

A Storied History

For over a century, ERCO Worldwide has stood as an industry leader in inorganic chemical manufacturing.

We have a strong reputation for innovation, helpfulness, and premium service thanks to our inspiring employees and their unwavering commitment to serving our customers and planet.


1893

W.T. Gibbs and S.P. Franchot obtain a patent on electrochemical manufacture of potassium chlorate to supply E.B. Eddy match works in Hull, QC. They build a plant in Masson, QC but it burns down within the first year.

1896

W.T. Gibbs builds a plant to make elemental phosphorus in Buckingham, QC using arc furnace technology.

1897

The Electric Reduction Company (Limited) is incorporated. It is 51% owned by Anglo-Continental Gold Syndicate, which finances the expansion of the company.

1902

ERCO, seeking investment to continue their growth, becomes a subsidiary of United Kingdom based Chemical company Albright and Wilson.


1915

Potassium chlorate manufacture begins in Buckingham, QC and continues until 1922, when it is shut down in favor of phosphorus production.

1932

Sodium and potassium chlorate manufacture is resumed in Buckingham. Electric Reduction Sales Company incorporates in Toronto, ON.

1935

Company is reorganized under Electric Reduction Company of Canada Limited.

1940s

Collaboration begins with Drs. Howard Rapson and Morris Wayman of the University of Toronto on long-range research and development of chlorine dioxide generation for pulp bleaching. Chlorine dioxide bleaching of Kraft pulp begins globally.


1957

North Vancouver, BC sodium chlorate plant begins production using cascade continuous graphite electrode cell tanks.

1964

Jim McGilvery, John Winfield and Herb Scribner patent the R3 chlorine dioxide process after operating a pilot plant at Thurso, QC in 1965. The R3 chlorine dioxide generator system, a vacuum, crystallizing process becomes the standard in the industry and ERCO develops its technology sales business. The first full-scale plant is sold to a mill in La Tuque, QC in 1971.

1966

Company headquarters, called 'The Innovation Centre' built at 2 Gibbs Road, Toronto, ON to replace separate sales and R&D locations downtown. Company now has four divisions: Chlorate (including Technology Sales), Phosphates, Agriculture and Technical. As ERCO has the first building in this part of Toronto we named the road after our founder.

1968

Company name changed to ERCO Industries Limited. ERCO starts its mammoth phosphorous Plant in Long Harbour, NL with two of world's largest phosphorus production furnaces.

1971

Tenneco of Houston, TX becomes majority shareholder of Albright and Wilson.

1976

North Vancouver, BC plant's sodium chlorate becomes the company's first line to utilize new metal anode technology from Krebs, France. Pilot work is conducted, first here and later in Thunder Bay, ON, to develop ERCO's sodium chlorate cell line technology, which is patented in 1980.

1978

Monroe, LA sodium chlorate plant start-up with metal anode technology.

1979

Thunder Bay, ON sodium chlorate plant start-up with metal anode technology.

1981

ERCO sodium chlorate technology is installed in expansion of Thunder Bay, ON plant.


1985

ERCO becomes a founding member of Responsible Care®, a sustainability initiative focused on environmentally responsible manufacturing.

1985

Sodium chlorate Line 1 is started at Buckingham, QC and is the first large scale plant utilizing metal anodes and the new ERCO patented technology.

1986

First R8 chlorine dioxide generator is sold. The R8 generator technology generates chlorine dioxide without chlorine and eventually permits the Pulp industry to switch to elemental chlorine-free pulp production.

1988

Buckingham, QC sodium chlorate expansion (Line 2) and construction of first sodium chlorite plant. Company name changed to Albright & Wilson Americas, a division of Tenneco Canada Inc.


1990

Buckingham, QC sodium chlorate expansion.

1991

North Vancouver, BC sodium chlorate expansion.

1992

Grande Prairie, AB ERCO designs and builds a 50,000 tonne per year sodium chlorate plant.

1992

Sterling Chemicals of Houston, TX acquires the Albright and Wilson Americas pulp chemicals division from Tenneco and renames it Sterling Pulp Chemicals. The phosphorus products division is sold to Rhodia Chemicals.


1996

Start-up of the Valdosta, GA ERCO designed and built 100,000 tonne per year sodium chlorate plant.

1997

ERCO purchases Saskatoon, SK facility for sodium chlorate, chlor-alkali and calcium hypochlorite manufacturing.

2001

Thunder Bay, ON Broadway Avenue sodium chlorite plant built at Abitibi-Bowater pulp mill.

2002

Superior Plus Corp. of Calgary, AB acquires the business from Sterling Chemicals. The business becomes the ERCO Worldwide division.

2003

Sodium Chlorate plants in Bruderheim, AB (started-up in 1990) and Hargrave, MB (started-up in 2002) are purchased from Alchem Industries.


2005

Port Edwards, WI chlor-alkali plant purchased from Vulcan Industries / Oxychem. Site start-up was 1967 under Wyandotte Chemical Company.

2006

Thunder Bay, ON City Road sodium chlorate plant decommissioned due to high electricity prices. Sodium chlorate dissolving facility added to Thunder Bay Broadway Avenue plant to supply truckloads of R2 and R8 sodium chlorate solution.

2006

Mininco, Chile ERCO designs and builds a 60,000 tonne per year sodium chlorate plant.

2006

Bruderheim, AB plant decommissioned and site sold due to high electricity prices.

2009

Port Edwards, WI chlor-alkali plant converted from mercury process to membrane process and expanded. Potassium carbonate plant decommissioned.


2017

Acquired International Dioxide, Inc., expanding chlorine dioxide-related products and services.

2019

ERCO embarks on a multiyear project to upgrade its Valdosta, GA plant to the latest ERCO Sodium Chlorate Technology.

2020

ERCO completes a 5,000 tonne per year Sodium Chlorate expansion of the Buckingham, QC plant.

2021

Acquisition of ERCO Worldwide by [Birch Hill Equity Partners](#) a Canadian private equity firm with over C\$ 4 billion in capital under management and a history of driving growth in their investments and portfolio companies.


2021

ERCO opens new headquarters in Mississauga, ON.

2022

Rationalization of high-cost sodium chlorate production at Saskatoon, SK.

2022

ERCO celebrates its 125th anniversary.