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The September/1991 issue of PPG Progress contained an important article addressing the continuing need for every facility to abide by PPG's Records Retention Policy. A copy of this article is attached for your information.

This article prompts me to remind each of you that the adoption of a procedure to ensure on-going review of all Coatings and Resins' records under these retention guidelines is essential. As pointed out in the article, retention of excess and unnecessary documents costs PPG substantial time, money, and resources.

Please see that a procedure to ensure compliance with PPG's Records Retention Policy within your business unit is implemented and carried out within the next four weeks.

E. B. Mosier

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Attachment

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Three-year use-it-or-lose-it rule

Mountains of records challenge management skills

Anyone with an attic, garage or basement can tell you that it is easier to store stuff than to sort through it and get rid of what you don't need.

At PPG, however, stored records are too often forgotten. "A new person takes over a job and is not sure which of the records he or she inherited should be kept and which should be disposed of," said John E. Kuzemchak, supervisor of corporate accounting and records. "So the new person packs up the files left by the predecessor, puts them in storage and promptly forgets them."

Mr. Kuzemchak is chairman of PPG's Records Management Committee, which oversees the company's records retention policy and publishes a manual to help PPG people determine what to keep and for how long.

Meeting requirements

PPG stipulates that records be kept only as long as necessary to operate the business and to meet tax and legal requirements. "As a rule of thumb, company records should be retained only for three years unless other rules apply," Mr. Kuzemchak said. "For example, some audit records must be kept for six years; some environmental, health and safety records must be kept for up to 30 years."

The PPG Records Retention Manual applies only to U.S. operations because governmental and legal requirements vary in

other countries. However, PPG operations around the globe have used it to help develop records retention guidelines specific to their needs. Only the primary record of each document, for example, the original letter, should be retained for the specified time. And, records must be disposed of at the end of the retention periods stipulated. To ensure compliance with the records retention policy, a sample of stored records is examined during routine internal audits at U.S. PPG operations.

Copies of the Records Retention Manual may be obtained by writing to John Kuzemchak, PPG Industries, One PPG Place, 9-W, Pittsburgh PA 15272.

Cut costs, clutter

"The price of not conforming to the company's requirements when it comes to records management can be substantial," Mr.

Kuzemchak said. Besides cataloging and filing time, there are the costs of space and receptacles.

Large numbers of old records make information retrieval cumbersome. "Retention of excess files seriously and unnecessarily increases the time and cost to comply with court-ordered document productions," said Guy A. Zoghby, vice president and general counsel.

A few years ago, during one legal case, PPG lawyers had to sort through 3.5 million pieces of

to the court, and more than two million of these were never used by either party in preparing the case.

"In the meantime, PPG lawyers and paralegals spent thousands of hours sorting through the materials," Mr. Zoghby pointed out. "And thousands of dollars and reams of paper were used in the extensive photocopying required."

"Reviewing millions of records delays the legal proceedings, sometimes for years," Mr. Zoghby said. "It is rare that old correspondence or other records will help the company win a legal case. Few people write with adequate

precision to ensure that records cannot be misinterpreted years after they were generated."

In addition to paper, records may be electronic or micrographic in nature. "While we are eager to reduce paper, we should be aware that computer and micrographic files can become a nuisance, too," Mr. Zoghby said.

"Do it right the first time" is a quality precept that applies to records management. Identify the potential value of records as they are generated and develop a system that makes them easy to find and easy to eliminate when they are no longer of value, Mr. Zoghby urged.