesses nationwide. For more information about the recall, go to http://www.castleberrys.com/news_productrecall.asp.

Do not accept recalled canned goods from businesses

Instruct clients such as stores, distribution centers, food service operations and other businesses with recalled canned goods to contact Castleberry at 1-800-821-5293 to arrange for a pick up or use the consumer hotline at 1-800-203-4412. A third party will transport the recalled cans to designated warehouses.

Direct these clients to <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/fsbotul.html> for information on the safe removal and disposal of recalled products.

Be aware of the potential impact of *Clostridium botulinum*

Clostridium botulinum survives in landfills and leachate.

Ohio EPA recommends testing leachate now to obtain background levels of *Clostridium botulinum* and its toxin and recommends periodic testing of leachate to monitor any changes.

Be careful when handling recalled cans disposed by consumers

Workers can be exposed to botulism toxin by breathing it in the air or by absorbing it through the eyes or a break in the skin.

Solid waste haulers, landfill operators, leachate haulers, transfer facility operators and recycling facility operators may be susceptible to botulism toxin during compacting or other waste handling activities. They should evaluate the need to wear personal protective equipment that protects the eyes, airway and any breaks in the skin. Workers also should be encouraged to change clothing and boots at the end of their shift.

Workers in transfer facilities and “Dirty MRFs” (material recovery facilities that process trash for recyclables) are more likely to be exposed to botulism toxin because they work in close contact with waste and in an enclosed structure.

Leachate handling, especially leachate recirculation, may also increase the risk of botulism exposure to landfill workers if the bacteria are in the leachate.

Questions and answers regarding the recall and botulism disease symptoms may be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/botulism/botulism.htm>. For more information regarding worker safety issues, contact the appropriate Ohio area OSHA Office. Contact information for Ohio area OSHA Offices can be found at <http://www.osha.gov/oshdir/oh.html>.

Additional Information

OSHA Safety and Health issues on Botulism
<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/botulism/index.html>

World Health Organization document on botulism
<http://www.who.int/csr/del/bepidemics/clostridiumbotulism.pdf>

Center for Disease Control and Prevention fact sheet on botulism
http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/botulism_g.htm

USDA/HHS list of select agents and toxins
http://www.aphis.usda.gov/programs/ag_selectagent/ag_bioterr_toxinlist.html

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