

October 27, 2020

**ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL ANNOUNCES SETTLEMENT WITH MODERN PLATING OVER
HYDROCHLORIC ACID LEAK**

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul today announced [a settlement with Modern Plating Corp.](#) requiring the company to take preventative measures following a hydrochloric acid leak at its plant in Freeport, Ill. The consent order also requires Modern Plating to pay a \$20,000 civil penalty, and to cease and desist from future violations.

Raoul's office entered the consent order in Stephenson County Circuit Court, resolving a lawsuit filed in February alleging that the company contributed to air and water pollution, conducted a hazardous waste disposal operation without a permit, and dumped waste into an on-site pond. The Attorney General's office filed a lawsuit following the Jan. 14 rupture of an above-ground storage tank and the release of approximately 4,800 gallons of the hazardous chemical, hydrochloric acid. The release also created a vapor cloud, which caused approximately 20 employees to be evacuated from the site. At least one person sought medical attention due to potential hydrochloric acid exposure.

"Today's settlement ensures that Modern Plating implements procedures to protect workers and residents from future hydrochloric acid emissions and contamination," Raoul said. "I will continue to work to protect Illinois residents by holding companies accountable for contamination that threatens public health and the environment."

The consent order requires Modern Plating to take action to prevent any future ruptures of an above-ground storage tank. Modern Plating must install a new bulk storage tank, piping system, scrubber and pressure relief system, and a new tank containment system for the tank storage area. The order also requires inspections of the tank and containment systems, as well as instituting rainwater removal processes. Modern Plating must also post additional signage with instructions for delivery drivers to follow during the transfer of hydrochloric acid to the storage tank. Additionally, Modern Plating must pay a \$20,000 civil penalty and cease and desist from future violations.

Hydrochloric acid is a hazardous chemical that can cause burns to the body and additional burns and scarring to the nose, throat and respiratory tract when inhaled. Release of the chemical into streams, creeks and other water bodies can result in the death of fish and other aquatic life. Raoul's lawsuit alleged that, following the January storage tank rupture that incurred when the delivery driver was filling the tank, hydrochloric acid reached an area of the site which connects to a small creek that drains into the Pecatonica River.

Assistant Attorneys General Karen Howard and Daniel Robertson handled the case for Raoul's Environmental Enforcement Division.