

AUTOMOTIVE REFINISHING SHOPS Best Management Practices

Pollution Prevention Fact Sheet

Alabama Department of Environmental Management, Pollution Prevention Unit

ADEM
(334) 394-4366

For more information contact the ADEM ombudsman 1-800-533-2336

Reduce your operating costs by reducing the amount of waste that you generate.

As little as 0.3 gallons of paint thinner can be used per car. Determine how much thinner you use per car, then try some of these techniques to see if you can reduce the amount you use.

- Prevent loss of chemicals to evaporation and spillage. Keep lids and bungs on containers tight. This also prevents contamination of the contents by water, dirt or other materials.
- Use spigots and pumps when dispensing new materials and funnels when transferring wastes to storage containers. This reduces the possibility of spills.
- Train personnel to reduce the potential for mixing off-spec paints.
- Train personnel in proper cleanup procedures. Well trained personnel can usually use less solvent for clean-up purposes.
- Protect products from extreme temperatures to preserve shelf life.
- Accumulate wastes in dry areas to prevent contamination.
- Never mix wastes. This may make recycling impossible or make waste disposal much more expensive.
- Identify all materials used in your facility. Evaluate how much is going into products and how much is disposed.
- Monitor water and electric meters routinely. Identify peaks and valleys for usage during the day and week. Determine if there are activities that consume water and electricity that could be curtailed during non-production hours.

Reuse or replace.

- Reuse thinner as wash thinner. Be careful to keep paint waste separate from wash thinner.
- Reuse solvent to rinse out spray equipment initially. Then use a small amount of clean solvent to remove residue.
- Certain parts require cleaning with high purity solvents. Clean these parts with fresh solvent and then reuse the same solvent to clean other dirtier parts.
- Consider replacing raw materials with others that reduce the amount or toxicity of waste generated.
- Allow waste thinner to separate out into thinner and sludge, then siphon the thinner off and use it as wash thinner.
- Reuse and/or recycle 55 gallon drums.

Recycle.

- Recycle paint thinner as wash thinner.
- Recycle solvents by contracting with a solvent tank maintenance service or send off-site to a commercial recycler.
- Solvent recovery units are available in sizes to handle 5 gallons or more of waste solvent per batch.

Process changes.

- Mix your own paint. This allows you to mix only the amount of paint needed, thus reducing waste.
- Use more efficient spray equipment-paint overspray creates waste. Powder coating - 90-99% transfer efficiency; Electrostatic - 65-80% efficiency; Air-atomized 30-60% efficiency.
- Decrease spray gun paint cup size. This limits the amount of leftover paint and decreases the amount of solvent needed for equipment cleaning.

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