

Integrated Production Services to pay \$162,000 after pleading guilty to violating the Clean Water Act

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The Department of Justice announced Tuesday, October 11, 2011, that Texas-based Integrated Productions Services, LLC, (“IPS”), a natural gas and oil drilling contractor, pleaded guilty to charges that it negligently violated the Clean Water Act. According to the government, in 2007, IPS was performing hydraulic fracturing operations in Oklahoma when a tank filled with hydrochloric acid leaked. The hydrochloric acid mixed with a pool of rainwater in the bermed surface of the well. Instead of properly removing the rainwater-acid mix from the site, a company supervisor drove his pickup truck through the berm to release the pooled mixture. As a result, an estimated 400 to 700 gallons of the hydrochloric acid ran into a nearby creek.

In addition to IPS, the supervisor who drove a truck over the berm was criminally indicted. The supervisor previously pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor violation of the Clean Water Act. At sentencing, he will face up to one year in prison and a fine of up to \$100,000.

Pursuant to the plea agreement, IPS has agreed to pay a \$140,000 fine. It will also be required to make a community service payment of \$22,000 to the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. Additionally, IPS will serve a two-year probation period and must implement an environmental compliance program which includes training its employees in the proper responses to a spill.

The EPA Special Agent-in-Charge of the investigation added that this prosecution demonstrated the agency’s commitment to holding companies responsible for environmental crimes.