

# CLASSIFIEDS SMALL ADS BIG RESULTS

## Acton company resents watchdog group's label as town's 'top polluter'

By LISA TALLYN  
Staff Writer

An Acton company has been singled out by a new Internet service as Halton Hills' top polluter.

Galvcast Manufacturing Inc., a galvanizing business, earned the distinction from PollutionWatch, a new Internet service launched recently that allows users to compare polluters in their neighbourhood with others in Canada.

Galvanizing is a process of coating steel so that it doesn't rust.

In a media release from PollutionWatch it stated the Acton company emitted the largest amount of pollution in town in 1999— about 3,637 kg of hydrochloric acid to their property. The Internet service also reported the company released 595 kg of hydrochloric acid to air and 191,000 kg to landfill for disposal. The company also released 2,190 kg of zinc compounds.

BASF Canada Inc. in Georgetown, which blends vitamins and minerals for animal

nutrition, ranked as the second highest polluter in town according to PollutionWatch. It noted a BASF release of 4 kg of zinc compounds, 2 kg of manganese compounds and 1 kg of copper compounds through its stack in 1999.

A Galvcast owner, Steve Christopher, said he resents the label PollutionWatch has put on his company.

"We're a fly in the ointment, that's plain to see," said Christopher about their release numbers compared to others who made the list of Ontario companies releasing hydrochloric acid. He pointed to Ontario Power Generation's Nanticoke plant which in 1999 released 4.6 million kg of hydrochloric acid through its smoke stack.

Mary McGrath, PollutionWatch outreach co-ordinator said Galvcast was 24th on that list. She added, that when compared to other companies in the province Galvcast is actually in the cleaner or better (low) range of facilities for total releases.

For land releases it was in the

medium range and for off-site transfer for disposal it was in the high range.

She said while hydrochloric acid has no recognized health hazards it is suspected of being a respiratory, skin, gastro-intestinal and liver toxicant.

Christopher said since the hydrochloric acid is not being emitted in an aerosol form very little is going out of the plant and most of it is staying on the property.

"As far as I'm concerned it's not harmful," said Christopher. "We are a galvanizing business. We're not putting people's health in danger or we wouldn't be here."

He said they are in the process of installing an acid recycling plant at Galvcast, the first of its kind in North America, and a bag house system for cleaner air.

He said the company has always been environmentally conscious and they are adding the recycling and bag house systems "not because we're being pushed, but because we want to do it."

"All BASF sites operate according to responsible care codes," said



Steve Christopher, a Galvcast owner, demonstrates the galvanizing process that goes on at his Acton company. He disputes an environmental Web site which names Galvcast as a bad polluter in Halton Hills.

Photo by Ted Brown

Martine Despatie of BASF Canada.

She said the ranking by PollutionWatch has to be put in context, and stressed while BASF is No. 2 on the list— there are only two companies on the PollutionWatch list in Halton Hills.

She said BASF actually releases less than .03 kg of materials per operating day.

"This is very small and it's a very low rate," said Despatie.

She said the company is working on continuing to find a solution to reducing its emission rate and welcomes public comments.

PollutionWatch is a joint project of the Canadian Environmental Defence Fund, Canadian Environmental Law Association and Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy.

The Web site is at [www.pollutionwatch.org](http://www.pollutionwatch.org).

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by  
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