

Environment Bramalea company reaps praise

By BARBARA HALSALL
Headline: Company Moves To Preserve Ozone
 It is so encouraging to see a company move to solve a problem before government regulations force change. Here is the story of a proactive company, Northern Telecom, in Bramalea. With permission, this is taken from "Printed Circuit" February/March 1991 issue.

"Bramalea plant is Freon free!
 After two years of dedicated effort, our Bramalea operations led the way in environmental protection by eliminating all use of Freon. Northern Telecom's goal is to be Freon free by the end of 1991. We reached that goal in December, 1990. Our results now make it easier for other NT groups and industries to achieve this level.

What's the problem with Freon?
 Freon was used to clean off the residue left on circuit boards after the soldering operations in the surface mount area and the wave solder area. Freon however, contains CFC's which are a harmful pollutant. To eliminate the use of Freon, we could have looked for other cleaning agents. But why replace one pollutant with another? Another possibility was to use lots of water to clean the boards; that would still mean having to treat the water later. The groups in-



olved decided to go one step further and remove the need for any type of cleaning at all.

Over a year ago a flux was found for use in the wave solder area, that did not require cleaning. The residue left by this flux did not affect the operation of the boards. However, it was a more difficult challenge to find a solder paste for the surface mount area that would produce similar results.

By working closely together, Manufacturing engineering, the shop, Quality engineering and the Quality lab met that challenge.

They worked with the solder paste suppliers to reformulate the flux in the solder paste so that the lingering residue would not impact the boards' performance.

It was an industry first! The team established tests to determine the applicability of the solder pastes, and set the necessary quality standards to be met. The dedicated efforts of the Surface Mount shop group in working with this new paste has produced products with equal quality.

This information has been

shared with other Northern locations, and through the ICOLP (Industry Cooperative for the Ozone Layer Protection), will be provided to other industries. This is a significant contribution to the betterment of our environment. As Keith Powell, Director of Operations, said at the mock burial of the Freon Cleaning Machine, "I thank everyone on behalf of my children, who will reap the benefits of your efforts."

This advance is even more important now that new satellite information shows the ozone layer is being depleted twice as fast as previously estimated.

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