

2013 TEEA Winner Pollution Prevention Category: Associated Air Center, LP, Dallas

Narrator

For over 60 years, Associated Air in Dallas has helped create some of the most elegant aircraft in the world.

Chris Schechter, VP & General Manager, Associated Air Center

Most of our customers are international. We basically take a green aircraft and we'll fit it out for whatever the owner would like to see in that aircraft.

Narrator

One of the first steps is to coat everything that might corrode, a critical process that traditionally uses the highly toxic and carcinogenic hexavalent chromium.

Gene Carter, Maintenance Sales Director, Associated Air Center

You had to wear protective equipment, gloves, shields, get it on your skin it's very hazardous.

Aaron Myers, Environmental Analyst, Associated Air Center

Any kind of green or kind of yellowish color you see is gonna be hexavalent chromium.

Narrator

Engineers and employees here began experimenting with alternatives. After two years of testing, they received approval to replace an acidic wash with a new water-based detergent. Associated Air also began using a water soluble primer for large, non-structural parts.

Aaron Myers

Used to, this entire thing would be green, so you can really see how much we've reduced.

Joel Pacheco, Warehouse/Supply Chain Manager, Associated Air Center

It's a huge savings. We went through a complete overhaul of our finish out processes.

Aaron Myers

This little stuff here is what's being primed.

Narrator

Hexavalent chromium is still used for smaller parts but is applied in booths that capture the pigment to prevent air contamination.

Chris Schechter

What's very rewarding to me is that most of these ideas – if not all of these ideas – come from the shop floor.

Aaron Myers

We went to these LED lights which don't produce the heat, use less electricity, don't generate hazardous waste and not in the way.

Chris Schechter

Being environmentally conscious is good for business, it's good for our customers and overall it's good for efficiency.