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## PUTTING THE BRAKES TO COPPER USAGE IN BRAKE PADS

**A** S A DRIVER YOU CLIMB BEHIND THE WHEEL, BUCKLE UP AND START THE CAR AND OFF YOU GO. THEN YOU STOP AND THEN YOU GO. THEN YOU STOP...WELL, YOU GET THE POINT.

Stopping and going is a necessary function to getting around in your vehicle. However, did you know that every time you put on the brakes you leave a little bit behind?

A little bit of copper, asbestos and other particles are left on the roadways from your vehicle's brake pads. Sure it's not much when you think of just your vehicle but, when you factor in all the other vehicles on the road, it adds up to a lot of pollution that is ultimately ending up in our streams and lakes. Brake pad pollutants account for half of the copper entering our waterways.

In areas - such as Atlantic Canada - this run-off is proving to be highly toxic to fish, invertebrates, amphibians, and phytoplankton. It is particularly harmful to the sensory systems of threatened and endangered salmon. The State of Washington's Department of Ecology reports that copper is bad for the sensory systems of fish as it makes them more susceptible to be hunted by predators and prevents them from swimming upstream.

Now copper has many useful qualities, it is used in helping to light our homes; it's widely used in cookware, it is a great semiconductor for computers and is used in jewellery. However, in large quantities it can prove detrimental to our health and in extreme cases it can even cause death. Environmentally speaking, because it can be stored in the earth, it can potentially prove hazardous to our future.



In Canada the automotive industry is moving towards environmentally-friendly copper free brakes and ALCO Brakes, a Quebec City based company, is right in the forefront. It manufactures and distributes brake products and offers one of the most comprehensive range of friction products available in North America.

ALCO is extremely proud of the fact that's its company has always been a "Green" company which is focused on protecting the environment. According to Eric Dussault, ALCO

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Brake's CEO "At ALCO we are really doing our part for the next generation by adopting cleaner ways of doing things without risk to the environment."

Being innovation driven ALCO is producing what is the first and most complete friction program in Canada, one that uses a 100% copper free formula and is priced for entry to mid-level brake pads. In their Organic brake shoe program they employ a completely green solution of zero heavy metals in their ceramic brake pads and brake shoes.

ALCO is the sole manufacturer of relined brake shoes in Canada and provide products to the automotive industry; including motorcycles, buses, heavy trucks, and off-road vehicles. They have one of the most comprehensive arrays of industrial friction products available in North America. Its products have been sold to and are being used in railways, elevators, rolling or stationary equipment, concrete plants, paper mills and cranes. Additionally, in 2004, ALCO installed its first pair of brake pads on wind turbines.

ALCO is a thoroughly Canadian company which was founded in 1985 and along with its headquarters in Québec City has warehouses in Moncton and Toronto.