



DATE: June 2, 2009

CONTACT: Mark Shaffer, Director of Communications, (602) 771-2215

Three More Valley Electroplating Companies Brought Into Compliance Through ADEQ's "Plating Initiative"

PHOENIX (June 2, 2009) – The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality has entered into two Consent Judgments in Maricopa County Superior Court and one Administrative Order with three Valley metal plating businesses in the latest phase of the ADEQ "Plating Initiative."

This brings to 10 the number of electroplating facilities in Arizona brought into compliance with hazardous-waste rules under the ADEQ initiative. ADEQ launched the Plating Initiative in 2008 after facility inspections beginning in 2004 determined that many facilities were not in compliance with the Arizona Hazardous Waste Act, which regulates hazardous waste in the state. Hazardous wastes, along with Hazardous Air Pollutants, are the most dangerous waste streams that ADEQ regulates.

The Consent Judgments were entered against Papago Plating Company, 2312 E. Washington Street in Phoenix, which require Papago to spend an estimated \$50,000 for a monitoring well, conduct audits of its environmental practices and implement an Environmental Management System; and Industrial Coating and Plating, 2724 W. Palm Lane in Phoenix, which requires Industrial to pay a \$20,000 civil penalty.

The Administrative Order was entered against Concours Metal Finishing, 9845 N. 21st Street in Phoenix, in which Concours agreed to clean up a release of toxic chromium and correct the unsafe work practices that led to the release of chromium.

Both Papago Plating and Industrial Coating and Plating received Notices of Violation for storage and disposal of hazardous waste without a permit, failure to make a waste determination and failure to manage their disposal containers correctly. Each company has returned to full compliance since the violations were identified by ADEQ investigators in 2006.

At the Concours facility, an inspection in April 2008 found staining of the concrete floor near a leaking hexavalent chromium tank. ADEQ issued a Notice of Violation (NOV) in June 2008. Company officials said that the waste was disposed of as regular trash and the company lacked a permit to store hazardous waste.

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Electroplating

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Arizona law sets a cleanup limit of 65 parts per million (ppm) of hexavalent chromium in the soil for a nonresidential facility, but the soil showed 230 ppm of chromium at the Concours facility.

The Administrative Order requires Concours to assess the area of contamination within the soil, submit a report to ADEQ, and submit a cleanup plan if the soil is found to exceed the legal cleanup levels for contaminants.

“Hexavalent chromium is a very dangerous substance, which endangers not only the surrounding community but also the health and safety of the people who work with it,” said Acting ADEQ Director Patrick J. Cunningham. “We launched the ‘Plating Initiative’ to better protect human health and the environment in Arizona and to ensure Arizona’s cleanup levels are followed so that neighborhoods are protected.”

Most problems with electroplating facilities involve mismanagement of hexavalent chromium, an odorless, tasteless chemical which has been known to cause lung and stomach cancer, asthma and other respiratory ailments, ulcers, anemia, allergic reactions, developmental problems in children, and damage to the male reproductive system.

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