

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Cleaner Production Challenge



### Q: What is The Challenge? Why is my business being challenged?

**A:** The Department of Ecology's (Ecology) Cleaner Production Challenge is a non-enforcement project designed to help your company reduce the amount of water used, wastewater produced and hazardous sludge generated. It will offer better ways to conserve energy and process chemicals.

Metal finishers (SIC 3471-3479), aerospace-parts manufacturers (SIC 3721-3729), and circuit-board manufacturers (SIC 3671-3699) generated nearly 200 million pounds of recurrent hazardous waste in 1998. Ecology is inviting nearly 80 facilities statewide to join **The Challenge**.

You are being asked to step up to this challenge because:

- ✓ Less than half of the wet-process facilities visited between January and June 2001 have implemented simple water-reduction opportunities
- ✓ Many pollution-prevention and waste-reduction process improvements do not require major infrastructure changes to the facility
- ✓ Payback for most modifications is less than two years

### Q: What can Ecology offer my company if I join The Challenge?

**A:** Toxics Reduction engineers and specialists from Ecology provide on-site technical assessments for pollution prevention and assist with project implementation. Ecology offers industry-specific compliance assistance and employee training, arranges vendor workshops and peer exchange, and acts as an information depository between facilities.

The training provided as part of **The Challenge** will be based on topics companies like yours requested in the survey Ecology conducted in 2001. The training offered in the spring of 2002 will be free of charge to Challenge participants. Additionally, some companies will be eligible for more in-depth technical assistance and analysis by the Toxics Reduction Engineer Efficiency (TREE) Team.

**The Challenge** will get you involved with learning how to decrease the amount of waste you generate, saving money and water, and lowering your energy bills.

### Q: How much will these changes cost? What can I save?

**A:** Costs and savings vary for each facility and opportunity. It is projected that most of the opportunities that will be uncovered through the technical assistance site visits and workshops will have a payback of less than two years. Many companies have been able to reduce their water consumption and wastewater by 50 to 90 percent and reduce the amount of hazardous sludge by 30 to 60 percent.

#### Smith Chrome Plating

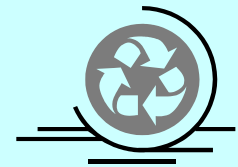
##### Walla Walla, WA

Reduced more than 90 percent of their water use by recycling cooling waters.

#### Asko Processing

##### Seattle, WA

Water usage did not change when 36 process tanks and rinse tanks were added. This was due to better bath maintenance and the installation of conductivity probes.



**Q: How will my company benefit by accepting The Challenge?**

**A:** Adhering to the Best Management Practices (BMPs) for your industry can increase your company’s environmental compliance and reduce liability. Even so, less than half of the facilities that Ecology employees visited in 2001 had properly implemented these BMPs.

Facilities required to prepare Pollution Prevention Plan updates in September 2002 can take full advantage of Ecology’s technical assistance. Start preparing now by identifying the opportunities now that can help move your company forward.

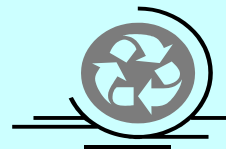
Participants will also be among the first to hear about regulatory changes that affect your industry, funding grants, and incentive programs. Participants will receive special recognition from Ecology for rising to **The Challenge** and those that meet pollution prevention goals will be eligible for state awards that can be used for marketing and community-relations purposes.

**Hytek Finishes  
Everett, WA**

100 percent of wastewater is recycled through an ion exchange treatment system and strict operating procedures.

**Art Brass Plating  
Seattle, WA**

Changing the tank-line configuration and strategically adding rinse tanks achieved a 40 percent reduction in water use.



**Q: When will The Challenge take place?**

**A:** The first portion of **The Challenge** involves compiling baseline data from 2000 on water consumption, wastewater volumes, the amount of hazardous waste sludge generated and energy usage, all normalized to production. All of this data should be easily accessible at your company.

Compilation and analysis of the baseline data should be complete in early 2002. Training will be held during the spring and summer of 2002. Ecology will assist with monitoring process parameters for success throughout 2002 and 2003. Technical assistance will be available throughout **The Challenge**.

**Q: Why are you asking me to make changes and investments during this economic downturn?**

**A:** Efficiency within your company and achieving a good “bottom line” is very important, especially during economic downturns. You have the opportunity to make changes to your company that will see you through difficult times and help you flourish during periods of economic prosperity.

This is a chance to train a group of your employees who will in turn motivate their co-workers and train new employees in better, cleaner processes. Optimize your business and your company’s resource use now and you will be ready to ramp-up to full production quickly and efficiently when the economy improves.

**Q: Why should I sign my company up for The Challenge?**

**A:** Participants will become environmental stewards by learning to conduct business while actively protecting the environment and conserving our precious natural resources. Wisely using minimal resources leads to economic survival and can assist in positioning your company as an industry leader.

Find out what other industries already know: Conservation is good business. Contact your Ecology representative today.

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