

Factory installs waste separation igloos

General Motors South Africa (GMSA) rolled out colourful new waste separation igloos at the Struandale plant last week in celebration of World Environment Day which is commemorated worldwide on 5 June.



GMSA employee Luvuyo Magquntulu disposes his glass bottle in an igloo.
Image: www.quickpic.co.za

Having made significant progress in reducing waste in the manufacturing process, the company rolled out waste disposal igloos where employees can dispose of their domestic waste like glass, plastic, paper and metal, before reaching their work stations. Not only will they be reducing the load on their domestic bins, but they will make a significant contribution to the environment.

According to Angus Clark, GMSA head of plant engineering, the environment is a key strategic imperative for the company - striving to minimise and mitigate the impact of operations on the natural environment and the communities within which the company functions. GMSA's commitment to sustainable, responsible business practices goes beyond compliance to ensuring the integration of environmental considerations into all business decisions said Clark.

GMSA has reduced its non-recyclable waste by 60%, from 34.09kg per vehicle manufactured in 2008 to just 11.08kg in 2013. The 2014 target is to cut this down to half, to 5.5kg per vehicle by the end of 2014. "We are therefore encouraging our employees to adopt a mindset of separating waste, reusing it or recycling it," said Clark.

Inside the plant there are also easily accessible, clearly-marked separation bins in team areas. "By providing facilities for people to bring their recycling from home is the logical next step," Clark added.

He said that employees have contributed to the company's achievements in reducing its environmental impact, "We wanted to make it possible for them to take these lessons and good practices into their homes. People are keen to recycle, but recycling facilities in Port Elizabeth are not widely accessible."

The company's environmental management system is certified to the ISO 14001:2004 standard, and it is well on track to achieve its target of zero waste-to-landfill by 2015. "Our initiatives to reduce, re-use and recycle waste resulted in less than

10% of waste going to landfill sites in 2013 and we are well on track to achieving our target of zero waste-to-landfill by 2015," Clark added.

At the same time as reducing waste production and recycling waste, the company also focuses strongly on reducing consumption of natural resources. Electricity consumption has been reduced by 34% over the past six years, and water consumption by 32% over the past four.

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