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Adult film studios denounced for not requiring actors to wear protection

LOS ANGELES: An AIDS advocacy group filed complaints against 16 adult-film studios in California on Thursday, accusing them of violating state workplace safety rules by failing to require porn actors to wear condoms.

The complaints, submitted along with five dozen DVD copies of pornographic films produced by the companies as evidence, formally call on the state's Division of Occupational Safety and Health to conduct an inquiry.

A former porn actress joined the filing with a complaint of her own against three additional production companies.

The agency swiftly vowed to investigate the complaints.

"We take it seriously, and it will be addressed," Cal-OSHA spokesman Dean Fryer said of the situation.

The filing marks the latest effort by the Los Angeles-based AIDS Healthcare Foundation to safeguard adult-film performers.

The \$12 billion-a-year U.S. porn movie business is largely centred in the San Fernando Valley suburbs of Los Angeles.

Last month, the foundation sued Los Angeles County, accusing public health officials there of failing to enforce laws aimed at curbing the spread of sexually transmitted diseases within the adult entertainment industry.

The suit was filed after the disclosure that a porn actress had tested positive for HIV in June, leading health officials to reveal 16 more previously unpublicized cases among adult-film performers since a 2004 outbreak that prompted tougher testing and reporting rules.

The latest complaints say the films demonstrate that they were made without performers wearing condoms, in violation of state regulations requiring workers be protected from blood-borne pathogens in the exchange of bodily fluids.

"They have a valid point here," Fyer said of the filings. "The blood-borne pathogens standard is designed to protect workers where there is risk of transmission of diseases through bodily excretions that occur as part of adult film activity."

Public health figures show that more than 2,800 sexually transmitted disease cases were diagnosed among 1,884 porn performers in Los Angeles County, many suffering multiple infections, from April 2004 to March 2008.

Porn executives insist the industry has successfully policed itself with voluntary guidelines that call for monthly testing and quarantines of actors found to be infected.

"If Los Angeles County chooses to enforce mandatory condoms, what you'll see is all adult production leave California," Vivid Entertainment founder Steve Hirsch told the Los Angeles Times. -Reuters