

SJM Auto Sales and Repairs Proves Concern for Environment

The Auto Body Industry has long been under great pressure to be responsible to the environmental needs of the surrounding communities in which they do business. As you may or may not know, legislation is being introduced and enforced to have the Auto Body Industry or Collision Industry as you may know it by; to begin to implement Water Based Products into the process of painting vehicles. This is not due to take effect as a mandate in our area for at least two to three years from now.

SJM Auto Sales & Repairs has decided to begin replacing their Solvent Based Color Coat with a Water Based Color Coat currently. Their concern for the environment has led them to take a proactive stance on this issue. By doing so they are reducing harmful emissions into the atmosphere. This required that they retool their facility and make financial investments into equipment specifically designed for the use of the Water Based Product.

Waterborne refinishing products are replacing solvent-borne refinishing products because they emit less volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and Hazardous Air Pollutants (HAPs) including toluene, xylene, methyl ethyl ketone, and ethyl benzene than solvent-borne materials, making Water-borne paints less toxic. The VOC level is reduced by almost one-half. VOCs contribute to depletion of the ozone layer, smog production, and adverse health effects.

Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) are organic chemical compounds that have high enough vapor pressures under normal conditions to significantly vaporize and enter the atmosphere. A wide range of carbon-based molecules, such as aldehydes, ketones, and other light hydrocarbons are VOCs. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines a VOC as any organic compound that participates in a photoreaction.

When comparing waterborne and solvent-borne products, the main difference is that water is used to replace a significant portion of the solvents as the carrier. Water evaporates from the basecoat, much like solvents evaporate from solvent-borne products. Waterborne mate-

rials still contain some solvents. Because a main ingredient is water, and the solvent content is lower; waterborne products also create less of a risk of flammable issues than solvent-based products. Their use will reduce air emission and improve worker health and safety. The pot life of the waterborne products is much longer and unused coatings can be saved in a sealed container for later use thereby reducing waste disposal. Paint guns can be cleaned with water or water-based solutions rather than paint thinner, acetone, or methylacetate which eliminates even more VOCs and HAPs being released into the atmosphere.

Legislation has been passed in several U.S. states and for all of Canada that requires lowering the amount of VOCs being emitted into the environment. In California, for example, it is estimated 20.7 tons of VOCs are emitted every day. The goal is to reduce that to 5.1 tons per day, a 75% reduction. Using waterborne materials helps provide compliance to these regulations.

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