



EPP Rapid Research

1402 Third Avenue , Suite 1420
Seattle, Washington 98104
Tel 206-352-2050
Fax 206-352-2049
www.pprc.org

EPP Rapid Research Lead Free Wheel Weights King County, WA

February 5, 2007

Request:

Eric Nelson from King County requested research assistance on EPP non-lead wheel weights. King County has done previous research and is using the Xact Balancing Product (PVC) in the Fleets Department (see Additional Resources below for previous research and background on the issues surrounding the use of lead wheel weights). King County has tested steel wheel weights and have attempted to get consistent pricing and availability in the past for non-lead metal wheel weights; however, the majority of the supply was going directly to OEMs of new cars and trucks. King County would like to know if alternatives are now available in sufficient quantity to get government pricing and consistent supply.

Key Findings:

Alternatives to lead wheel weights and manufacturers include:

- PVC Plastic (IMI Xact Balance) (**PVC is a source of environmental concern and may not be an environmental improvement compared to lead¹**)
- Steel (BADA (manufactured by Hennessey Industries), Perfect Equipment) **Steel is currently the environmentally preferable option. Prices of steel wheel weights are now competitively priced for large orders.**
- Zinc (Perfect Equipment) (**Zinc is also a source of environmental concern**)

The environmentally preferable option currently is steel. PVC is not a good alternative to lead since it is being phased out of many products because of links to human and environmental health concerns. If a polyethylene alternative for the Xact Balance product becomes available, this will eliminate the concern about their current composition of PVC. Zinc can also be harmful to the environment and human health, so zinc is not the best option. Zinc pollution has exceeded allowable quantities in storm water in Washington in some areas².

Pricing and Availability: Steel wheel weights are now available to the after markets, with prices almost comparable to the price of lead wheel weights if an organization orders a sufficient quantity. Shipping costs make it most economical to order as large a quantity as possible.

¹ IMI is currently conducting performance testing on the next generation non-PVC XACTBalance product. The prototypes they are working with are polyethylene. As soon as they finalize the final material choice and dimensions, samples will be available.

² Terry Whittmeier, Washington Department of Ecology Storm Water Inspector 509-574-3991

Northwest Distributors:

Myers Tire Supply (BADA, IMI Xact Balance, Perfect Equipment)

Northwest Sales Group
5718 1st Avenue South
Seattle, Washington 98108
Government Representative, George Bond (330-253-5592)
Phone: 206-762-5111
Fax: 206-762-5546

Meyer's Tire distributes plastic, aluminum and steel wheel weights for IMI (Xact), Perfect and BADA. George Bond worked with the Postal Service on a lead-free wheel weight pilot project. The California USPS has already converted to lead-free wheel weights. **Government pricing is available.**

NAPA (BADA)

Government Accounts Representative for King County Greg Ballinger 206-228-6272. **Government pricing is available and production is able to meet orders.**

"The BADA company will work only through our standard distribution for smaller end users. As of my conversation last week with the BADA Marketing Manager, we can deliver all of our current "steel" wheel weights on a regular basis given freight minimums and standard packaging requirements are met. All pricing will need to come from NAPA and I suggest that for those questions you may wish to contact Jim Dennis at NAPA headquarters at 800-298-8805 ex. 6591384"

Gregory Buhr
District Manager for the Northwest
Hennessey Industries (BADA)

Northwest Sales Group (IMI Xact Balance PVC Plastic)

Brian has developed a King County price list that is still current as of January 2007.

Six Roblees (IMI Xact Balance, Perfect Equipment)

Tukwila, WA
206-787-7970

Additional Resources:

Lead-Free Wheels Project, The Ecology Center
<http://www.leadfreewheels.org/>

King County Purchasing Bulletin on Lead Free Wheel Weights
<http://www.metrokc.gov/procure/green/bul92.htm>

State of Minnesota announces program to phase-out lead wheel weights on state vehicles
<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/oea/media/040315.cfm>

Criteria for Purchasing Decision Making:

- Lead alternative non toxic materials
- Product performance
- Availability in Northwest
- Cost

To help disseminate this information and encourage EPP, PPRC will list the summarized results, including contact information, on its website. Please let us know if this is not acceptable