

November 26, 2002

## **PROPOSED AIR TOXICS REGULATION FOR PLYWOOD AND COMPOSITE WOOD PRODUCTS**

### **FACT SHEET**

#### **TODAY'S ACTION**

- ! The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is proposing a rule to reduce emissions of toxic air pollutants from plywood and composite wood products facilities. These facilities manufacture plywood and veneer; particleboard; medium density fiberboard; hardboard; fiberboard; oriented strandboard; and engineered wood products.
- ! Air toxics, also known as hazardous air pollutants, are those pollutants known or suspected to cause cancer and other serious health or developmental problems. Air toxics emitted during the manufacture of plywood and composite wood products include methanol, formaldehyde, acrolein, acetaldehyde, phenol and propionaldehyde. These toxic pollutants are associated with a variety of adverse health effects, including damage to nasal membranes, reproductive disorders, irritation of eyes and throat, dizziness, headache, and nausea. Some of them been classified as probable or possible human carcinogens.
- ! The proposed rule would provide industry with several options for compliance: (1) installation and use of emissions control systems with an efficiency of at least 90 percent; (2) production-based limits that limit air toxics emissions per unit of product produced; and (3) emissions averaging that allows control of emissions from a group of sources collectively. EPA anticipates most facilities will comply with the proposed rule by using three types of equipment: regenerative thermal oxidizers; catalytic thermal oxidizers; or biofilters when complying with option number one or three.
- ! EPA will take public comment on the proposed rule for 60 days after it is published in the *Federal Register*.
- ! EPA is also seeking public comment on three options that could reduce the economic burden associated with this proposed rule. The options would focus emission control requirements on those facilities with air toxics emissions that pose the greatest health risks. Under each of these options, a facility could be exempt from additional emission control requirements if it can demonstrate that its air toxic emissions pose risks below certain health effects thresholds.
- ! EPA will hold a public hearing if requested.

## **BENEFITS AND COST**

- ! The proposed rule will reduce emissions of acetaldehyde, acrolein, formaldehyde, methanol, phenol, propionaldehyde and other toxic air pollutants by 11,000 tons per year, or a 42 percent reduction from 1997 levels.
- ! The proposed rule also would reduce the emissions of volatile organic compounds by 27,000 tons per year, a 46 percent reduction from 1997 levels. Volatile organic compounds contribute to the formation of ground-level ozone, or smog.
- ! EPA estimates the total annual cost to comply with the proposed rule will be about \$142 million. That includes average annual operating and maintenance costs for industry's recordkeeping and reporting, which is estimated to be about \$8 million.

## **EMISSION FACTORS**

- ! EPA plans to add new emission factors and update existing emission factors for facilities and regulatory agencies to use in implementing this rule when it becomes final. Emission factors are a measure of pounds of air toxics emitted from a process unit. Emission factors are expressed in pounds per unit of production, such as pounds per thousand square feet of ½-inch thick board.
- ! Emission factors for plywood and composite wood products are available in Chapter 10 of EPA's "Compilation of Air Pollutant Emission Factors, also known as AP-42. The chapter contains specific sections for oriented strandboard, particleboard, medium density fiberboard, plywood, hardboard/fiberboard, and engineered wood products. EPA recently updated these sections to include emissions data gathered for the Plywood and Composite Wood Products project. The table of contents for AP42, Chapter 10, is available on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/chief/ap42/ch10/>. EPA will post new and revised AP-42 sections as they become available.

## **BACKGROUND**

- ! The Clean Air Act requires EPA to identify categories of industrial facilities, or source categories, that emit one or more listed 188 toxic air pollutants.

- ! For major sources within each source category, the Act requires EPA to develop standards that restrict emissions to levels consistent with the lowest-emitting (also called best-performing) plants.
- ! Major sources are those that emit 10 tons per year or more of a single air toxic or 25 tons per year or more of a combination of air toxics. EPA estimates that about 220 plywood and composite wood products facilities are major sources.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

- ! To download the proposed rule from EPA's page on the Worldwide Web, go to <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg>. For additional information, contact Mary Tom Kissell of the EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards at (919) 541-4516 or by e-mail at [kissell.mary@epa.gov](mailto:kissell.mary@epa.gov), or Greg Nizich at (919) 541-3078 or by e-mail at [nizich.greg@epa.gov](mailto:nizich.greg@epa.gov).
- ! To comment on the proposed rule, submit written comments to the Air and Radiation Docket and Information Center (6102T), Attention Docket Number A-98-44, Room B108, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1301 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20460. Submit electronic mail comments in ASCII file or WordPerfect® version 5.1, 6.1, Corel 8 or 9, to [a-and-r-docket@epa.gov](mailto:a-and-r-docket@epa.gov). All comments and data submitted in electronic form must note the docket number: A-98-44.
- ! EPA's Office of Air and Radiation home page 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 address is: <http://www.epa.gov/oar/>.