



# News Release



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Joint release by the Environmental Protection  
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## **Corps, EPA Set Requirements For Restart of Tanapag PCB Treatment**

(Honolulu, April 18, 2002) The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Honolulu District, Region 9, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Corps' contractor Environmental Chemical Corporation are working together to resolve worker safety and operational concerns at the PCB-remediation project site at the Tanapag Village, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

ECC is making certain operational and safety changes to meet Corps and EPA requirements. After the two agencies accept these changes, ECC will resume processing PCB-contaminated soil at the work site. Resumption of soil processing is expected to occur this month.

ECC stopped processing PCB-contaminated soil in its indirect thermal desorption unit at the project site after a February 16 accident. In that accident, three workers suffered injuries while performing maintenance work on the unit. One of the workers, Roberto Alarzar, was seriously burned and later died.

A Corps investigation following the accident determined it was caused by a failure of the electrostatic precipitator hopper unit that could not have been anticipated. However, based on the findings of the investigation, both the Corps and ECC developed additional safety and operational requirements that ECC must meet before it can resume soil processing.

The Corps' investigation made these three recommendations:

-ECC must develop detailed procedures for the ITD unit to ensure that the electrostatic precipitator hopper units are empty before their access plates are removed and must ensure these procedures are understood and followed by its on-site workers. Mr. Alarzar was burned by superheated dust that flowed from the hopper unit when he opened it.

-ECC must also revise its Site Safety and Health Plan and related standing operating procedures to address specific physical hazards in addition to obvious chemical hazards related to the operation and maintenance of the ITD unit.

-ECC must ensure all employees receive specialized safety and emergency procedure training related to the operation and maintenance of the ITD unit.

In addition, EPA wants more ECC data from the ITD unit's proof of performance test before the agency will grant approval for resuming soil treatment. The proof-of-performance test results verify the effectiveness of the ITD unit in vaporizing the PCBs.

ECC conducted its own investigation of the accident and reviewed its safety and operations plans and procedures. The company provided the Corps and EPA with a modified Site Safety and Health Plan and revised operating procedures. The agencies are reviewing the submittals.