

Pollution Prevention: Saves Dollars, Makes Sense

For decades, the traditional approach to reducing industrial pollution has been one of treatment rather than prevention. Industry -- whether out of concern for the environment or to meet regulatory compliance -- has spent millions of dollars to treat, store, control, transport and dispose pollutants. The benefits are impressive; fewer toxics are released into our air, land and water than just a few years ago, and a flourishing environmental technology industry has been created.

However, these traditional approaches are not eliminating pollution as much as they are managing or controlling it. In some cases, such as some waste treatment and disposal facilities, pollution controls often move the problem from one place to another. In addition, as standards and public demands get tougher, total reliance on treatment to reduce pollution can become increasingly inefficient and expensive.

Pollution prevention (P2) can be a cost-effective alternative. Whereas traditional approaches focus on treating or controlling pollutants at the discharge pipe or smokestack, P2 looks at reducing or eliminating pollution at its source in all parts of a facility. By modifying processes, replacing toxic raw materials with less toxic substances, or applying a number of other techniques, companies can minimize the wastes which must be treated, stored, discharged or discarded. As a result, P2 can improve efficiency, hasten regulatory compliance, save money and reduce liability.

Industrial facilities with P2 strategies have initiated a wide variety of ways to create less waste. Some have made operational changes -- such as the use of less toxic raw materials -- while others have modified their manufacturing processes to employ new efficient, clean technologies.

Today, innovative and competitive industries are realizing the environmental and economic benefits of effective P2 applications. New technologies and forward thinking environmental management will lead Maryland's business community into the next century.

For more information on P2 at MDE, contact the Pollution Prevention Office at (410) 537-4119 or 1(800)633-6101, extension 4119.



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