

Small Business Environmental Assistance Program

NYS Pollution Prevention Institute

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Automotive Refinishing EPA Requirements (October 2022)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a regulation that affects all automotive refinishing shops. This regulation [40 CFR Part 63, Subpart HHHHHH] addresses the hazardous metal compounds of lead, cadmium, manganese, nickel and chromium (referred to as target HAPs) that are components in many automotive coatings. These target HAPs are released to the atmosphere when atomized through spray guns.

Who must comply?

All auto body shops must meet the following requirements and deadlines unless you can certify that you do not spray apply coatings* that contain target HAPs. Target HAPs are > 0.1% by weight of lead, nickel, cadmium or hexavalent chromium, or > 1% by weight of manganese or trivalent chromium.

*Spray-apply coatings mean hand-held devices that create an atomized mist or coating. Spray applied does not include the following:

- hand-held devices with paint cup capacities \leq 3 fluid ounces,
- non-refillable aerosol containers,
- non-atomizing technologies, powder coating and thermal spray operations.

How can I tell if coatings contain target HAPs?

Many primers and tints/basecoats contain target HAPs. You can determine if any spray coatings contain target HAPs by contacting your coating manufacturers, supply vendors and by reviewing the materials safety data sheets for each of the coatings. If any coating contain > 0.1% by weight of lead, nickel, cadmium or hexavalent chromium, or > 1% by weight of manganese or trivalent chromium, then you need to comply with requirements below.

What if my coatings don't contain any target HAPs?

If you can verify that you do not spray coatings with target HAPs or you can switch to coatings that are free from these compounds, you can submit a Petition for Exemption and be exempt from the requirements outlined in the next section. If you want to be exempt, contact SBEAP for assistance. Be careful! If you Petition for Exemption and switch coatings or use new ones, you will need to make sure they do not contain target HAPs, or else begin meeting the following requirements in order to use the non-exempt coating.

What are the Requirements?

If you spray apply even one coating with target HAPs, you need to do the following:

1. Have 98% removal efficient filters on the exhaust of all spray operations. Your vendor or filter manufacturer should be able to provide this information.
2. Use only a certified high volume, low pressure (HVLP) spray guns, electrostatic application, airless or air-assisted airless spray guns or equivalent technology.
3. Do not spray solvent to clean the guns unless using a container that captures all of the bounce back spray, or mist.
4. For body shops that refinish complete motor vehicles or other mobile equipment, spray painting operations must occur in a fully enclosed spray booth or station and operate under negative pressure. However, fully enclosed booths using an automatic pressure balancing system can be operated up to 0.05 inches water gauge positive pressure.
5. For body shops that refinish parts, products or vehicle “subassemblies”, spray painting must occur in an area that has a full roof, at least three complete walls or side curtains and is vented to draw air through the area.
6. Mobile spot repair operations need to enclose the area being coated, capture paint overspray and filter the exhaust.
7. Train and certify all spray painters. Re-certify every five years. Maintain these records. (See the Spray Painter Training Fact Sheet for the detailed training requirements.)
8. Submit a Notification of Compliance Status and maintain a copy. If there are any changes in your compliance status during the calendar year, you need to submit an Annual Notification of Changes Report (by March 1).
9. Have documentation on the spray booth filter efficiency.
10. Have documentation on the spray gun transfer efficiency.
11. All records must be kept for 5 years and maintained at the facility for the first 2 years.
12. Permitting or registration is typically required. Changes will require modifications to the permit.

For more information or assistance with compliance or permitting, contact the Small Business Environmental Assistance Program.