



Filthy Five: Olin Corporation Charleston, Tennessee Plant

The Olin Corporation, a publicly traded company based out of Clayton, Mo., owns and operates two of the five remaining chlor-alkali facilities in the United States that still have not committed to stop using mercury-cell technology. The company's Tennessee facility is the larger of the two and its other mercury-emitting facility is in Augusta, Ga. Interestingly, Olin switched two other chlorine factories from mercury-based to mercury-free technology in 1982 and 1990. Because it has refused to convert its remaining plants, both of which are major polluters, Oceana has dubbed Olin's Tennessee and Georgia plants as members of the Filthy Five.

Key Statistics on Olin, Charleston, Tennessee

- Olin's Charleston plant is the largest of the five plants that still rely upon mercury-cell technology.
- This plant is the number one source of mercury air pollution in Tennessee.
- Despite spending millions of dollars on control technology, the plant still reports emitting 1,250 pounds of mercury pollution into the air annually. Workers are tested weekly for high mercury levels.
- The plant emitted nearly three times more mercury into the air than Tennessee's top mercury-emitting, coal-fired plant in 2005.
- The plant has already spent more than \$64.2 million (adjusted to 2006 dollars) in treatment systems, fines and other mercury-related costs in Tennessee. This estimate does not include expenditures for legal and consulting fees, mercury permitting, or the purchase of mercury itself.
- Between 2001 and 2004, Olin was cited for eight violations of the Tennessee Hazardous Waste Management Act.
- In total, the costs to control this mercury pollution could have gone a long way towards paying for the conversion, which is estimated to cost about \$117.8 million.

Benefits of Switching

- Although the cost of converting to mercury-free technology runs in the millions, analysis shows that the majority of these costs would be recouped within five years due to energy savings, increased capacity and eliminating millions of dollars in fines, upgrades and cleanups.
- Over five years, shifting to mercury-free technology could save Olin's Tennessee plant approximately \$40 million in electricity costs, \$2.3 million from eliminating monitoring and maintenance costs associated with mercury use and between \$3.3 and \$4.9 million in estimated wastewater treatment costs.
- A switch to mercury-free technology could increase energy efficiency by 25 percent saving enough energy to power 16,525 average-sized American homes.

- Most plants that convert to mercury-free technology increase capacity by about 25 percent. If Olin’s plant increased capacity by just 10 percent, it could increase sales by nearly \$85 million over five years.
- If it did increase capacity by 10 percent, the company could earn \$4 million in extra profits due to energy savings.
- Being a responsible citizen would benefit the company’s finances, while at the same time safeguarding the health of its employees, the public and the environment.

Cost to Switch:	\$117.8 million
Costs of Using Mercury	\$ 64.2 million
Estimated Benefits (Over 5 years)	
Energy Savings	\$ 40 million
Monitoring	\$ 2.3 million
Wastewater Treatment	\$ 3.3 to 4.9 million
Capacity Increase (Over 5 years)	
Sales	\$ 84.9 million
Energy Savings	\$ 4 million

The three other chlorine plants that have not committed to going mercury-free are Ashta Chemicals in Ashtabula, Ohio; PPG Industries in Natrium, W.Va.; and ERCO Worldwide in Port Edwards, Wis.