



Idaho Department of Environmental Quality Pollution Prevention Champion

Kimball® Office

Caldwell, Idaho

2010

Environmental Commitment

Kimball® Office in Post Falls, Idaho, manufactures metal office furniture. The company's values revolve around environmental and social responsibility, so the company continually implements improvements to reduce its environmental impact.

Pollution Prevention Success

Kimball® Office has successfully prevented pollution in four key areas: minimizing hazardous waste, reducing the volume of wastewater produced, improving energy efficiency, and recycling.

Hazardous Waste Minimization

Kimball® Office converted from a liquid paint to powder coating process in 2004. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, powder coatings are more beneficial to the environment than liquid coatings because they emit essentially zero volatile organic compounds (VOCs), generate almost no hazardous waste, do not produce water pollution, and are less toxic to operators because no solvents are used; air or vacuum hoses can be used in place of solvents for equipment cleanup. Kimball® Office uses high-transfer efficiency electrostatic powder coating equipment and is currently focusing on improvements to the powder composition itself to further improve transfer efficiency and reduce the amount of waste powder sent to landfills.

As a result of its conversion to powder, Kimball® Office reduced the amount of hazardous waste generated from hundreds of tons per year to one 55-gallon drum every 18 months, saving the facility over \$300,000 per year in hazardous waste disposal costs. Additionally, the facility was reclassified by the state of Idaho from a large quantity waste generator to a conditionally exempt small quantity generator.

Wastewater Reduction

In preparation for powder coating, metal must first be properly washed. Kimball® Office reduced the company's water consumption and the wastewater generated in the wash process by implementing better wash line practices. A focused effort with defined goals was initiated in 2008 and monitored through the company's ISO-14001-2004 certified Environmental Management System. As a result, Kimball® Office generated 2,496,000 fewer gallons of industrial wastewater in 2008, and an additional 316,265 fewer gallons in 2009.

To support further reductions to water consumption and discharge, a new chemical cleaning process is currently under evaluation. The local municipal wastewater treatment facilities in Post Falls use biological systems, and as a result, cannot easily tolerate surfactants, which are chemicals used in cleaning. The new process under consideration will significantly reduce cleaning chemical additives from the wastewater discharge. The process does this by reducing the number of chemicals involved from three to one, and by using a "dry in place" cleaning chemical that does not require a final rinse after application. The process change is expected to reduce the amount of industrial wastewater produced by more than 50 percent. If the new process is implemented, progress toward the wastewater reduction goal will be monitored through Kimball® Office's Environmental Management System.

Energy and Water Conservation

Bon Appétit completes annual energy and water audits to find ways to conserve resources. The company has since replaced its outdated dish machine with an updated energy efficient machine that uses less than half the amount of water. It has also created a comprehensive plan to update light fixtures, older equipment, and plumbing to reduce water and energy consumption.

Energy Efficiency

Moving to the new chemical cleaning process will also reduce Kimball® Office's energy consumption since the new process will operate at a lower temperature and involve fewer wash stages.

Other energy improvement efforts at Kimball® Office include replacing facility compressors with high-efficiency Atlas-Copco units connected in series to align the power required to run the compressors with facility demand. Three high-efficiency compressors replaced older units and were configured with two compressors on fixed speed and one on variable speed. This new configuration allows one compressor to run at near idle speed when demand is low, matching power consumption to the demand.

Additionally, high-efficiency light fixtures replaced older, less efficient units. As a result, Kimball® Office saved approximately \$32,000 in electricity costs in 2008 and \$54,000 in 2009. The goal for 2010 is to reduce electricity usage by another 10 percent.

Recycling

Kimball® Office has a long history of landfill diversion through various recycling efforts, including use of a number of local recyclers, as well as company-owned recycling services. As of August 2010, 92.3 percent of all waste materials generated at the facility have been recycled, with one month's recycling rate reaching as high as 94.3 percent.

The Post Falls facility currently recycles the following materials: batteries, fluorescent lights, used oil, sawdust, wood offal, pallets, metal drums, spray cans, steel, aluminum cans, copper, cardboard, plastic containers, mixed paper, and fabric.

About Kimball® Office

A recognized leader in fine workplace furnishings, Kimball® Office has been building its reputation on quality and integrity of design for 40 years. The company is a business unit of Kimball International, Inc., a corporation that provides a variety of products from its two business segments: furniture and electronic manufacturing services. Based in Jasper, Indiana, the publicly traded company (NASDAQ: KBALB) had sales of \$1.2 billion in 2009.

For More Information

For more information about Kimball® Office, visit www.kimballoffice.com.

Information on this webpage represents examples of projects undertaken by the organizations only and does not constitute Departmental certification or approval of compliance at this or any other time with federal, state and/or local regulations, but is solely presented as an example of projects undertaken by organizations in order to prevent pollution and/or conserve resources.