

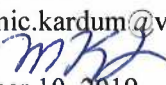


GREGORY D. TOTTE
District Attorney

NEWS RELEASE

www.vcdistrictattorney.com

Twitter: @VenturaDAOoffice

Contact: Dominic Kardum
Supervising Deputy District Attorney
Telephone: 805-662-1750
E-mail: dominic.kardum@ventura.org
Approved: MKF 
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**Former Santa Clara Waste Water Company
Human Resources Manager Sentenced for Her Role in 2014 Explosion**

VENTURA, California – District Attorney Gregory D. Totten announced today that former Santa Clara Waste Water Company Human Resources Manager Marlene Faltemier (DOB 1/13/65) was sentenced earlier today for her role in a November 2014 explosion at 815 Mission Rock Road in Santa Paula that injured numerous employees and first responders, and for the subsequent storage of undisclosed hazardous chemicals on site in 2015.

On November 18, 2014, at approximately 3:45 a.m., an explosion occurred at 815 Mission Rock Road, Santa Paula, a wastewater treatment facility owned and operated by the Santa Clara Waste Water Company. The investigation revealed the blast was caused by the mixing and disposal of hazardous chemicals into a 5,040-gallon vacuum truck not rated to hold nor transport such chemicals. Numerous employees of the corporate defendants as well as firefighters and paramedics who responded to the scene and rendered aid were injured either by the initial explosion or by inhaling toxic vapors which developed on site shortly afterwards from the chemicals that exploded out of the vacuum truck.

In November 2015, a search warrant was served at the corporate defendants' facility in Santa Paula which led to the discovery of approximately 5,500 gallons of sodium hydroxide, also known as Petromax, stored within a locked shipping container. These chemicals were required by law to be reported into the California Environmental Reporting System (CERS), yet the corporate defendants' officials had not reported their possession of Petromax since 2013.

The investigation in this case determined Faltemier exchanged text messages with convicted codefendant David Wirsing, detailing company efforts to hide chemicals from environmental inspectors before inspections were completed in November 2014. After the November 18, 2014, explosion, law enforcement confirmed Faltemier was personally aware of the presence of over 5,000 gallons of a chemical named “Petromax” being on site, yet she failed to report the presence of these chemicals in the California Environmental Reporting System as required by law.

During the sentencing hearing held earlier today, the court imposed and stayed a two-year jail sentence and placed Faltemier on formal probation for five years. Faltemier was also ordered to pay victim restitution in the amount of \$2,647,621.35. The investigation and prosecution of this case is the result of a joint effort by the California Attorney General’s Office; the Ventura County District Attorney’s Office; the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA); the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT); the State Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA); and the Ventura County Environmental Health Division.

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The Ventura County District Attorney’s Office is the public prosecutor for the county’s 850,000 residents. The office employs approximately 280 employees including attorneys, investigators, victim advocates, and other professional support staff who strive to seek justice, ensure public safety, and protect the rights of crime victims.

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