



Date:

Friday, March 26, 2010

Time:

4:00 p.m. – 4:20 p.m.

Presenter:

“Social Responsibility to the Environment”

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Deciding to be socially responsible is not simply a moral choice. There is not only a social aspect, but also an economic as well as environmental aspect. The increased participation in the green movement has raised the awareness of the deterioration of the environment. Trends have been published demonstrating the environment is changing at a blink of an eye.

In an effort to improve the environment, vastly different practices have been put in place strengthening international environmental regulations. A raised awareness of environmental impacts has caused an increase in preferences to purchase products and company stock from environmentally conscious companies. As a result, companies are making more environmentally conscious decisions when designing, purchasing, and manufacturing products. One of the considerations is reducing the amount of hazardous substances in the environment. Across international treaties, country regulations, and individual state laws, the requirements, applicability, and penalties are often not known or misunderstood.

There are a whole host of environmental requirements documented from sovereign nations and states. Within the past 25 years, there have been several different restrictions on hazardous substances documented. A few of the most popular include the: Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, Montreal Protocol on Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer, Waste from Electrical Equipment Directive, Reduction of Hazardous Substances Directive, and Registration, Evaluation, Authorization and restriction of Chemicals.

Each of these “laws” have distinct degrees of impact, requirements, and applications. The Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, better known as Proposition 65, is intended to protect California citizens and California’s drinking water sources from chemicals known to cause cancer and birth defects. The Montreal Protocol on Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer is an international treaty and phases out the production and import of ozone depleting substances. The Waste from Electrical Equipment Directive, most often referred as WEEE, makes producers financially responsible for end-of-life costs. The Reduction of Hazardous Substances Directive, referred to as RoHS, applies to all WEEE classifications except two, and restricts the weight of six classes of substances in homogeneous materials. One of the newest regulations, the Registration, Evaluation, Authorization and restriction of Chemicals, known as REACH, initially proposed requirements on 16 substances of very high concern (SVHC).

As knowledge increases about the hazards so do the restrictions on hazardous substances. On the horizon, a standard will be published to lower the content of halogens, referred to as JSTD 709, and the EU’s RoHS, often referred to as RoHS2. In addition, each year the EU REACH regulation is expected to be revised by including additional SVHC. The green movement is a journey, with increasing requirements with no end in site.