



April 18, 2002

## **Improved TuffCoat Plating PRODUCT ENHANCEMENT – ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY TuffCoat PLATING WITH SUPERIOR SALT SPRAY RESISTANCE**



Following up on our introduction of our industry leading TuffCoat plating in 2001, Gates is pleased to announce another important product enhancement – the elimination of hexavalent chrome from our TuffCoat plating process. This improvement will occur with no change to our already superior salt spray resistance.

A color change will be noticeable from the current light gold, almost silver color to a lighter silver color. This change will not affect the fit, form, or function including dimensions. This process meets and exceeds current TuffCoat plating standards for existing products.

The key points are:

1. We have eliminated environmental issues in our plating process. Hexavalent chromium, a common material in industrial plating processes, is dangerous to the environment, as was shown in the movie Erin Brockavich. Gates continues to work at being ahead of

global governmental and environmental regulations, and eventual OEM requirements.

Beginning in July 2003, European legislation, Directive 2000/53/EC of the European Parliament, goes into place limiting the amount of hexavalent chrome allowed per vehicle or machine. As a result, companies such as GM and Ford have issued new requirements forbidding the use of hexavalent chrome for all new, resourced, or redesigned parts. This requirement affects all construction and agricultural machines as well. With this in mind, Gates is changing over to an environmentally safe process for plating with no loss in corrosion resistance performance or change in torque recommendations.

2. This plating will now not contain dichromate. This could effect approvals at some of our OEM customers. This process change needs to be presented to OEM customers and approval should be obtained to prevent issues with parts being supplied by the new process.
3. Per ASTM B117 salt spray testing, our plated components with the new TuffCoat plating will continue to yield a minimum of 400 hours of protection against red rust, versus an industry average of 96 hour resistance, 400% better. This is a 500+% improvement over the 72-hour SAE standard.
4. The color of the new TuffCoat plating material will be even more consistent than that produced by the current process.

Gates will begin implementing this process conversion by the end of June on a running change basis. There is a possibility that you will receive fittings or hydraulic assemblies with a mixture of components processed through previous and new methods until inventories of older components are consumed.