

FACT SHEET FOR CHROME PLATERS USING FUME SUPPRESSANTS

What are California requirements for chrome platers using fume suppressants?

Under California's Airborne Toxic Control Measure for Chrome Plating and Chromic Acid Anodizing Operations (Chrome Plating ATCM), certain categories of facilities are required to use certified fume suppressants. Chemical fume suppressants are highly effective in-tank controls that reduce hexavalent chromium emissions by reducing chromic acid mist from the surface of the tanks. Small facilities located 330 feet or less from a sensitive receptor and operating 20,000 ampere-hours or less per year, or greater than 330 feet from a sensitive receptor and operating 50,000 ampere-hours or less per year, are required to use a certified fume suppressant. A certified fume suppressant has been tested and certified by the California Air Resources Board (ARB) to achieve a hexavalent chromium emission rate of 0.01 milligrams per ampere-hour.

Other categories of chrome platers, such as those operating at higher ampere-hours and those closer to sensitive receptors are required to use add-on control. Many of these facilities also use fume suppressants for additional in-tank control. These facilities are not required to use a certified fume suppressant; however, many do because these fume suppressants are proven to be highly effective in controlling hexavalent chromium emissions.

What are the federal requirements for chrome platers using fume suppressants?

On September 19, 2012, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) published final amendments to the National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants – Hard and Decorative Chromium Electroplating and Chromium Anodizing Tanks. As part of those amendments, effective September 21, 2015, U.S. EPA phased out the use of perfluorinated octane sulfonate (PFOS) in fume suppressants. PFOS is of concern because these compounds have persistent, bioaccumulative, and toxic characteristics as shown in fish and in water.

What fume suppressants should I use after September 21, 2015?

To date, only fume suppressants containing PFOS have been certified in California. As a result, on behalf of chrome platers in California, with the exception of those located within the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD/District), the Metal Finishers Association of Southern California and Northern California (Metal Finishing Association) requested a one-year extension of the PFOS phase-out to allow for continued testing, and to further evaluate the efficacy and feasibility of non-PFOS fume suppressants in their chrome plating operations. On September 21, 2015, ARB granted California chrome plating facilities the requested one-year extension from the PFOS ban. The additional year will allow for a smooth transition toward the use of non-PFOS fume suppressants while maintaining public health protection from hexavalent chromium emissions. The SCAQMD is working separately with their facilities on granting a similar extension.

When do I need to switch to a non-PFOS fume suppressant?

Although California chrome platers, except those located in the SCAQMD, have a one-year extension (until September 21, 2016) to continue to use PFOS-based fume suppressants, facilities located in the SCAQMD should contact the District to determine when they should switch to a non-PFOS fume suppressant. ARB along with the SCAQMD are continuing to test non-PFOS based fume suppressants and believe that within the next six to twelve months non-PFOS products will be certified for use in California chrome plating operations. Once a non-PFOS fume suppressant becomes certified, ARB will update the list of certified fume suppressants on our website at: <http://www.arb.ca.gov/toxics/chrome/fumesuppresslist.pdf>. At that time, facilities may use certified non-PFOS fume suppressants.

How can I get more information?

Information on California's Chrome Plating ATCM, including the Metal Finishing Association extension request letter and ARB's response letter, can be found on ARB's website at <http://www.arb.ca.gov/toxics/chrome/chrome.htm>. Facility specific or permitting questions should be directed to your local air district which can be found at the following website: <http://www.arb.ca.gov/capcoa/roster.htm>