

Boeing Responds To Washington State DOE Announcement

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Boeing Commercial Airplane Group today reiterated its commitment to ensuring the safety, health and well-being of its employees, its communities and the environment in response to the Washington State Department of Ecology's announcement that it is assessing a \$148,500 penalty against the Boeing Auburn, Wash., facility. The company also reiterated its intent to continue to work closely with the Department of Ecology on improvements in the handling of hazardous waste.

"We understand the Department of Ecology's concerns, and we are working aggressively to resolve them," said Howard Fitz, vice president and general manager - Boeing Commercial Airplane Group Fabrication Division, which is headquartered at Auburn. The division produces a diverse range of parts, tools and assemblies used in the production of every Boeing jetliner. More than 12 million parts per year are produced at Auburn.

"We are and have been taking actions to improve our handling of hazardous materials and managing our chemical processes," Fitz said. "We believe these actions will meet the Department's intent, as well as our own, for managing chemical processes safely at the Boeing Auburn site. Our improvements will meet not only the letter but the spirit of all of laws and regulations under which we are required to operate."

Prior to Ecology's order, the Boeing Auburn site already had taken steps to correct issues raised by employees, the community and regulatory agencies. Examples of some of the improvements already under way include:

- The formation of a Chemical Process Management Board, which reviews chemical processes within Boeing Auburn to improve practices for the management and use of chemicals. The board has been working with DuPont, the large chemical-processing company, and other consultants since last fall to analyze the Auburn site's chemical-handling processes and identify areas where improvements can be made. In addition, teams have been formed to review all chemical-process handling procedures.
- The Auburn site plans to install new rinse-water conveyance lines. These lines carry rinse water from the tank lines located in several manufacturing buildings on the site to the on-site Wastewater Pre-treatment Facility. Preliminary designs have been completed; final designs and installation schedule are being developed.
- Earlier this year, the Auburn site began working with the Department of Ecology to identify and evaluate voluntary rinse water-reduction options.
- In mid-1997, the Auburn site implemented a Chemical Management System, which centralizes the storage of chemicals in a specially designed facility and reduces the number and volume of chemicals on the shop floor.
- Also last summer, the Auburn site improved the New Employee Orientation process to include a higher level of chemical awareness and general safety training.

Last year, the Boeing Auburn Safety Health & Environmental Affairs organization centralized responsibilities for responding to emergencies and notifying regulatory agencies. This has already improved communication with the Department of Ecology. Additionally, the division is working with Ecology to develop a procedure for external notification in an emergency, which will clarify differences in legal interpretation of spill reporting requirements.

"The bottom line is that many of the people who work at the Boeing Auburn plant also live here and in neighboring communities," Fitz said. "Our goal is the same as the Department of Ecology's, and that is to protect the health, safety and well-being of our employees, our communities and the environment. We are strongly committed to improving our handling of hazardous materials and managing our chemical processes

at this site. We will continue to work closely with the Department of Ecology to resolve these issues."

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