

TIRE & RUBBER RECYCLING



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BEATING YOUR COMPETITION WITH ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

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You want to beat your competition, right? Though you may not have considered it, being environmentally conscious and proactive may actually help you to do so. One way to do this is to implement environmental best management practices (BMP). Though there are many, here are six BMPs to implement right away:

1. Leaking hydraulic lifts

First of all, make sure that your lifts are certified by the Automotive Lift Institute (ALI). They have published standards for performance, structural integrity, operation, and safety for all types of automotive lifts. ALI and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) have a standard that addresses training, maintenance, and inspections for your lifts. The 2008 standard can be purchased at ALI's web site: www.autolift.org.

Second, make sure that you have annual inspections of your lifts to check for proper working order, leaks, etc. In fact, you will notice many potential issues simply by being aware of how the lift operates day to day.

Next, make sure that you discontinue and repair lifts at the first sign of an issue. If you're adding hydraulic fluid to a lift, stop using it, and call for repairs immediately to avoid soil/groundwater impact. Remember that hydraulic lifts are closed systems, so if you're adding fluid, it's leaking into the ground.

Finally, consider replacing your in-ground lifts with above-ground lifts. Yes, they take up more space, but you greatly reduce the chance of environmental impact by using these lifts. In addition, you'll have less oil and grease to worry about, which will make for cleaner bays.

2. Washwater discharge

The water you use to wash your floors is oily and dirty. You can't just push it out of your bays into the storm drain, because it will impact the ground, and you'll end up paying hefty fines. So, what is the solution? If you have an oil/water separator, you can push it into the drains in the bays. The preferred method, however, is to dump it into a drum labeled "mop water," and have it disposed of along with your other hazardous and non-hazardous waste. That way, you get rid of the potential environmental impact, and you also don't have the tell-tale staining on the ground proving that the washwater is actually going into the storm drain.

3. Oil/water separators

The best thing to do with these is to have them removed, so that you don't have an environmental liability in the ground. However, that is not always practical. If you do have an oil/water separator, make sure that you have a maintenance schedule in place to get it pumped out on a regular basis. The frequency and method of how you clean your service bay floors will help you to determine how often it should be pumped. The vendors you use to dispose of your used fluids can pump it out for you, so it shouldn't require extra work for you or your staff. Also, you'll want to research its construction, as there is a much greater chance of brick and mortar construction leaking than a steel construction.

4. Lead wheel weights

This one is easy. You're just going to have to bite the bullet and change to steel wheel weights. Your

customers are becoming more educated on this issue, and you don't want to be behind your competition. As for all the fuss about lead, it is one of the 31 priority chemicals targeted for reduction by the EPA. Lead in soil and water can lead to serious health problems. Follow the footsteps of large, well-known companies such as Bridgestone Americas, Inc., Goodyear, Monroe Muffler & Brake, Wal-Mart, and the U.S. Postal Service, who have already made the switch.

5. Scrap tires

Make sure you use good housekeeping in this area. Minimize the amount of tires stored, store them properly, and have them removed frequently. Otherwise, they are likely to pollute, attract bugs, and pose a potential safety risk.

6. Oil and grease spills

When you have a spill, use absorbent immediately, and dispose of it properly. Not only is this an environmental issue; you don't want a potential safety issue where someone could slip on the spill. In addition, oil spills are unsightly and could cost you customers.

PROTECTING YOUR PROFITS

At the end of the day, you are in business to make a profit. There's no reason to let environmental issues rob you of those profits. Take a proactive stance, and meet these issues head-on, so that you don't have a surprise expense you aren't expecting. Remediation costs can run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars – not something you want to deal with.

Given the fact that there is so much competition, customers are getting more choosy about where they spend their money. Chances are that they are going to go to a clean, well-run facility over others. Make the decision easy for them, so that you continue to build your customer base.

Another great idea is to consider doing entrance/exit facility audits. That way, each time you get ready to enter or exit a facility, you'll know exactly where you stand from an environmental standpoint, and you can protect yourself both legally and financially.

WHERE DO YOU GO FROM HERE?

Start talking about these issues within your organization. Make sure everyone from the CEO to the mechanics know and are implementing your BMPs. It's not easy to take a stand about something that may cost you money in the

short term, but in order to protect your long-term environmental (and financial) exposure, it is necessary.

Remember that your customers want to come to a facility that is clean, environmentally-friendly, and takes care of their needs. Become that facility so that they don't go to your competition across the street. After all, it is their choice, and you want them to choose you, right? Make it happen!

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Since 1996, Sierra Piedmont has completed thousands of projects for a variety of clients throughout North America. Based in a suburb of Atlanta, Georgia, they offer a wide range of environmental assessment, compliance, remediation, training, and other consulting services. For more information, please contact Scott Pate at spate@sierrapiedmont.com or 770.792.6200.

CALRECYCLE WORKS TO PROMOTE USE OF RECYCLED TIRES

The Bay Area Rapid Transit District intends to incorporate "green" construction in a planned route extension by using recycled tires underneath the new rail lines. The decision is applauded by the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle), which has invested long hours to promote the use of tire-derived aggregate (TDA) in engineering projects. When used under rail tracks, TDA acts to reduce noise and vibration that can affect nearby buildings and residences.

CalRecycle experts have worked for more than a decade to promote the use of TDA. Their efforts received a big boost after the Federal Transportation Authority, a major funding source for light rail systems around the country, accepted the use of TDA in the BART Silicon Valley Extension Project. A later project will extend the BART route into downtown San Jose.

In 1999, CalRecycle commissioned the first field test of TDA as a vibration dampening material. The results of that test led the firm to recommend that the Valley Transportation Authority use TDA for its Vasona Line light-rail extension in Santa Clara County.

Before proceeding, the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) built a test section of the TDA vibration track in its San Jose railyard. CalRecycle supplied the TDA, and monitored construction and testing of this 2001 pilot

project. Ultimately, VTA decided to proceed with construction using TDA, and CalRecycle agreed to follow up with post-construction analysis after the route opened in 2005. Use of TDA as part of the Vasona Line extension resulted in a savings of \$1 million and kept 100,000 old tires out of the state's landfills.

The Federal Transportation Authority (FTA), which is helping to finance the BART extension, wanted further proof that TDA would continue to perform well. CalRecycle again funded tests of the existing Vasona Line, and the results showed that TDA continued to perform well. The FTA was also convinced the product is cost-effective, high-performing and a common-sense approach to vibration dampening.

CalRecycle is currently promoting the use of recycled tires through its Green Roads campaign. California generates more than 40 million scrap tires every year. While nearly 75 percent of used tires are recycled, the rest still end up in landfills or illegal stockpiles. If not managed properly, scrap tires are a potential threat to both California's environment and public health and safety. Illegally stockpiled tires also pose a fire risk and are attractive habitats for rodents and insects.

Construction of the new BART extension using TDA will begin in 2012.

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