

Small Quantity Specialty Chemical Manufacturer Operating without appropriate air permits

Project Background

A small specialty chemical manufacturer with multiple reactors and blenders had been operating without an Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) Construction Air Permit or an Operating Air Permit.

The client had previously applied for the permit but it was returned as incomplete; emission data was not included because it wasn't available at the time. The company did not respond to the IEPA's request for information and continued to operate the facility. Business for the client was excellent so more processing equipment was ordered to double production throughput.

By now however, the IEPA was finally following-up on the original application and it was quickly going to be obvious that compliance would not be satisfactorily demonstrated to the agency. The IEPA was further insisting that because no Construction Air Permit had been issued, the existing emissions were assumed to be "worst case" for the 8,760 hours per year, and hence classified the facility as a "Major Source." This designation makes any pending violations a significant occurrence within the IEPA with subsequent significant fines. Additionally, further complicating the facility owner's ability to operate its facility, the IEPA would not issue permits for the new equipment until the original violations were resolved.

With the company owner pushing for going ahead with the expansion, the firm's management team needed a seasoned expert to convince the owner of the problems and the need to not further compound the violations.

Admiral Assistance

The first step of Admiral's engagement was to meet with the owner and his advisors to listen and fully understand their short and long-term objectives. Then, once this was completed, our experts thoroughly explained the situation in context to their objectives and concerns and answered all of their questions.

In the end, Admiral determined that extensive stack testing could show that the existing emissions were very low, and at worst case, far below IEPA "Major Source" thresholds. With that critical step agreed to, the permitting of the new equipment (needed to attain the desired larger production levels) could proceed. However, to perform the proposed stack testing, Admiral had to negotiate at length with IEPA and the stack testing vendor to identify and establish acceptable stack test conditions and parameters. These successful negotiations resulted in test modifications outside the IEPA's normal protocols.

Success

Even better for the facility, the stack test results confirmed low emission rates and the entire facility became exempt from any permitting requirements. That was very satisfying to the client, to go from major violations to no permit required.
