

The National Strategic Goals Program

*A voluntary commitment
to improve environmental
performance.*

Q&A

September 2000

About the Program:

A Common Sense Approach to Public Health Protection

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), is focusing on the need to comprehensively address the environmental performance of industries as an alternative to the one-size-fits-all, pollutant-by-pollutant approaches of the past.

In 1993, the EPA took a major step toward that goal by establishing the Common Sense Initiative. Six sectors, representing a cross section of business interests were initially targeted: automobiles, computers and electronics, iron and steel, metal plating and finishing, printing and oil refining. The most far reaching effort, to date, is the Strategic Goals Program for the metal finishing industry.

Q: ***What is the Strategic Goals Program?***

A: The Strategic Goals Program (SGP) is a cooperative effort between the EPA and the American Electroplaters and Surface Finishers Society (AESF), the National Association of Metal Finishers (NAMF), and the Metal Finishing Suppliers Association (MFSA) to "test new ideas" that are both bold and "common sense" in nature for improved environmental protection by the metal finishing industry.

Q: ***Who was Involved in the Development of the Strategic Goals Program?***

A: The program was developed through the CSI's Metal Finishing Subcommittee. Consistent with the CSI's commitment to involve multiple stakeholders, this subcommittee included representatives from the industry (individual firms and national trade associations); state and local government; environmental, labor and public interest groups; and the EPA.

Q: ***What are the Basic Elements of the Strategic Goals Program?***

A: The Strategic Goals Program includes commitments by the industry to go beyond compliance with the baseline environmental standards, substantially reducing pollution from their operations. Within 5 years, participating metal finishing firms that enlist in the voluntary program pledge to become:

- CLEANER by reducing hazardous emissions
 - 90% reduction in organic Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) emissions
 - 50% reduction in metals emissions to air and water.
 - 50% reduction in hazardous sludge disposal.
 - Substantial reduction in sludge generation.
 - Reduced worker and community exposure.

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CHEAPER by saving money and providing economic advantages
50% reduction in costs of unnecessary reporting, permitting and monitoring.
Less long-term liability

SMARTER by conserving resources
98% metals utilization on products.
50% reduction in water use.
25% reduction in energy use.

Q:
A:

What are the Benefits of the Strategic Goals Program to Metal Finishers?

The industry can expect a number of important benefits from this ambitious program:

1. It demonstrated that metal finishers are environmental leaders concerned about public health in their communities.
2. It can lead to more operational flexibility, a benefit that can help firms become more responsive to changing market demands and, ultimately increase overall competitiveness.
3. The program offers the opportunity to change the regulatory system in which metal finishers operate.

Q:
A:

What is the "Action Plan" To Help Metal Finishers Reach Their Goals?

The stakeholder commitments are based on a strong foundation of knowledge about the industry, an understanding of the factors that affect industry performance, and testing of innovative ideas through pilot projects. From this foundation, the Action Plan addresses key issues for this industry:

- Operational flexibility for top firms
- Waste minimization and recovery
- Reporting reform and Community Right to Know
- Compliance tools and assistance
- Research and technology development
- Proactive wastewater treatment
- Responsible site transitions (Brownfields Prevention)
- Enforcement against chronic non-compliers
- Access to financial capital

Once implemented, the Action Plan will provide the metal finishing industry with important tools and incentives for pursuing performance goals, while removing critical barriers to success.

For More Information: <http://www.strategicgoals.org>

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