

Small Engine Repair Campaign

Executive Summary

January 2002

This single industry campaign focused on small engine repair. Most single industry – type campaigns focus on business types that represent a risk to public health and the environment. This risk is evidenced by improper storage, use, and disposal of hazardous materials. Often, when looking at a single industry campaign, the list must be prioritized to keep the campaign manageable. In past automotive campaigns, small engine repair shops were rarely included. Therefore, a technical assistance campaign was initiated for small engine repair shops. Once the list of businesses was finalized, 43 percent of the businesses selected had never received a technical assistance visit in the past.

With the exception of marine engine testing, the small engine repair industry is the same as the large engine repair industry. The same hazardous materials are used, stored, and disposed. The same processes and procedures are used. The same pollution prevention issues are found in small engine facilities that are found in large engine facilities.

The majority of the inspected businesses (64%) were in full compliance with the Sanitary Code, and handled and stored their hazardous materials in a manner that did not pose a threat to human health or the environment. They did this by having small quantities of materials stored indoors and in areas with no floor drains or by having proper outdoor storage for these materials. The Business Pollution Prevention Team generally offered very few suggestions to make management of hazardous materials better for these businesses.

Two businesses were required to modify their method of outdoor marine engine testing. These modifications eliminated the loss of coolant from splash and spray and retained the pollutants from the engines instead of releasing them to the environment. Two businesses changed their method of engine testing. The third is no longer in business.

The Customer Survey Form asked the businesses to rank methods of receiving information on hazardous waste services, pollution prevention, changes in regulations, etc. The answers represent how the businesses would like to get their information, but not which one would reach the most businesses for the least amount of money. The first and second most preferred methods were “Topic-specific fact sheets” and a “Quarterly newsletter,” respectively. The County could test the effectiveness of different information delivery methods by running a pilot information campaign with these businesses, another business group, or in a wellhead protection area prior to the campaign. If a pilot program were implemented, the County could send fact sheets to the selected business groups prior to commencing the campaign. The County could then follow up by asking businesses where they received the information about the campaign. The same process could also be used if the County newsletter was sent to businesses on a regular basis. It would be interesting to see which method of delivering information is most remembered by individual businesses.

Businesses were also asked to rank the types of services they would use if provided by the County. The top two services – a disposal site and a hotline – are currently offered by the County and have been for some time.

The highest ranked service the County could provide for businesses is a hazardous waste recycling/disposal site. This site is in existence and is located at the Thurston County Waste & Recovery Center. The site is known as HazoHouse and has been available for SQG business waste disposal since 1996. It currently provides hazardous waste recycling/disposal service for approximately one hundred sixty-two (162) SQG businesses and government agencies. In 2001, HazoHouse recycled and/or disposed of 18,756 pounds of SQG hazardous waste from 81 businesses.

The second highest ranked service the County could provide for businesses is an information hotline. This service has been available to the public and to county businesses since 1993. The hotline currently receives approximately two hundred (200) calls per year. The calls typically range from information on HazoHouse to information on disposal of specific wastes such as paints and fluorescent light tubes.

The third most requested service the County could provide is a news bulletin or newsletter. Thurston County is committed to doing just that. The first edition of the newsletter, known as the “Hazardous Waste Update,” was sent to all businesses on the departments’ SQG business master mailing list in January 2002. The publication will be sent to the County’s SQG businesses three or four times per year. It will be used to remind everyone of the services offered by the County including the hazardous waste hotline and the hazardous waste recycling/disposal site at HazoHouse.

Past campaigns have not followed up on BMP recommendations made to businesses that were in compliance with the Sanitary Code. This is because BMP recommendations are voluntarily implemented and are not a regulatory mandate. This has left a gap in the county’s ability to track the number of BMPs that are implemented by “in compliance” businesses. This campaign did follow up on BMP recommendations prior to the final report.

These follow ups were conducted on-site at each business four to six months after the initial technical assistance visit. The results are encouraging. Thirty-six BMP recommendations were made to ten businesses. Nine businesses (90%) implemented all the suggested BMPs. One business (10%) implemented one of two BMPs. (The one outstanding BMP recommendation is to label used oil and waste fuel storage tanks in a containment area; the business intends to implement this BMP at some time in the future.) In all, thirty-five of thirty-six (97%) BMPs were implemented as a result of this technical assistance campaign. This shows a high degree of interest to do more than just “comply” with regulations and corresponds very well with customer survey responses from question #9 (see page 12).

These BMP implementations along with compliance with the Sanitary Code now serve as a baseline for future comparison.