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Small Business

# The Advocate

For and about small businesses affected by environmental regulations

Healthy Environment. Strong Business. Good Sense.

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## FY 1998 Annual Summary Shows Outreach Helps Small Businesses

The Small Business Assistance Program (SBAP) had a productive Fiscal Year (FY) 1998 giving free technical assistance to over 20,000 small businesses through telephone and walk-in help, informational

mailings, publications, industry newsletters, and Small Business Advisory Committees.

Hotline calls, a primary source for input and ideas from small business industries, generated these recommendations:

- ◆ assess the need for outreach for the dairy, lumber, high-tech/electronics, aquaculture, laboratory, and die caster industries;
- ◆ ensure input to the rulemaking process from members of the Small Business Compliance Advisory Panel, Small Business Advisory Committees, Rule Review Committee, trade associations, and small business owners;

### Here's a look at some of the outreach numbers:

hotline calls received: ..... 1,923  
 staff presentations and workshops sponsored: ..... 45  
 workshop attendees: ..... over 1,500  
 site visits made: ..... 177  
 EnviroMentor hours volunteered: ..... over 120

- ◆ continue current SBAP initiatives for foundries, dry cleaners, printers, wood product manufacturers, autobody/autoservices and metal finishers.

### Site Visit Program Increases Voluntary Compliance

The Site Visit Program is a key outreach effort the SBAP administers to offer free technical assistance to small businesses through private consultants. Since October 1997, site visits have been requested by over 177 small businesses. Common

problems discovered during site visits included the failure to:

- ◆ make a hazardous waste determination (49.72 percent)
- ◆ properly label waste containers (31.64 percent)
- ◆ keep monthly records of hazardous waste generation (28.25 percent)
- ◆ register for air permit exemptions (20.32 percent).

Of the participating businesses, only 10 percent were in full compliance during site visits. Surveys taken after the site visits found small businesses had made significant changes based on the consultant's recommendations. The program's overall result was a significant increase in compliance. Waste regulation compliance among automotive repair facilities went up from 68.2 percent to 93.3 percent (up 25 percent) while compliance by autobody shops went from 74.7 percent to 95.8 percent (up 21.1 percent). Site visits also spurred more small businesses to recycle and use environmentally friendly solvents and in turn reduce waste and cut disposal costs.

## Star Program Has Bright Outcomes

Through a grant from the U.S. EPA, the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC) kicked off the state's first training course in the Spray Techniques Analysis and Research (STAR) program. Developed by the Iowa Waste Reduction Center, STAR teaches participants how to use spray painting equipment in an environmentally friendly manner. STAR students learn an efficient method that reduces the amount of spray paint going into the air instead of onto the vehicle, and that also reduces volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions that contribute to ground-level

ozone, a major air pollutant. STAR has some other bright outcomes: students learn how to reduce pollution, cut costs for the disposal of hazardous paint wastes, and gain a new skill that strengthens their employment opportunities. As a result of this program and several others, the TNRCC won a second place award from the National Pollution Prevention Roundtable's 1998 Most Valuable Pollution Prevention Program.

## Foundry Initiative Boosts Compliance And Recycling

A new SBAP outreach effort, the foundry initiative, was created to inform

foundry operators about environmental laws. In FY1997 and 1998, SBAP staff conducted workshops and site visits, and developed a self-audit checklist for foundry operators. These efforts resulted in a big boost to compliance by foundries: air compliance shot up from 52 percent to 93 percent while waste compliance was up from 68 percent to 75 percent. Key to the initiative was promoting the reuse of foundry sand for the Texas Department of Transportation's (TXDOT) road and highway projects. Collaboration among the TNRCC, the EPA, the TXDOT, foundry associations, and the Texas Manufacturing Assistance Centers made the initiative a success. ■

## Regulatory Roundup

### Clean Air Responsibility Enterprise (CARE) Program Helps Grandfathered Facilities

As a result of House Bill 3019, the TNRCC created the CARE Program to recruit grandfathered facilities, those built prior to September 1971, to voluntarily enter the air permitting process. Mary Miksa of the Texas Association of Business and Chambers of Commerce chairs the CARE committee and worked with the SBAP to make sure that small business concerns about the expense of public notice requirements, exemptions, and standard permits were taken into consideration in the development of the program.

### Wood/Coating Operations Gain Record Keeping Flexibility

The SBAP suggested a rule change that makes record keeping requirements flexible for small wood part and product coating facilities. Prior to the SBAP's rule change, facilities located in the Dallas-Fort Worth, El Paso, and Houston-Galveston areas were required to keep daily usage

records as mandated by Chapter 115, part 426 of the Texas Administrative Code. Under the rule change, facilities using VOC compliant coatings can substitute the record keeping requirements of exemption 106.231 for the daily usage records required by Chapter 115.426. Facilities that claim exemption 106.231 may keep monthly receipts for coatings, solvents, and stripping agents.

### De Minimis Standard Creates Exemptions For Low Pollution Levels

*De minimis*, though still in the process of being defined, will be a new standard that exempts entities that emit low levels of pollution from having to obtain TNRCC authorization.

### Regulatory Flexibility Act Gives Businesses Alternatives

Passage of Senate Bill 1591, the Regulatory Flexibility Act, allows the regulated community to propose alternative methods or alternative standards to existing

methods and rules to control or reduce pollution. The SBAP has provided input to the Office of Pollution Prevention and Recycling (OPPR) about small business issues that OPPR should consider in developing a guidance document to the Act. The guidance document will be available early next year. ■



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## UPCOMING EVENTS:

### Autobody/Auto Repair Workshops

January 26, 1999 - Brownsville

January 27, 1999 - Harlingen

Call SBAP at 1-800-447-2827 for more information  
and to register for a workshop.