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## Plain Language Regulatory Guide Expanded

The Printed Wiring Board Resource Center ([www.pwbrc.org](http://www.pwbrc.org)), a website related to the NMFRC, has recently expanded its Plain Language Regulatory Guide. The purpose of this online tool is to provide industry and government with a well organized and easy to understand explanation of environmental regulations. The tool is divided into five sections, the last of which is new:

- Air Emissions
- Wastewater Discharges
- Solid/Hazardous Waste
- Toxic Chemical Reporting
- Small Business Policy (NEW!)

The PWBRC Plain Language Regulatory Guide is targeted to printed wiring board environmental issues; however, metal finishers are also finding it to be very useful. A similar tool exists on the Paint and Coatings Resource Center ([www.paintcenter.org](http://www.paintcenter.org)). In most cases, the same regulations and rules covered by these tools apply to metal finishers.

The newest of the online tools pertains to the EPA's Policy on Compliance Incentives for Small Businesses. This policy states that the EPA will refrain from initiating an enforcement action seeking civil penalties, or will mitigate civil penalties, whenever a small business (100 or fewer employees) makes a good faith effort to comply with environmental requirements by:

- (1) Receiving compliance assistance, or
- (2) Promptly disclosing the findings of a voluntarily conducted environmental audit, subject to certain conditions.

The Policy tool is organized into nine sections:

- Introduction & Background
- Applicability
- Criteria & Guidelines for Civil Penalty Mitigation
- Compliance Assistance
- Environmental Audits
- Enforcement
- Applicability to States
- Public Accountability
- Related Links

The NMFRC is in the process of investigating the extent to which



Fig. 1—PWBR Tool—Policy on Compliance Incentives for Small Businesses.

PWB manufacturers, metal finishers and related industry sectors have utilized this policy. The NMFRC is also working to identify acceptable procedures for environmental audits relative to this policy. These results will be incorporated into the tool in the future. **P&S**

*The National Metal Finishing Resource Center (NMFRC) ([www.nmfrc.org](http://www.nmfrc.org)) is the industry's online resource for environmental and metal finishing information. The NMFRC was established under a joint program funded by the Department of Commerce and the EPA. Industry partners include AESF, NAMF and MESA.*

## TDS/Rinsewater Study

The NMFRC is facilitating a project with the metal finishing industry. The purpose of this project is to develop and refine procedures that plating shop personnel can utilize to measure drag-out and rinsewater quality using hand-held TDS (total dissolved solids) meters. These meters have been selected because of their accuracy, ease of use and low cost. The rinse quality data will be used in conjunction with existing data to refine acceptable ranges of TDS readings for various processing baths and conditions. Both the drag-out and rinsewater quality data also will be employed to demonstrate the use of an online rinsing model. The results of the study will be distributed to companies that have signed-on to the Strategic Goals Program (SGP) and made available to the public.

For more information, go to [www.strategicgoals.org](http://www.strategicgoals.org) and click on TDS Project near the bottom of the left-hand menu.