

June 5, 2026

Chief, East Jefferson Fire Rescue (EJFR)
 24 Seton Road
 Port Townsend WA 98368
 360-385-2626 | ejfr.org

RE: Port Townsend Paper Company White Liquor — HAZMAT Preparedness Request — V_1.17

Dear Fire Chief,

I write with a simple and direct request: we want Port Townsend Paper Company to make safety, health, and the environment their number one priority. Not their second priority. Not a consideration balanced against production schedules and profit margins. Number one.

I am a Port Townsend resident writing to East Jefferson Fire Rescue (EJFR) with a request that I believe is directly relevant to your HAZMAT preparedness responsibilities. PTPC stores white liquor — a highly caustic mixture of sodium hydroxide and sodium sulfide with a pH of approximately 13 — in tanks on 450 acres bordering Port Townsend Bay.

On May 26, 2026, a white liquor tank imploded at the Nippon Dynawave kraft paper mill in Longview, Washington, killing eleven workers. The Longview disaster required approximately 40 firefighters and a regional hazmat team. Victims required specialized decontamination before hospital transport. Legacy Oregon Burn Center Medical Director Dr. Nik Eshraghi stated that white liquor causes ‘deep and devastating’ burns and that his team mobilized seven surgeons — it was the first time many of his providers had treated white liquor injuries.

PTPC operates a kraft pulp and paper mill on 450 acres bordering Port Townsend Bay, five miles from residential neighborhoods in Jefferson County. The mill produces 950–1,000 tons per day using the kraft process — the same chemistry that killed 11 workers in Longview, Washington on May 26, 2026, when a white liquor tank imploded at the Nippon Dynawave mill in the deadliest industrial accident in modern Washington State history.

PTPC’s documented compliance record is a matter of public record in US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)’s EPA Enforcement and Compliance History Online (ECHO) database (FRS ID: 110000490326):

- Clean Air Act: High Priority Violation every single quarter for the past three years — 12 consecutive quarters
- Clean Water Act: documented spills into Port Townsend Bay including: 800 gallons of untreated process wastewater (November 2021–March 2022, fine \$27,000); 114,000 gallons of untreated wastewater near Glen Cove (April 2025, fine \$20,000 — less than 9 cents per gallon); and 1,000 gallons of condensed water (January 2025) — plus two additional

Ecology penalties issued in 2023 for 2022 water quality violations; two new formal enforcement orders April and May 2026

- Hazardous Waste (Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)): June 2025 inspection found 9 violations including emergency preparedness and prevention procedure failures
- National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES): permit expired October 2018; renewed May 2025 after 6+ years on administrative extension
- Total penalties all statutes five years: less than \$100,000
- Daily discharge of effluent (liquid waste or wastewater discharged into the environment): 12 million gallons into Port Townsend Bay — the largest discharger in Jefferson County

In 2024, the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) specifically studied Port Townsend and found hydrogen sulfide, methyl mercaptan, dimethyl sulfide, and dimethyl disulfide measured near PTPC above US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) chronic health reference concentrations. The Washington State Department of Health guidance still tells residents these odors are 'rarely at levels that harm health.' The federal science says otherwise — for our specific community.

What I Am Requesting from East Jefferson Fire Rescue:

- Confirm that East Jefferson Fire Rescue (EJFR) has current, specific protocols for a white liquor release scenario at PTPC — including mass decontamination capability, caustic chemical neutralization procedures, and coordinated hospital notification to Jefferson Healthcare
- Request that PTPC provide East Jefferson Fire Rescue (EJFR) with a current facility emergency response plan, the location and capacity of all white liquor storage tanks on the property, and the Material Safety Data Sheets for all hazardous chemicals stored on site
- Request PTPC's annual Tier II chemical inventory report from Jefferson County Emergency Management — this is a public record that PTPC is required to file annually under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA), and East Jefferson Fire Rescue (EJFR) as a Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) member has a right to this information
- Formally support the activation of the Jefferson County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) — which has been Jefferson County Emergency Management Director Willie Bence has confirmed that the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) meets quarterly, is open to the public, and that Port Townsend Paper Company (PTPC) is an active participant. A Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) meeting is scheduled for July 2026, at which the Longview disaster is expected to be addressed. Under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA), PTPC reports its chemical inventories annually to local fire departments, the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), and the Washington State Department of Ecology. — and participate in the development of a white liquor bay release emergency response plan
- Conduct a joint tabletop exercise with Jefferson Healthcare, Jefferson County Emergency Management, and Washington State Patrol specifically simulating a white liquor tank rupture at PTPC with release into Port Townsend Bay

East Jefferson Fire Rescue would be the primary first responder to a PTPC white liquor incident. Your preparedness for that scenario — and your formal request to PTPC for the information you need to prepare — is one of the most concrete safety actions available right now. I welcome the opportunity to share my full research documentation with you.

Respectfully,

David Ginsberg

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