FACT SHEET

FINAL AIR TOXICS RULE FOR POLYETHYLENE TEREPHTHALATE POLYMER AND STYRENE-BASED THERMOPLASTIC POLYMERS PRODUCTION

TODAY'S ACTION...

Under authority of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is issuing a regulation to reduce emissions of air toxics from the manufacture of polyethylene terephthalate polymers and certain styrene-based thermoplastics.

These polymers are used to produce such products as polyester fibers, soft drink bottles, automotive plastic parts, appliance parts, packing materials, and plastic toys.

EPA worked in partnership with major stakeholders, including industry representatives, in developing the final rule.

WHAT ARE THE HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS?

EPA's final rule will reduce emissions of a number of air toxics, including styrene, butadiene, and methanol. Air toxics are those pollutants that are known or suspected of causing cancer or other serious health effects.

EPA's final rule will reduce emissions of air toxics from existing sources by approximately 3,880 tons annually, representing a 20 percent reduction from current levels. Many facilities subject to EPA's final rule have already installed stringent air pollution controls.

BACKGROUND

Under the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, EPA is required to regulate emissions of 189 listed toxic air pollutants. On July 16, 1992, EPA published a list of 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 controls, known as maximum achievable control technology (MACT).

EPA's published list of industry groups (known as "source categories") to be regulated includes major sources that manufacture polyethylene terephthalate polymers and certain styrene-based thermoplastics.

WHO MUST COMPLY WITH THE REGULATION?

There are about 66 facilities nationwide that manufacture polyethylene terephthalate polymers and certain styrene-based thermoplastics that will be affected by the final rule.

EPA's regulation covers seven of the twenty-seven polymers and resins source categories that may be regulated under the air toxics provision of the Clean Air Act.

Today's action also adds another polymers and resins source category (nitrile resins) to the list of source categories regulated under the Clean Air Act's air toxics program. Nitrile resin manufacturing facilities will be subject to this final regulation.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN COMPONENTS OF EPA'S FINAL RULE?

EPA's final rule will set a limit for the following emissions points at affected sources or facilities: storage vessels, process vents (continuous and batch), equipment leaks, and wastewater operations. For some existing and new sources or facilities, emission limits will also be set for process contact cooling towers.

The monitoring, recordkeeping and reporting requirements are outlined in the final rule.

HOW MUCH WILL THE RULE COST?

The estimated capital costs for EPA's final rule will be about $11 million for existing sources or facilities and about $6.5 million for new sources or facilities.

The estimated annual costs will be about $3.7 million for existing sources or facilities. Because of cost-saving pollution prevention measures required for new sources or facilities, EPA estimates that the final rule will result in annual cost savings of about $5 million for new facilities.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION...

About two weeks after signature the rule should be available on the TTN. Anyone with a computer and a modem will be able to download the rule from the Clean Air Act Amendments bulletin board (under "Recently Signed Rules") on EPA's Technology Transfer Network (TTN) by calling (919) 541-5742. For further information about how to access the bulletin board, call (919) 541-5384. For further information about the rule, contact Robert Rosensteel of EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards at (919) 541-5608.