

**MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM, GOVERNOR**

James C. Kenney, Cabinet Secretary

Jennifer J. Pruet, Deputy Secretary

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The Environment Department's mission is to protect and restore the environment and to foster a healthy and prosperous New Mexico for present and future generations.

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Environment Department settles with O'Reilly Auto Parts store for endangering workers during pandemic

SANTA FE — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) entered into a [settlement agreement](#) with O'Reilly Auto Parts for alleged violations of the state's public health order and the Occupational Health and Safety Act that resulted in an unsafe workplace at a Santa Fe store. Under the settlement agreement, O'Reilly Auto Parts will pay \$79,200 in penalties.

NMED inspected the O'Reilly Auto Parts store located at 4715 Airport Road in Santa Fe on July 4, 2020 in response to several citizen complaints. During that inspection, NMED observed that management did not require employees to wear face coverings – a violation of state law, public health orders and COVID-Safe Practices – thereby exposing staff and customers to the imminent danger of COVID-19. The store was also cited for failing to post signage requiring customers to wear face coverings while inside the store, further endangering employees. During subsequent inspections, NMED observed store management corrected the violations.

“Failure by employers to protect staff from COVID-19 – a known workplace hazard – is unacceptable,” said NMED Cabinet Secretary James Kenney. “Employers must take their worker protection responsibility seriously or they will face robust enforcement action by the State of New Mexico.”

NMED's Occupational Health and Safety Bureau is an integral part of the state's response to COVID-19, conducting over 25,000 rapid responses to help businesses take appropriate action when employees test positive. NMED is also currently investigating over 200 workplace safety complaints related to COVID-19 and 14 workplace-related COVID-19 deaths.

Any penalties collected will go to the state general fund, the primary state fund from which the ongoing expenses of state government are paid.

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