

GOODYEAR

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NIAGARA FALLS, N. Y. -- The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company plant here is cutting back production of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) resin by 50 per cent because it is "economically unfeasible" to bring a production unit into compliance with new federal standards regulating worker exposure to the chemical.

The cutback will shut down a 28-year-old building and eliminate about 60 of the plant's 440 jobs.

The company said it is "striving" to meet the standards in an adjacent facility, built in 1957, but that the use of respiratory equipment by some workers will be necessary.

The move will halt annual production of about 50 million pounds of general purpose resins, but the plant will continue to make specialty resins used in automotive products, flooring, wall coverings and upholstery.

Effective Jan. 1, a Labor Department ruling requires plants to trim worker exposure to PVC from 50 parts per million (ppm) in the air to one ppm averaged over an eight-hour period and five ppm averaged over any period no longer than 15 minutes.

Goodyear has operated a chemical plant here since 1946 primarily to convert vinyl chloride, a gaseous material, into PVC resin, basic building block for many plastic products.