

September 15, 2000

## FACT SHEET

### URBAN AIR TOXICS REPORT TO CONGRESS

#### TODAY'S ACTION

- ! The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is issuing a Report to Congress titled *National Air Toxics Program: The Integrated Urban Strategy*.
- ! The report is the first of two reports, required by the Clean Air Act, on actions EPA is taking to reduce public health risks posed by air toxics emitted in urban areas.
- ! Air toxics, also called hazardous air pollutants, are those pollutants known, or suspected to, cause cancer and other serious health and environmental effects.
- ! Today's report builds on information provided in the *National Air Toxics Program: The Integrated Urban Strategy* (Strategy), which was published in the Federal Register July 19, 1999. The Strategy presented a framework addressing air toxics in urban areas, looking collectively at large and small industrial and commercial operations, as well as mobile sources of pollution.
- ! The Clean Air Act also requires EPA to prepare a report to Congress describing exposures to air toxics in urban areas and actions the Agency is taking to reduce those exposure. Today's report also summarizes existing information on risk assessments which have been conducted in various urban areas and provides a detailed description of 13 research needs to carry out the Strategy's goals.

#### WHAT'S NEW IN THIS REPORT

This report to Congress provides:

- < A more detailed look into the methodologies used for selecting the 33 urban air toxics identified in the Strategy;
- < A summary of recent risk assessments conducted in several urban areas. These assessments provide information on the potential nature and magnitude of exposures, and health risks in urban areas; and

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- < A detailed discussion of 13 research needs to achieve the goals outlined in the Strategy. These 13 needs were identified in the following areas: exposure assessment; health effects; dose-response assessment; risk assessment; risk characterization; and risk management. The research needs chapter also presents a summary of ongoing EPA activities to address those 13 research needs.

## **BACKGROUND**

- ! The Clean Air Act requires EPA to control emissions of 188 toxic air pollutants. Since 1990, EPA has issued standards that will reduce air toxics emissions from "stationary" sources by over one million tons per year -- almost 10 times the reductions that were achieved in the previous 20 years.
- ! These standards affect more than 70 categories of major sources, such as chemical plants, oil refineries, aerospace manufacturers, and steel mills and some smaller operations such as dry cleaners and commercial sterilizers. (A "major" source is one that emits 10 tons or more a year of a single toxic air pollutant, or 25 tons or more a year of a combination of pollutants.)
- ! EPA also has substantially reduced emissions of air toxics, such as lead and benzene, and other pollutants through national standards for fuels, cars and trucks. For example, EPA has issued tighter standards for tailpipe emissions from cars and trucks, for refueling vehicles, and for substantially cleaner gasoline.
- ! Although existing programs have achieved substantial emission reductions, data indicate that significant toxics problems continue to exist in urban areas. Air toxics can pose special threats in urban areas because of the large number of people and the number and variety of emission sources.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

- ! For questions on the report, please contact Mr. Jaime Pagán of EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards at (919) 541-5340.
- ! Anyone with a computer and a modem can download the report from the Internet at: (<http://www.epa.gov/ttn/uatw/urban/urbanpg.html>).
- ! The Unified Air Toxics Website on the Internet contains a wide range of information on the EPA's air toxics programs. The home page address is: (<http://www.epa.gov/ttn/uatw>).