

Operation Clean Sweep Gets an Upgrade

by Elle Brumley

In its original form, the Operation Clean Sweep stewardship program has had a tremendous impact on helping make plastic pellet, powder and flake loss a thing of the past for the last 25 years. The goal of Operation Clean Sweep is to help every plastic resin, flake or powder handling operation implement good housekeeping and containment practices to work toward achieving zero pellet, flake and powder loss, protecting the environment and saving valuable resources. After a recent review process of partner needs and requests the OCS program has evolved. The new, updated edition (OCS Version 2.0, if you will) promises to make OCS an even stronger force for environmental stewardship in the plastics industry. OCS 2.0 will provide:

Stronger and more regular communications

Version 2.0 will make even clearer what's expected of OCS signatories and supporters. A more detailed website will include a list of specific metrics that OCS members can use to measure internal accountability. A new spotlight feature will be added to the OCS website to collect and highlight OCS best practices from members who are on the ground doing the important work of safeguarding the environment from pellet, powder and flake loss.

A biannual newsletter will also be sent to OCS partners and shared with NGO partners and government agencies to educate about actions the industry is undertaking to ensure that no plastic materials end up in streams, waterways or oceans.

More accountability and bigger figures

Under OCS 2.0, companies will repledge every three years to ensure that their OCS membership is up-to-date and accurate. Additionally, rather than counting the number of companies that have signed, OCS will begin keeping track on a facility-by-facility basis. There are currently more than 16,000 plastics facilities in the United States, and the goal is to get every single one of them on board with OCS 2.0's effective but easy-to-follow guidelines.

Stronger international participation

The first stage of this portion of the OCS upgrade will include more sharing of tools and best practices associated with the OCS guidelines with international partners. The new OCS will be more consistent across the board, making it easier for international associations to promote OCS among their memberships, and for international companies to become a part of the OCS solution.

The organizers will be in touch with OCS members to promote these new upgrades and to solicit input about how to make the program even more successful. If your company has best practices for OCS implementation or ongoing maintenance that you'd like to share, or if you'd like to send in your facility's contact information to ensure that it's among the facilities counted in the OCS tally, email Elle Brumley at ebrumley@plasticsindustry.org.

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