



INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

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Mike Braun
Governor

Clint Woods
Commissioner

September 12, 2025

VIA EMAIL

Mr. Robert Brodhead
Plant Manager
American Axle & Manufacturing, Inc.
Metal Forming, Columbus Manufacturing Facility
2805 Norcross Drive
Columbus, IN 472011

Re: **Inspection Summary Letter**

Dear Mr. Brodhead:

On September 10, 2025, a representative of the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, Office of Land Quality, conducted an inspection at the American Axle & Manufacturing, Inc facility located at 2805 Norcross Drive, Columbus, Indiana. This inspection was conducted pursuant to IC 13-14-2-2. For your information, and in accordance with IC 13-14-5, a summary of the inspection is provided below:

Type of Inspection:	Complaint
Results of Inspection:	Additional information is needed to determine overall compliance. Please see the attached inspection report for additional information.

Please direct any questions regarding this letter to me at (317) 727-6907, or via email at gritchot@idem.in.gov.

Sincerely,

Senior Environmental Manager
Industrial Waste Compliance Section
Compliance Branch
Office of Land Quality

Enclosure
cc: Bartholomew County Health Department

Visit on.in.gov/survey or scan the QR code to provide feedback.

We appreciate your input!





**INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
OFFICE OF LAND QUALITY
COMPLIANCE INSPECTION REPORT**

EPA ID NUMBER: Non-notifier
NAME: American Axle & Manufacturing, Inc.
Metal Forming, Columbus Manufacturing Facility
ADDRESS: 2805 Norcross Drive
CITY & COUNTY: Columbus, Bartholomew County
INSPECTION DATE(S): September 10, 2025
INSPECTOR(S): George Ritchotte (IWCS)

PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Mr. Robert Brodhead

TITLE

Plant Manager

TELEPHONE

(812) 418-7784

PRE-INSPECTION INFORMATION

In August 2025, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) received a complaint from a concerned citizen regarding the “dumping of pit sludge on the ground and covering it with sand.” The citizen indicated that the sludge is from the pits below the machinery, and that the pile is located behind the address of 2705 Norcross.

A review of IDEM records found that the property had been inspected by the IDEM’s Office of Land Quality (OLQ) on two prior occasions regarding open dumping and illegal disposal complaints when the facility was known as Impact Forge, Inc. Both issues were returned to compliance.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

On September 10, 2025, OLQ, Industrial Waste Compliance Section staff conducted a complaint inspection visit at the site. Staff met with Mr. Robert Brodhead, Plant Manager, during the visit. Staff explained the reason for the inspection and discussed the information included in the citizen complaint. Staff also discussed the brief review of IDEM records and requested information regarding facility history. Staff understood Mr. Brodhead to indicate that operations began at the location under two names Impact Forge, Inc. (Impact) and Net Forge, Inc (Net). Impact produced the larger forged products and Net produced smaller products using a little different technique. Approximately 15 years ago, those two operations were purchased by another business known as HHI Group Holdings (HHI) but still operated under the original names. Recently, HHI was acquired by American Axle & Manufacturing, Inc.

Mr. Brodhead then provided a brief overview of the different manufacturing operations that occur at the facility. Discussions then focused on their hammer forge operation and the generation of what Mr.

Brodhead referred to as "tailings." Staff was informed that the waste in the photograph submitted by the complainant was tailings. He informed staff that the tailings were the sand that had been packed under and around the lower portion of the hammer forge, understood to be known as the anvil, that was housed in a concrete pit below the upper portion of the forge. The metal product is produced by first heating the metal blank in an induction furnace. The "red hot" metal is then placed on the lower half of the die on the anvil portion of the machine. The upper half, known as the hammer or ram, which contains the upper half of the die, repeatedly strikes with great force the lower half to produce the shape of the product.

Staff was then given a tour of the plant. Staff was show how the hammer forge operation works, then staff was able to observe a forge area in which an anvil had been removed to be repaired. Staff observed an example of a pit area. No oils or other liquids were noted. After concluding the inside tour, staff was shown the area outside where the anvils are stored for later use or to be shipped off to be repaired. Staff noted the immense size of these items.

Staff was then shown the area where the tailings and new sands to be used in the pits are stored. (See attached Photo Log, photo 1) At the time of the inspection, the facility was only storing new sands that had been brought on-site to be used to pack around the anvil in the pits to secure it in place. Staff inquired about the disposal practices for the material he referred to as tailings. Mr. Brodhead indicated that the company that removes and reinstalls the anvils manages that material, and he was unaware of their management practice. Staff discussed the need to make a "waste determination" on the sands to determine if they had been impacted by the industrial activity, and if they had, they would be considered a solid waste and must be disposed at a municipal solid waste landfill, such as the nearby Bartholomew Co. Landfill.

Staff concluded the inspection with an exit interview summarizing the inspection and requesting information regarding the management practices of the tailings.

After the inspection had concluded, Mr. Brodhead submitted information, via email (See attachment) indicating that the tailing "is taken to North Vernon to construction sites and used for fill."

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on information available during the inspection, additional information is needed to determine if violations have occurred. Please see the attached "Description of Violation and Further Actions" for more information outlining the specific information necessary for this determination.

Description of Violations and Further Actions

Facility Name: American Axle & Manufacturing, Inc.
Metal Forming, Columbus Mfg. Facility

EPA ID #: Non-notifier

Facility Address: 2805 Norcross Drive
Columbus, Bartholomew Co.

Inspection Date: September 10,
2025

329 IAC 10-7.2-1 Generator responsibilities for waste information

Sec. 1. (a) A person who generates a solid waste shall carry out the hazardous waste determination required by 40 CFR 262.11, incorporated by reference in 329 IAC 3.1-7.

(b) A person who generates a nonhazardous solid waste and disposes of it in a solid waste land disposal facility regulated under this article shall determine if any of the following are present in the waste:

- (1) Fugitive dust regulated under the rules of the air pollution control board at 326 IAC 6-4, or fugitive particulate matter regulated under the rules of the air pollution control board at 326 IAC 6-5.
- (2) Heat, or the capability of generating heat, regulated under 329 IAC 10-8.2-3.
- (3) Regulated asbestos-containing material regulated under 329 IAC 10-8.2-4.
- (4) Polychlorinated biphenyls regulated under 329 IAC 4.1 or this article.
- (5) Pesticides regulated under this article or 329 IAC 3.1.
- (6) Infectious waste regulated under the rules of the Indiana state department of health at 410 IAC 1-3.
- (7) Liquid waste regulated under 329 IAC 10-20-27.
- (8) Other materials prohibited from disposal under 329 IAC 10-9-2.


(c) Nothing in this rule limits the authority of the commissioner to require any information necessary to secure compliance with, or grant an approval under, this article.

Note: At the time of the inspection, the facility generates a material known as tailings which are used to anchor the anvil section of their hammer mills. Based on information provided during the inspection, the tailing material originates as unused sands. It was unclear whether or not these sands could have been impacted (contaminated) during their industrial use. According to facility representatives, current practice has been to remove spent tailings from the site and use them at other locations for fill material.

Required Action: Immediately make a waste determination on the tailings. If it has been determined that the sands have been impacted by industrial activities including, but not limited to; metal contamination, or hydraulic oils, the tailings would be considered a solid waste and you must immediately cease current management practices and properly dispose of this waste in a permitted facility based on the outcome of the generator responsibilities listed above. Within 30 days of receipt of this inspection report, please submit written information demonstrating the determinations made from this required action.

Please note that additional violations may be cited based on this submitted information.

Photo Log

	Photo #:	1
	Description:	Storage area for anvil pit sand and "tailings."
	Photographer:	George Ritchotte
	Facility Name:	American Axle & Manufacturing, Inc. 2805 Norcross Drive Columbus, Bartholomew County
	Photo Date:	September 10, 2025
	Others:	Robert Brodhead (facility)

From: [Brodhead, Robert](#)
To: [RITCHOTTE, GEORGE](#)
Subject: Impact Forge Anonymous Complaint
Date: Wednesday, September 10, 2025 5:00:39 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)

EXTERNAL EMAIL: This email was sent from outside your organization. Exercise caution when clicking links, opening attachments or taking further action, before validating its authenticity.

Good afternoon, George,

I spoke with our concrete contractor this afternoon regarding the tailings. He informed me that, as they have done since the mid 80's, the concrete and sand he pulls out of the hammer pits is taken to North Vernon to construction sites and used for fill.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me if you need additional information.

Robert Brodhead
Plant Manager | AAM
Metal Forming | Columbus Manufacturing Facility
2805 Norcross Drive, Columbus, IN 47201
O. (812) 418.7784 | M. (812) 657.1208
Email: Robert.Brodhead@aam.com



Visit www.aam.com 

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RE: American Axle & Manufacturing, Inc - INX000024778

From: Brodhead, Robert <Robert.Brodhead@aam.com>

Date: Fri 9/12/2025 8:03 AM

To: Van De Bossche, Nira <NVandebo@idem.IN.gov>

EXTERNAL EMAIL: This email was sent from outside your organization. Exercise caution when clicking links, opening attachments or taking further action, before validating its authenticity.

Received 9.12.25 6:44 a.m.

From: Van De Bossche, Nira <NVandebo@idem.IN.gov>

Sent: Friday, September 12, 2025 6:44 AM

To: Brodhead, Robert <Robert.Brodhead@aam.com>

Subject: American Axle & Manufacturing, Inc - INX000024778

CAUTION: This email came from outside of AAM. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good morning,

Please see attached Inspection Report for American Axle & Manufacturing, Inc.

Kindly respond to this email to confirm your receipt of the document.

Thank you,

Nira van de Bossche



Administrative Assistant | Compliance Branch

Office of Land Quality

Indiana Department of Environmental Management

(317) 232-5583 | nvandebo@idem.in.gov

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