

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
AIR QUALITY DIVISION
ACTIVITY REPORT: Complaint Investigation

B561973110

FACILITY: KOREX CORP		SRN / ID: B5619
LOCATION: 50000 PONTIAC TRAIL, WIXOM		DISTRICT: Warren
CITY: WIXOM		COUNTY: OAKLAND
CONTACT:		ACTIVITY DATE: 08/08/2024
STAFF: Adam Bognar	COMPLIANCE STATUS: Non Compliance	SOURCE CLASS: SM OPT OUT
SUBJECT: Odor Observation		
RESOLVED COMPLAINTS: C-24-01528		

On Thursday August 8, 2024, Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy – Air Quality Division (EGLE-AQD) staff, I, Adam Bognar conducted a complaint investigation near Korex Corporation. The investigation was in response to complaint No. C-24-01528. In this complaint, the complainant stated, “there is extremely powerful detergent/fragrance odor with a dirty laundry funk to it, coming from Korex.” Complaint indicates suspected health effects but does not specify symptoms.

Prior to arriving at the complainant’s location at around 5:30 pm, I noticed a strong detergent odor while driving on Wixom Road just north of Pontiac Trail, east and downwind from Korex. I arrived at the complainant’s location at around 5:50 pm. Conditions were partly cloudy, 80 Fahrenheit, with wind 5 mph from the west. I walked around the complainant’s location until 6:10 pm. During this period, I noticed constant level 3 detergent/soapy odors at the complainant’s location that were consistent with what the complainant described. It smelled like very strong laundry detergent.

The EGLE-AQD odor scale ranges from 0 to 5:

0 – Non-detect

1 – Just barely noticeable

2 – Distinct and definite odor

3 – Distinct and definite objectionable odor

4 – Odor strong enough to cause a person to attempt to avoid it entirely

5 – Odor so strong as to be overpowering and intolerable for any length of time

A Rule 901 violation notice will be sent to Korex as a result of this investigation. Rule 901 states:

Rule 901. Notwithstanding the provisions of any other rule, a person shall not cause or permit the emission of an air contaminant or water vapor in quantities that cause, alone or in reaction with other air contaminants, either of the following:

(a) Injurious effects to human health or safety, animal life, plant life of significant economic value, or property.

(b) Unreasonable interference with the comfortable enjoyment of life and property.

AQD has determined that this detergent/soapy odor is of a sufficient intensity, frequency, and duration to cause an unreasonable interference with the comfortable enjoyment of life and property.

After leaving the complainant's location, I attempted to investigate upwind of Korex to verify if another business may be causing the odor, I did not notice any detergent/soapy odors upwind from Korex; however, it is difficult to perform an odor investigation west of Korex due to the geography/surrounding businesses. Based on the industries I observed in this area, it does not appear that any of the businesses surrounding Korex would emit a detergent/soapy odor.

I was able to observe the emission stacks on top of the Korex plant at around 6:25 pm. I did not observe any opacity coming from the stacks.

There is an elementary school, playground, recreation trail, and many residential homes downwind from Korex. I noticed the odor was still present along Wixom Road just north of Pontiac Trail at around 6:30 pm when I was leaving the location.

I called the complainant to inform them of my findings. I informed them that I noticed a strong odor near their location – similar to what the complainant stated they observed.

AQD contacted Korex after the investigation to determine if anything out of the ordinary was happening at the plant on this date. Korex stated that "System #2 was running Cascade Powder and System #3 was running an Oxi Powder. No malfunctions and the same combination of products has been running for a week at this point."

As a result of this investigation, a Rule 901 violation notice will be issued to Korex Corporation to address the detergent/soapy odors observed at the complainant's location.

NAME Adam Bogner

DATE August 14, 2024

SUPERVISOR Joyce