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SAFER BRAKE CLEANERS IN DULUTH MINNESOTA

Challenge

The job is to repair, tune, and shine cars and trucks for the citizens of the North Shore of Lake Superior. Keeping these vehicles running requires the use of an engine degreaser or brake cleaner to remove grease and grime so the mechanics can identify issues and make repairs. Unfortunately, most brake cleaners contain chemicals that are harmful to human health and the environment. Auto shops have been putting up with these chemicals for years because they need to clean parts in order to make repairs that keep cars on the road. Fortunately for ten auto shops in the Duluth area, that compromise ended last winter.

Results

Replaced hazardous
brake cleaners with
safer alternatives.

Ten Sites
Implemented Safer
Products

1700 lb/yr
VOC Reduction

660 lb/yr
HAP Reduction

**MINNESOTA TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

612-624-1300

MnTAP.UMN.EDU

Link to more information on
safer products that work.

Approach

Many auto shops in Duluth chose to partner with the University of Minnesota to test and implement safer products that work. Fifty shops were engaged with information on the project. Thirty-two sites sampled product. These sites tested various blends of acetone, heptane, and hydrocarbons as replacements for more hazardous blends containing xylene, toluene, perchloroethylene, trichloroethylene and methanol. The safer products were sourced from project partners at Advanced Auto Parts, O'Reilly Auto Parts, and Auto Value. After identifying a working product, the auto shops were given the option to redeem a case of the product to continue testing it to ensure that it met cleaning expectations. The overwhelming consensus was that the safer products performed well.

Results

Ten shops chose to permanently implement safer products. Combined, these sites are reducing volatile organic compounds (VOCs) by 1700 pounds per year. They are reducing hazardous air pollutants (HAPs) by 660 pounds per year. The changes will not only benefit the people working with these products each and every day, but will help to improve the overall air quality in the Duluth area

Safer Products in Duluth Minnesota		
	VOC Content	HAP Content
Advanced Auto Parts		
Wearever W7340	34%	0%
Wearever W7341	80%	0%
O'Reilly Auto Parts		
O'Reilly 46580	10%	0%
CRC 05050	9%	0%
Auto Value		
Brake & Parts Cleaner 0732	54%	0%
Brake & Parts Cleaner 0734	100%	0%

More information on safer products or on how to calculate the VOCs and HAPs in your products can be found on our website: <http://www.mntap.umn.edu/industries/air/degreasing.html>

Special thanks to our partners at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and Environmental Protection Agency for making this work possible.