

# Chemical case costs DuPont record fine

\$16.5 million punishment is biggest noncourt civil penalty in EPA history.

By **JEFF MONTGOMERY**

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The DuPont Co.'s failure to report widespread exposures to a potentially toxic chemical used to manufacture nonstick pans, stain-resistant carpet and hamburger wrappers will cost the company \$16.5 million in fines and compensatory payouts.

Environmental Protection Agency officials said the settlement, announced yesterday, produced the largest administrative, noncourt civil penalty in agency history and would serve as a warning to industries that flout federal toxic substance control laws.

"This settlement sends a strong message that companies are responsible for promptly informing EPA about risk information associated with their chemicals," said Granta Y. Nakayama, assistant administrator for the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance.

Although the action was triggered by revelations about problems at DuPont's Teflon plant in Parkersburg, W.Va., its terms require the company to spend \$5 million studying how a wider variety of related chemicals and consumer products behave and break down in the environment.

Some of the chemicals covered by the research deal are handled at DuPont's Chambers Works plant in Deepwater, N.J., including C-8 — also known as perfluorooctanoic acid or PFOA — a chemical used in the production of Teflon.

One national organization, Environmental Working Group, said the penalty highlighted the federal government's weak hand in dealing with industrial polluters.

"What's the appropriate fine for a \$25 billion company that for

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