



# Design for the Environment Small Auto Refinish Shop Project in Philadelphia



## What Is Design for the Environment?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Design for the Environment (DfE) Program is a voluntary, partnership-based program that works with small companies to integrate health and environmental considerations into business decisions. DfE's approach to environmental protection emphasizes making changes and choices—in materials and processes—that prevent pollution before it is created.

## What Is the Project Goal and Game Plan?

The Small Auto Refinish Shop Project works with auto refinishers to identify and adopt safer, cleaner, more efficient practices and technologies. Through its research, the Project Team has uncovered many examples of health and safety improvements that increase efficiency and help shops save time and money—some are even cost-free. Other factors—like the quality of the refinish job and compliance with environmental regulations—also can advance the goal of a cleaner, safer shop.

## Why Is This Project Important To You and Your Workers?

Auto refinishers use many potentially harmful chemicals, especially during painting operations. Of particular concern are isocyanates, solvents, and paint additives. Isocyanates, for example, are a major cause of occupational asthma. To safeguard their health, workers need to protect themselves from exposure during spray painting and related activities. The Small Auto Refinish Shop Project will identify better control technologies and more efficient workplace practices and will make this information available to interested shop owners. Use of these new practices and technologies will better protect workers and minimize the generation of waste and the release of chemicals in the environment.

## Why Small Shops in Philadelphia?

The DfE Program selected Philadelphia for the project's first pilot because of the city's positive experience working with auto refinishers, concern for small businesses and the safety and environmental issues they face, and the large number of auto refinish shops in the Philadelphia area. The project focuses on small shops because they make up the majority of the auto refinish industry and often have the fewest resources to upgrade their shops.



