

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY  
AIR QUALITY DIVISION  
ACTIVITY REPORT: On-site Inspection

B708273738

FACILITY: AUSCO PRODUCTS INC		SRN / ID: B7082
LOCATION: 2245 PIPESTONE RD, BENTON HARBOR		DISTRICT: Kalamazoo
CITY: BENTON HARBOR		COUNTY: BERRIEN
CONTACT:		ACTIVITY DATE: 09/18/2024
STAFF: Chance Collins	COMPLIANCE STATUS: Compliance	SOURCE CLASS: MINOR
SUBJECT: Scheduled Inspection		
RESOLVED COMPLAINTS:		

On September 18, 2024, AQD staff traveled to Berrien County to perform an inspection of AUSCO Products INC (SRN: B7082). The inspection was to determine the facility's compliance with Permit to Install No. 92-86 (for various grinding operations) and applicable state and federal air pollution control regulations.

AQD staff arrived on site at 9:20 a.m. to sunny conditions with a temperature of 67°F with a ESE wind of 6 mph. There were no noticeable odors upon arrival.

AQD staff met with Mr. Dustin Strasser (Manufacturing Engineering Manager), who walked staff around the facility and answered all questions.

AUSCO Products INC currently has one active permit (PTI No. 92-86) which has 4 conditions relating to PM emissions, opacity, that they must operate the baghouse when operating the grinding equipment, and stack height dimensions.

The following discusses the findings of the inspection:

According to Mr. Strasser, AUSCO Products is owned by Cypress Corporation who purchased it from Auto Specialties Manufacturing, and it has been around since the 1980's. The facility's main customers are John Deere, Caterpillar, Polaris, and Toro. The facility makes braking systems for various off-road vehicles (ATV's), lawn mowers, bulldozers, front end loaders, etc. The facility currently has approximately 142 employees working 1 shift 6 days a week. At one time, the facility had paint booths for wet painting, but the paint booths have been removed and the only thing they have now is powder coating. The facility also has boilers on site, but they have been decommissioned for quite some time. The boilers would be too costly to remove, which is why they are still physically located on site.

The main manufacturing processes at AUSCO consist of metal machining operations and the making of ceramic brake pads. The machining operations start by the purchase of raw castings that the facility machines to specifications for whatever braking system it may be used for. They then wash the casting with a water-soluble solution, and it then goes through a dryer. If the customer requires powder coating on the part, then that would be done next. The part then goes to assembly where it will be put together, tested, and then packed/shipped if it meets QA/QC. The powder coat paint racks are shipped out for cleaning. The facility does not reclaim any of the powder coating because they don't do much of it. All the machining operations appear to be exempt per Rule 285(I)(vi) and the associated drying ovens appear to be exempt per rule 287(d).

The ceramic brake pad manufacturing process starts out by mixing a brake lining formulation (ceramic fibers) with a resin. AUSCO has five different brake line

formulations that contain all the same components (ceramic fiber based) only in different proportions. Once the formulation is mixed, it is heat pressed into brake pad form and then adhered to a steel bracket. The brake pads are then placed into a cure oven to dry out the brake lining. The brake linings are then ground down to their finished sizes. All dust collected in the grinding department goes to a baghouse outside and it was operating efficiently during the inspection. AQD staff did not notice any opacity during the inspection. Mr. Strasser stated that they have not had any opacity issues, and the baghouse is only used at roughly half capacity. The facility has recently updated the baghouse to meet explosion and fireproofing requirements.

The facility appears to be in compliance with Permit to Install No. 92-86 special conditions pertaining to operations of the baghouse during grinding operations. As of the date of the inspection, the AQD has not requested any particulate testing be conducted.

NAME

DATE 9/18/2024SUPERVISOR Monica Brothers