

California Finisher Services Aerospace & Medical/Dental Industries With Quality Anodizing

Not too far from “beautiful downtown Burbank,” home of famous motion picture and television studios, is a jobshop that has been a leader in quality finishing for nearly 45 years. K&L Anodizing Corporation, an ultra-clean, well-organized company, has built its business by working directly with prime government contractors, manufacturers, other jobshops, machine shops, and tool and die shops. It has more than 20,000 ft² of production area, with well-maintained, state-of-the-art equipment.

The company's primary services lie in anodizing per Mil-A-8625, Types I (chromic acid), II (sulfuric acid) and III (hard anodizing). The shop is licensed as an FAA Repair Station and offers a variety of specialized services, such as:

- Teflon impregnation of hard anodize per Mil-A-63576, Type I;
- Passivation of stainless steel per QQ-P-35 and Mil S-5002;
- Caustic etching;
- Chemical film per Mil-C-5541;
- Glass bead blasting;



Dan Cunningham, quality control manager, demonstrates the “anofaxing” equipment that is used to place numbers, company or product names, or logos on anodized parts.

- Masking;
- Slow stripping;
- Custom silkscreening and two-color anodizing.

Started in 1950 by D.J. “Lefty” Leiker and now run by his son Don, K&L has now grown to 80 employees, 70 of whom are members of the production staff. The company originally burgeoned with the aerospace industry, satisfying its high-tech clients (such as Boeing, Lockheed, McDonnell Douglas and Hughes) with special care and attention to detail on complex and delicate parts. Its in-house testing provides quality assurance to meet military and industry specifications, and other special requirements.

The company's clients are represented all across the U.S., but most are located in the Southern California area. K&L has its own fleet of three trucks and a van, and its drivers go as far as Santa Barbara for pick-up and delivery. When the aerospace industry began to suffer a downturn, K&L's management looked into other possible client industries that would appreciate its high standards of operation. The objective was to keep the work flowing in, rather than consider downsizing or closing its doors. The diversification into servicing the medical/dental industries began.



The shop has more than 20,000 ft² of production area. A variety of colored anodized parts is processed daily.



D.J. "Lefty" Leiker, chairman of the board, founded the company in 1950.

High-Demand Process: Anofaxing

Some of K&L's medical/dental clients request its popular anodizing/silkscreening process that begins with a chemical filming, followed by masking of an area, clear anodizing, the "anofaxing" (the silkscreen-type process), followed by black anodizing. The last step is removal of the

resist and the mask. The process, which is generally used to impart a company logo or name or number a part, has also caught on with aerospace clients, too.

K&L is a Good Neighbor In the Business Community

According to Dan Cunningham, quality control manager, K&L has a good relationship with water/waste treatment officials from the State of California and the City of Burbank because of the shop's conservation-mindedness and housekeeping practices. Over the past four years, the company's water use has been drastically reduced from 90,000 to 35,000 gal/day—approximately 60 percent. Cunningham, who has just completed a two-year term as president of the Metal Finishing Association of Southern California (MFASC), credits zealous waste minimization and pollution prevention practices, as well as good housekeeping. All rectifiers, for example, are water-cooled. Water used for cooling is recirculated for other uses in the plant.

Because it is an anodizing facility, there is no waste

treatment involved, but the pH of any water leaving the plant is carefully monitored. A pH recorder-monitor has been installed on each lead-lined anodizing tank. Personnel from the City of Burbank visit the plant periodically and check these monitors.

Consistent monitoring is the key to quality anodizing and color consistency. K&L has distinguished itself by producing colored anodized parts—such as those used in sporting goods in unusual aerospace applications—in brilliant rainbow hues when required by the customer. Intricate parts often require precision film masking.

All anodizing solutions are checked and adjusted daily to insure that parts are processed according to specifications. The operating temperature of the tanks is also held at a constant.

Being a good neighbor also includes being a model, safe employer. As Cunningham explains, "We're producing high-quality, high-tech parts for a very demanding audience. The end-users of the products we're contracted to finish are physicians and aerospace engineers. We feel it's important to literally demonstrate to them that the work atmosphere here is every bit as good as the quality tools that we finish for their use." □



Cunningham displays a complex part, before and after finishing. The gold part (left) is masked for processing.