Automotive Refinishing

Why is the ARB focusing on automotive refinishing?
Automotive refinishing includes the use of paints or coatings that emit toxic air contaminants. Unlike larger industrial facilities, automotive refinishing operations are often found in close proximity to neighborhoods and schools. You do not need to live near an autobody shop to be exposed to toxic air contaminants from automotive refinish coatings. The same coatings applied in professional autobody shops are used by automobile enthusiasts who paint cars in their garage.

What types of toxic air contaminants are emitted during automotive refinishing?
Hexavalent chromium and cadmium are the toxic air contaminants of most concern in automotive refinish coatings. Hexavalent chromium is the most toxic compound used in automotive refinish coatings, and poses the greatest health risk. Both of these toxic air contaminants are found in relatively small amounts, but even small amounts pose an unnecessary health risk to the public. Toxic air contaminants can cause serious illness and other health problems by damaging organs like the liver and kidneys, and may also cause birth defects or diseases such as cancer.

What is the ARB doing to reduce public exposure to toxic air contaminants from automotive refinishing?
The ARB is currently developing a regulation that would eliminate hexavalent chromium and cadmium in automotive refinish coatings used in California. This regulation will also decrease emissions of lead, a toxic air contaminant, because lead is used in coatings containing hexavalent chromium. By eliminating these toxic air contaminants from the coatings, this regulation will reduce public risk regardless of where the coatings are used.

In addition to developing a regulation that would eliminate these toxic air contaminants from automotive refinish coatings, the ARB will be conducting community outreach. The ARB will be providing autobody shops information about safer alternatives and ways they can decrease the amount of toxic air contaminants and other air pollutants emitted from automotive refinishing operations.

For more information
Visit our web site at http://www.arb.ca.gov/toxics/toxics.htm, for more information on identified toxic substances. For information on automotive coatings, visit http://www.arb.ca.gov/coatings/autorefin/autorefin.htm. You may also contact the ARB’s Public Information Office at (916) 322-2990. You may obtain this document in an alternative format by contacting ARB’s ADA Coordinator at (916) 322-4505 (voice); (916) 324-9531 (TDD, Sacramento area only); or (800) 700-8326 (TDD, outside Sacramento).

The energy challenge facing California is real. Every Californian needs to take immediate action to reduce energy consumption. For a list of simple ways you can reduce demand and cut your energy costs, see our web site: www.arb.ca.gov.