

Fact Sheet

03-04-98

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE EPA'S FINAL AIR TOXICS STANDARD FOR THE PETROLEUM REFINING INDUSTRY

TODAY'S ACTION...

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is proposing amendments to its final rule to regulate emissions of hazardous air pollutants from petroleum refineries. The final rule was issued on August 18, 1995. Hazardous air pollutants, also known as air toxics, are pollutants which are known or suspected to cause cancer or other serious health effects, such as birth defects or reproductive effects.

These proposed amendments will revise the monitoring, recordkeeping, and reporting requirements of the petroleum refinery rule. EPA expects these amendments to be of interest to owners and operators subject to this rule and to State and local regulatory agencies with petroleum refineries in their jurisdictions.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE EPA'S REFINERY AIR TOXICS RULE

In the petroleum refinery rule, EPA committed to continue to work with the industry and other stakeholders to reduce the monitoring, recordkeeping, and reporting burden associated with the rule. These amendments reflect the Agency's careful review of the existing requirements and suggestions from the stakeholders.

These amendments will reduce the time associated with annual monitoring, recordkeeping, and reporting by 13,200 hours. This will be accomplished by: (1) allowing facilities to incorporate the reporting of certain events into the required semi-annual reports rather than submitting separate reports when events occur; (2) allowing the permitting authority (i.e. the State or EPA) to determine whether certain information should be reported; and (3) eliminating duplicate reporting and recordkeeping requirements for equipment subject to the petroleum refinery rule or other EPA rules.

The amendments also include minor corrections and clarifications to the rule.

This action does not change monitoring, recordkeeping, and reporting requirements that are necessary to determine compliance with the control requirements nor does it alter the applicability, stringency or schedule of the rule.

EPA will accept public comment on the proposed revisions for 30 days following publication in the Federal Register.

BACKGROUND

Under the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, EPA is required to regulate emissions of air toxics. Air toxics are those pollutants known or suspected to cause cancer or other serious health effects (e.g., reproductive effects and birth defects).

On July 16, 1992, EPA published a list of industry groups (known as source categories) that emit one or more of these air toxics. For listed categories of "major" sources (those that emit 10 tons/year or more of a listed pollutant or 25 tons/year or more of a combination of pollutants), the Clean Air Act requires EPA to develop standards that require the application of stringent air pollution reduction measures known as maximum achievable control technology (MACT).

In its July 16, 1992 published list of industry groups to be regulated, EPA identified petroleum refineries as a major source of air toxics.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF EPA'S FINAL RULE TO REDUCE AIR TOXICS FROM PETROLEUM REFINERIES

EPA's final rule will reduce emissions of eleven air toxics, including benzene---a human carcinogen, by 48,000 tons annually, representing a 59 percent reduction from levels currently emitted from petroleum refineries.

The final rule will also reduce emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) by over 250,000 tons annually, representing a 60 percent reduction from current levels. Volatile organic compounds, when emitted into the ambient air, are precursors to the formation of ground level ozone which is a component of smog. A wide variety of acute and chronic respiratory health effects and welfare (e.g., agricultural, ecosystem) effects have been

attributed to concentrations of ozone commonly measured in the ambient air throughout the U.S.

HOW DO THE FINAL RULE AND THESE AMENDMENTS PROVIDE FLEXIBILITY TO INDUSTRY AND REDUCE THE REGULATORY BURDEN?

These amendments reduce the regulatory burden to the petroleum refining industry by reducing the recordkeeping and reporting requirements.

EPA's final rule contains a market-based provision, "emissions averaging," that allows facilities flexibility to choose certain emissions points to control in order to achieve the required emissions reductions in the most cost-effective manner possible. In some situations, facilities may find it more cost-effective to over control certain emissions points and under control others, so that the overall result would be greater emissions reductions at lesser control costs.

EPA's final rule for petroleum refineries provides additional flexibility by permitting the use of emissions averaging among petroleum refineries, marine terminal loading operations, and gasoline distribution facilities located at the same site.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Interested parties can download the amendments from EPA's web site on the Internet under recent actions at the following address: (<http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg>). For further information about these amendments or the rule itself, contact James F. Durham at (919) 541-5672 of the EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards.

EPA's Office of Air and Radiation's homepage on the Internet contains a wide range of information on the air toxics program, as well as many other air pollution programs and issues. The Office of Air and Radiation's home page address is: (<http://www.epa.gov/oar/>). Comprehensive rule and implementation information for petroleum refineries can be accessed on the Air Toxics Web page (<http://www.epa.gov/ttn/atw/petrefine/petrefpg.html>).