

BEST News

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OK International Kicks Off Lead Awareness Workshop in Cameroon

OK International, in coordination with Cameroon's Research and Education Center for Development (CREPD), conducted a workshop to increase awareness of lead paint hazards on March 23rd in Yaounde. Workshop attendees included representatives from the paint industry, government, NGOs and local medical schools.

Representatives from the Ministry of Environmental Protection, the Agency of Quality and Norms, and the

Ministries of Health and Commerce addressed the conference, explaining the need for government and civil society to work together to address lead in paint.



Perry Gottesfeld with CREPD Staff at the Lead Awareness Workshop

The workshop resulted in a declaration that was developed by those in attendance with proposed policy recommendations that outlined the need for consumer protection including a proposed standard for paint with no added lead, enforcement of existing product labeling laws, and clinical studies in Cameroon to document the health effects of lead exposure. One recommendation from this meeting has already come to pass when a new law establishing the framework for consumer protection was enacted by the government in May. The law states that consumers have the right to information regarding health hazards associated with products.

CAL-OSHA Committee Meets on Lowering Lead Exposure Limit

The California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (CAL-OSHA) advisory committee met in February to discuss its recommendation to reduce the blood lead levels (BLL) that trigger medical removal. Current medical knowledge of lead exposure demonstrates

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that BLLs lower than the current limit cause health consequences, hence the committee's proposal to lower these standards that were adopted in the 1970s. The committee also presented its proposal to revise current medical surveillance practices for lead in the workplace and revise the requirements for removing an employee with occupational exposure to lead. Recommendations that emerge from this process will then be used to inform changes in California's lead standard governing general industry and construction.

The American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM) has recommended that federal OSHA also lower their lead standard. The ACOEM is calling for medical removal when BLL exceeds 20 mcg/dL on any two consecutive blood tests or any single value exceeding 30 mcg/dL. See more at: <http://www.acoem.org/BloodLeadLevels.aspx>

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More Children Poisoned Around Lead Battery Plants in China

Since our last edition in February at least three separate mass lead poisoning incidents have been reported around battery manufacturing plants in China. In these recent incidents nearly 550 people are impacted including 200 children. The Feng Jiang Storage Battery Company in Taizhou City was closed after blood testing confirmed that 178 residents of the community surrounding the plant had elevated blood lead levels (BLLs). Another battery manufacturer in Zhejiang, the Zhejiang Haijiu Battery Company, was confirmed as the source responsible for 53 people from this area being treated in a hospital for lead poisoning. 44 children living near Sunnyway Battery Company in Guangdong Province's Zijin County were found with excessive lead in their blood. China has reported more than 30 serious lead poisoning incidents since 2009.



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Vacuum Recycling Technology for Recycling Lead Batteries Cuts Emissions

A recent study published by the journal *Waste Management* found that a new vacuum process for recycling used lead acid batteries recovered more lead than traditional recycling methods and utilized less energy with lower sulfur dioxide and lead emissions. In this experiment the battery was broken down, the cover and acid removed, and the lead from the metallic grids and paste melted down in a closed furnace pressurized by a vacuum. Lead recovery rates for the grid components recycled by the vacuum method were 10% higher than those recycled in traditional atmospheric melting. Recycling batteries by the vacuum method also yields secondary lead that is of slightly higher quality. While the scalability of this method was not addressed in the study, if implemented on a large scale, it may offer significant improvements in environmental lead emissions.

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EU Adopts Directive to Allow the Use of Heavy Metals in Auto Parts

The European Commission adopted Commission Directive 2011/37/EU on March 30, 2011, which provides new exemptions for the use of toxic substances, including lead, in older cars. Lead may now be used in various parts of cars including in some brakes and in the solder of many electrical components. In addition to exemptions for lead, the Directive made the use of mercury, cadmium, and chromium legal in some auto applications.

The Directive argued that in some cases, it is technically impossible to repair vehicles without

FACT: CDC says prevention of

the original replacement parts, and redesigning them to exclude lead and other heavy metals would require costly changes in entire vehicle systems. In the case of new vehicles, the Directive emphasized that certain materials should continue to be allowed in some auto parts as their use is technically and scientifically unavoidable. See a copy of the Directive here: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:085:0003:0007:EN:PDF>

lead poisoning is 1 of the top 10 public health achievements in the USA for 2001-2011, saving \$213 Billion per year: <http://1.usa.gov/IURQI7>

Firefly to Introduce Batteries in India

Firefly Energy India, originally a U.S. company recently acquired by Electrotherm India Inc., announced plans to begin manufacturing its patented carbon foam lead-acid batteries in Ahmedabad, India this year. Twenty percent of production will be exported with the remainder used in multiple applications throughout India, including in electric vehicles, uninterrupted power supply, and for the telecom industry. These carbon-based foam batteries can last up to three times as long as a conventional lead acid battery, are lightweight, and have rapid recharge rates.

South African Department of Health to Investigate Use of Lead in New Paint

A statement released by the South African Medical Research Council indicates that the Department of Health will conduct further investigation in response to reports of the continued sale of lead paint. The South African Paint Manufacturing Association (SAPMA) acknowledged that some companies are continuing to use lead in their paints despite South Africa's legislation banning lead paint at levels greater than 600 ppm. An earlier report that tested lead concentrations of paint in ten countries found that over 65% of all samples from South Africa had lead concentrations over 90 parts per million (ppm) and 62% had lead concentrations exceeding 600 ppm. See the press release here: http://www.mrc.ac.za/pressreleases/2011/5press2011_lead.htm

New Smelting Technology to be Implemented by Doe Run

The Doe Run Herculaneum lead smelter announced its plan to build a new plant that will use a chemical process to produce primary lead. This process will replace heat-based smelting that is used in Doe Run's Herculaneum, Missouri smelter that is set to close in 2013. The company indicates that this new process will reduce airborne lead and sulfur dioxide emissions. Note that in February of this year the U.S. EPA proposed lower standards for primary lead smelters in the U.S. See: <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/atw/risk/fr17fe11.pdf>

Ethical Gold Project Launched

OK International is launching a new program to reduce environmental impacts of gold mining by encouraging increased recycling of gold. Ethical Gold, a fiscally sponsored project of Occupational Knowledge International, will partner with nonprofit organizations to encourage donations of gold and gold jewelry to be recycled and converted into charitable donations to partner organizations. See additional information on our web site at: www.okinternational.org/mining/ethical-gold

Occupational Knowledge International

www.okinternational.org

www.bestbattery.org

Email us at: info@okinternational.org