

## Controversies: Sherwin-Williams

- In January 2019, the South Coast Air Quality Management District sued Sherwin-Williams for **30 million USD** over claims that its paints violate air pollution standards. According to the lawsuit, the company supplied solvents, wall coatings, paint thinners, sealants and adhesives to businesses and its own retail outlets in Southern California that exceeded allowable levels for certain smog-producing compounds.
- In August 2017, several residents of Camden County, New Jersey, filed a **class action lawsuit** in federal court claiming that the paint manufacturing plant at Gibbsboro caused contamination of soil, water and air, and caused cancers among the residents. The site was included in the US **Superfund National Priorities List in 2008**. According to the USEPA, decades of direct discharge of materials into Hilliards Creek from lagoons, improper storage and handling and leaking tanks led to widespread soil, sediment, surface water and groundwater contamination. In September 2015, the company agreed to spend **14 million USD** to clean up residential properties contaminated by the plant. In May 2019, the company committed a further **21 million USD** to remove contaminated soil from the same property.
- In March of 2016, a Sherwin-Williams paint processing plant in Tijuana suffered a series of explosions, resulting in a **huge fire and column of smoke** that could be seen for miles. There were no reported injuries, but a few firefighters were treated for smoke inhalation, and civil protection authorities warned residents in the area to avoid any outdoor activities until the air quality could be determined.
- On 17 June 2015, the US Department of Transportation's Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) **proposed a 71,500 USD civil penalty** against Sherwin-Williams for violating Hazardous Material Transportation Regulations. The FAA alleged that on 15 October and 20 October 2014, Sherwin-Williams knowingly offered undeclared hazardous material shipments for transport aboard FedEx Corp. flights.
- In October 2012, Sherwin-Williams agreed to settle **US Federal Trade Commission** charges that they misled consumers to believe that some of their paints are free from potentially harmful chemicals known as volatile organic compounds (VOCs).
- In October 2011, Sherwin-Williams agreed to pay a **570,000 USD civil penalty** to settle alleged violations of hazardous waste regulations at its paint manufacturing facility located at Hollins Ferry Road in Baltimore. The penalty was imposed following an inspection by the USEPA in June 2009 during which the agency found Resource

Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) violations involving hazardous waste stored at the facility, including waste paint, waste resin, and used aerosol cans.

- Between 2011 and 2020, Sherwin-Williams has paid [close to 1.3 million USD in penalties for 18 environmental violations](#), according to the violation tracker project of Good Jobs First.