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ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

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Industrial laundry cleans up environmental problems

Solvent-based, closed-loop system recycles contaminated gloves and wipes

BOB DERLUNAS HAD A problem. The purchasing manager at North American Directory Corp., Hazelton, PA, was worried because the industrial laundry he used stuffed his solvent-soaked shop towels into cloth bags and dragged them across the floor of his printing plant, leaving a trail of solvent.

"I was concerned because the laundry was a water-based operation," says Derlunas, "and if the solid waste residue from its cleaning operations wound up in the municipal wastewater stream, we might also be held liable."

Not long ago, few plant managers would have given much thought about the environmental sensitivity of their industrial laundry. Gloves and towels that became impregnated with oil, grease, ink or solvents were simply discarded and eventually ended up in a landfill.

Federal environmental regulations have made landfilling these solvent-soaked textiles illegal, and many companies are scrambling to avoid potential liability.

To compound the problem, the water-based laundries that many companies used to clean their "dirty" (contaminated with solid or hazardous waste) laundry would no longer accept such materials because it was against the law to discharge waste into municipal water systems. And incinerating the materials at EPA licensed facilities was extremely expensive — from \$650 to \$1,000 for a 55-gal. drum.

Derlunas solved his problem by contacting Arbill, Inc., a Philadelphia, PA-based industrial laundry that uses a closed-loop, solvent-based cleaning system.

Arbill's cleaning system uses solvents to completely clean materials soiled with hazardous substances. The cleaning solvents are then recaptured, refined, and reused.

The company picks up contaminated materials in Department of Transportation-approved drums and carries them to its plant. After cleaning, any residue



Arbill President Barry Bickman (right) and Production Supervisor Alice Reeves inspect a batch of newly cleaned shop towels. Arbill's solvent-based, closed-loop industrial laundry provides EPA-approved cleaning of contaminated gloves and wipes used in the metalworking, automotive, chemical, printing, petroleum, and furniture industries.

is removed from Arbill's plant by DOT-licensed haulers and incinerated at facilities licensed by the EPA. Each step of the process is manifested and clients receive a Certificate of Disposition as proof of compliance.

Dave Ritter, production coordinator at CPS Chemical, Old Bridge, NJ, is particularly appreciative of Arbill's all-encompassing service. CPS Chemical makes polymers and monomers for sewage treatment, potable water and paper industry applications. Ritter not only uses Arbill for cleaning soiled gloves, he also buys gloves from the company.

"New Jersey is relentless regarding the environment," says Ritter. "Using Arbill has been a huge bonus and provides a real sense of comfort because

they remove all liabilities from us."

One of Arbill's biggest boosters in fact, is Norine Binder, bureau chief for advisement and manifests of New Jersey's Department of Environmental Protection and energy.

"We recommend that companies have their impregnated materials recycled in a closed-loop laundry system," says Binder. "It's healthier, because there are no fugitive emissions to pollute the air, it removes waste in an appropriate fashion, and it saves money. We have certain provisions that allow industrial laundries to use that process, and in that way we encourage companies to use them."

Arbill, Inc., 2207 Glenwood Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19132; 215-228-4011.

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