

## **Gill**

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By Brooks Baehr

"This should not have happened. There's not supposed to be storm water running over a landfill and certainly a landfill is not supposed to erode and put garbage into the ocean," said Gary Gill, deputy director with the state Department of Health.

"Any visible garbage that's left the site and is on the beach needs to be cleaned up. Aside from just removing the viewable floatables, the trash, any kind of medical waste that might be out there, you'll be wondering about contaminants whether they be chemical or biological," Gill added.

The EPA is gathering information about the spill through the state Department of Health. "When there's a violation of permits or water quality, there's a potential enforcement action," Gill added. That "enforcement action" could come in the form of fines against the city or Waste Management.

G. Pang 1/15/11

The landfill is allowed to accept medical waste, but it is supposed to be sanitized, Gill said.

**"As unsightly as they are, they should not be any more infectious than the rest of the (ocean trash) that's floating out there," Gary Gill, acting deputy health director, said yesterday.**

Andrew Perera 1/14/11

"Obviously this situation should never have happened," said Deputy State Health Director Gary Gill. "The landfill is supposed to be designed to divert any flood waters that come from the mauka areas and push those waters around the side of the landfill." Yet he claims EPA APPROVED IT ON THE 13TH OF January.j

"Any violations of the rules or the permits can lead to a fine," said Gill, when asked about landfill operations. "That's an investigation that's ongoing and I can't talk to you in any specifics at this point."

Regardless of the circumstances that lead to the discharge of storm water from the landfill Gill said medical waste should never end up strewn across a shoreline.

"Certainly no waste, medical or otherwise, is supposed to leave this landfill," he said.

**On December 19 Waste Management discharged an estimated 7.5 million gallons of storm runoff into the ocean after the area received about five inches of rain.**

The city could not immediately provide an estimate of how much storm water was discharged into the ocean during Thursday's weather event.

## Rain dislodges medical waste

[By Gordon Y.K. Pang](#)

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Gary Gill, state deputy health director for environmental health, said, "Obviously, this situation should never have happened."

Rain accumulating at a reservoir above Oahu's only municipal landfill poured into a "cell" of waste, causing it to overflow and send a torrent of debris-laden storm water down a concrete spillway and into waters just off the Ko Olina Resort on Wednesday, said officials with the city and Waste Management Inc., the company that operates the landfill.

"The landfill is supposed to be designed to divert any floodwaters from the mauka areas, push those waters along the side of the landfill," Gill said. "The waters should not have crossed on top of the landfill; they should not have eroded a cell full of waste that was placed in that landfill; and certainly no waste, medical or otherwise, is supposed to leave this landfill."

"Obviously, this was not supposed to happen," said Gary Gill, deputy state health director for environmental health. "This is the last thing anybody would want to have happen. But it has happened and we're dealing with it as quickly as we can."

Gill said health officials are advising the public to stay out of the waters between Ko Olina resort and the Kahe power plant. "It would be wise for people to stay out of the water, they should stay out of the water anyway after a big rain storm, regardless of whether that is coming off the landfill or not," he said.

The state does not know how much contaminated water and trash went into the ocean.

Gill said storm water has collected into a pond at the top of the landfill, and to prevent further damage to the landfill, that water still needs to be pumped out.

"There's no other viable way to remove it except by pumping it down into the storm system," Gill said.

## **KITV 1/13/11**

A storm water catchment system at the base of the landfill is too small and can't handle the water from big storms, since the landfill has expanded over the years, Gill said.

The city is designing a storm water diversion system there, but it is not completed yet.

Gill said last night's landfill flooding and a similar episode that happened there just before Christmas will result in the city facing some kind of penalty from the state health department, but he said the state is working with the city to fix the situation first.

In the first incident, lasting more than four days just before Christmas of last year, the operators of the landfill dumped potentially-contaminated storm water into the ocean, according to health department officials.

"Obviously, this is a serious situation and there are potential violations that have taken place, but we're not pursuing this right now, trying to play 'gotcha' with the city, we're trying to take care of the problem," Gill said.

For more than four days just before Christmas, the operators of the landfill dumped potentially-contaminated storm water into the ocean, according to health department officials.

## **Steinberger**

"You're talking an awful lot of water accumulating that we normal don't see. So, I mean, you have to put things into perspective. It's similar to having a tsunami coming off the hillside," said Tim Steinberger, director of the city Department of Environmental Services.

Tim Steinberger, city director of environmental services, said the storm was a "catastrophic weather event" and that the overflow was caused by an extraordinary set of circumstances. "We haven't had a rain like this, ever."

## **Andrew Perera**

The city's Environmental Services director told Khon2 the city would review whether or not medical waste should continue to be dumped in the landfill. However Tim Steinberger cautioned that Thursday's event was the result of "a hundred year storm."

"We haven't had a rain like this ever," said Steinberger. "This is the first time in recorded history. The (storms) in December broke all the records from 1955."

## **Whalen**

## **Gordon Pang 1/15/11**

Joe Whelan, Waste Management's general manager for the landfill, said the company was weeks away from completing a bypass route that would have diverted the storm water from the upper reservoir straight into the drainage way, avoiding the landfill cells. The additional measures were required under Waste Management's latest permit allowed by the state Land Use Commission. Granted in September 2009 after much debate and controversy, the permit allows the landfill to expand and continue operating, but only through 2012.

Had the improvements been completed, the water still would have ended up in the filtration basin at the base of the landfill, but it would not have gone through the landfill cells, picking up rubbish along the way, Whelan said.

Five inches of rain fell on Dec. 19, and then again about a week later, so water had already begun to accumulate along the route and in the basin below, Whelan said. The 11-inch rainfall that occurred late Wednesday and early Thursday caused the water to go over the top, he said

## **CITY Officials**

### **B.J Reyes 1/18/11**

City officials say it is too early to assess blame for the massive discharge. No timetable has been set, and no discussion of blame or fines has occurred yet, officials said.

### **A. PERERA KHON2 1/14/11**

According to landfill General Manager Joe Whelan of Waste Management, runoff from Thursday night's storm gathered inside a cell that has been collecting solid municipal waste since October.

## **KITV 1/13/11**

The city's Department of Environmental Services released a written statement Thursday night shortly before 10 p.m.

"After having numerous and ongoing discussions with various branches of the state Department of Health over the past several days, the decision was made to release the stormwater today, given the lack of feasible alternatives," the statement said.

"The city will continue to meet with its operator to discuss the discharge, to ensure compliance with all applicable permits and laws, and will investigate the accumulation of stormwater as well as the possible presence of sterilized medical waste," the city said. **(EPA NOT MENTIONED)**

**Douglas Chin City managing director**

beaches.

"Certainly what happened a couple days ago was a very serious event," Chin said. "However, it seems like we're now on the same page with the state, as well as with (landfill operator) Waste Management and the (Environmental Protection Agency) as far as taking what has occurred and really starting to clean up and fix what is out there."

"There's plenty of time in the future to be able to look back ... and assess and figure out who is responsible, what could we all have done better," said acting Mayor Doug Chin, who is also city managing director. "Right now I think we're just trying to get ourselves through this (cleanup) phase; that's probably the most important thing."