

What to do about odour ...

December 8, 2009

Preventing air pollution is one of the requirements under environmental legislation that body repair workshops need to work under. Although not seen, particles from grinding, VOCs from paint and solvent and particles from faulty spray booths, all have an effect on the quality of air and odours. These days, the locations of industry and residential are not always distinct. Sometimes houses are built next door to existing industrial complexes and sooner or later, residents are complaining of odours.

Whilst on the one hand there will always be odours associated with various businesses (the smash repair industry being one of them), there are actions that your business can take to reduce the amount of air pollution and odour caused. Some of these actions are small and common sense, others are larger for when a serious problem has been identified. Others are more administrative, so that you can demonstrate to your local authority that your business has been actively trying to decrease odour potential, in the case of a complaint or dispute.

Use the list below either to act as a checklist of what you need to do, or as a list of what your business has already implemented for your to be able to demonstrate best practise.

Small, everyday actions

- Regularly change the filters on the spray booth as per manufacturer's instructions. Each filter should be touching each side of the frame and should not be shrivelled.
- Make sure all painting takes place in the spray booth with the doors closed and the filter on.
- Use high volume low pressure (HVLP) spray guns to minimise off spray.
- Store paints in a paint room with an exhaust fan.
- Keep lids on all paint and solvent containers.
- Dispose of solvents via a waste collection service, don't leave them to evaporate.
- Use dust vacuum systems on sanders.
- Clean guns in a gun wash station.

- Wrap used spray booth filters in plastic prior to disposal.'

Larger actions

- Ensure that the spray booth meets AS 4114.1:2003 and have documentation from your spray booth supplier to show this.
- Ensure the exhaust of the spray booth is correctly located; away from windows, air-conditioning units and vents of other buildings.
- Install equipment that captures VOCs (volatile organic compounds) from the spray booth. (Normal spray booths do not do this and VOCs are often the source of odour complaints). Visit www.eati.com.au for more information on this.
- Have your spray booth properly maintained and tested by the spray booth supplier (if possible).

Keeping records

- Keep a record of when the filters on the spray booth are changed. This could be as simple as sticking a piece of paper on the side of the spray booth and writing in the date each time they are changed.
- Keep a record of any maintenance that is carried out on the spray booth.
- Maintain an Environmental Management Plan (a checklist with all your environmental practices).

There will inevitably be odours when working with solvent-based materials, but it's worth taking small steps to reduce air pollution not only for the sake of our environment, but also for the health of our staff and customers.

This story was found at:

<http://www.paintandpanel.com.au/news/what-to-do-about-odour->