

MPCA offers \$320,000 in small business grants to clear the air

Written by

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The Business Assistance unit (non-regulatory) at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) is offering \$320,000 in grants to help small businesses reduce their harmful air emissions.

The MPCA will offer matching grant funds up to \$100,000. MPCA has also partnered with the Minnesota Technical Assistance Program (MnTAP) to offer free technical assistance to determine the most effective way your individual facility or business can reduce VOC emissions. The grants will help small businesses in Minnesota such as auto body shops, print shops and dry cleaners take steps to help reduce VOCs. These chemicals are emitted from many industrial and commercial processes used in businesses in Minnesota and are recognized as the fumes coming from coatings, inks, solvents, adhesives, gasoline and other everyday products.

Direct exposure to VOCs can cause eye, nose and throat irritation and headaches, nausea and dizziness. Exposure over long periods can increase cancer risks and damage the liver, kidneys, and central nervous system.

In addition, when VOCs are released into the atmosphere, they can be chemically transformed into ground-level ozone, which is a component of smog and is itself a harmful air pollutant. Minnesota is hovering close to the national air quality standard for ozone and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is planning to tighten the limit in the next couple of years. If that happens, the costs for keeping area air safe to breathe could go up and affect Minnesota

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businesses.

To apply for VOC reduction grants visit www.pca.state.mn.us/voc . Applications are being accepted from now until Aug. 13. For additional questions contact Eric David at eric.david@state.mn.us or (651) 757-2218.