

Message from the President



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Making new environmentally conscious steps, connecting us with society

February 2005 saw the start of the Kyoto Protocol coming into effect, and with it an increase in global awareness as regards the prevention of global warming. While bringing forth products and technologies that contribute towards the environment, we feel that further strengthening our efforts in protecting the environment is a necessary part of our social responsibilities.

Major features of our 2004 environmental activities were the full-scale commencement of environmental efforts which consist of the environmental management in each Business Group launched in 2003, and the environmental management by production sites that had formerly been in place, and these have started to produce results.

We achieved reductions in CO₂ emissions equivalent to the extra amounts produced as a result of increased production. However, in order to achieve the levels specified by the Kyoto Protocol, further bold measures will be required, for example in energy-reducing activities, creation of energy, use of alternative energy sources, and in emissions trading.

We have achieved a 92% recycling rate for by-products, and we expect to achieve zero emissions within 2005. Given this as a spur, we have formulated and put into operation a next-generation mid-term plan for zero emissions, aiming towards a 30% reduction of total by-products.

NGK has started to create a system that supports European regulations regarding the management of chemical substances. These regulations include Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) and Restriction of the Use of Certain Hazardous Substances (RoHS) directives. In addition, we have revised our green procurement guidelines, and while aiming to raise the awareness of our suppliers regarding the management of chemical substances, have put in place a system to respond to customer needs.

In April 2004, one harmful substance in excess of environmental standards were detected at NGK Printer Ceramics Co., Ltd., one of our group companies and a producer of electronic products, and therefore notification was immediately sent to local government bodies, and nearby residents were kept informed of progress. Furthermore, necessary clean-up measures were undertaken promptly.

In 2004, a system for assessing and reporting the environmental performance of overseas plants was put in place in preparation for the implementation of integrated environmental management starting from 2005. Along with a total of four domestic group companies acquiring certification in environmental management systems, two of our overseas companies also newly acquired this certification. At present, the 2005 World Exposition, Aichi, Japan is being held, based around the theme of "nature's wisdom." NGK has the NGK Water Lab – an exhibit that expresses the importance of water. Furthermore, as well as technical participation in the NEDO-sponsored new-energy plant with a NAS[®] battery and methane-fermentation system, NGK has been commissioned by the Foundation for Riverfront Improvement and Restoration for the installation of a water circulation system: environmentally conscious technologies that we are proudly showing to guests from home and abroad. World Expo 2005 has helped us to realize anew the need for communication with citizens in order to protect the environment, and we believe that we should more broadly interpret and respond to our company's social responsibilities. Furthermore, in order to continue being a company which is rewarded with society's trust, we strive to make the "Environmental & Social Responsibility Reports" useful in understanding NGK's positions and efforts on these issues.