

Convenience Store/Criminal Enforcement: Yazoo City Operator Pleads Guilty to Unpermitted Discharge into City Sewer



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05/10/2017

The United States Department of Justice (“DOJ”) issued a May 3rd news release stating that an individual (Mahant Singh [“Singh”]) plead guilty to a criminal violation of the Clean Water Act.

Singh is described as an operator of a convenience store and gas station in Yazoo City, Mississippi.

Singh is stated to have admitted to discharging the contents of an underground fuel storage tank into a sewage line connected to the Yazoo City, Mississippi wastewater treatment system. This alleged discharge is stated to have created a fire or explosion hazard and risk to contaminating local water supplies.

The news release cites alleged facts from the criminal information as:

... at the end of April 2016, water from rainstorms leaked into one of the underground gasoline storage tanks at the 49 Quick Stop through an inadequately maintained tank cap. The presence of water in the fuel storage tank triggered an automatic shut off, preventing the dispensing of gasoline. When there had been a similar water leak into a Quick Stop tank about a year earlier, in March 2015, defendant Singh arranged for a commercial tank service company to remove the water and gasoline mixture from his tank and to dispose of it properly, by separating the water and gasoline.

DOJ claims that instead of removing the gasoline and water mixture from his tank (as he had a year earlier):

... on or about April 28, 2016, defendant Singh pumped some of the content of the contaminated Quick Stop tank into an opening in the sewage line. Singh did so by extending a hose to the bottom of the tank where water might collect underneath the lighter gasoline. The other end of the hose he placed into the sewer pipe. Singh turned on a pump connected to the hoses, forcing liquid from the tank into the sewer line while he waited on customers at the Quick Stop store. In so doing, defendant Singh discharged liquid from the gasoline storage tank into the Yazoo City wastewater treatment system, thereby negligently introducing a pollutant into the system which created a fire or explosion hazard.

DOJ notes the federal law authorizes a Class A misdemeanor under the Clean Water Act for any person who negligently introduces into a publicly owned treatment works any pollutant or hazardous substance which the defendant person knew or reasonably should have known could cause personal injury or property damage or to introduce into the system any material other than in compliance with all applicable Federal, State, or local requirements or permits.

[A copy of the news release can be downloaded here.](#)