FINAL RULE TO REDUCE TOXIC AIR POLLUTANTS FROM SURFACE COATING OF PLASTIC PARTS AND PRODUCTS

FACT SHEET

ACTION

- On August 29, 2003, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a final rule to reduce toxic air pollutant emissions from plastic parts and products surface coating operations. Toxic air pollutants, also called air toxics, are those pollutants known or suspected to cause cancer or other serious health and environmental effects.

- The final rule applies to new and existing facilities that are a "major source" of air toxics or are part of a facility that is a "major source" of air toxics.. A "major source" emits 10 tons per year or more of a single toxic air pollutant listed in the Clean Air Act or 25 tons per year or more of a combination of those pollutants.

- The surface coating of plastic parts and products is a process of applying a protective, decorative, or functional coating to a plastic substrate. Coating materials include, but are not limited to, paints, stains, sealers, topcoats, basecoats, primers, inks, and adhesives.

- EPA estimates that there are approximately 202 existing major sources nationwide that will be affected by this rule. Another six new major sources are expected to be constructed within the 5-year period following publication of the final rule, and they will also be affected by the rule.

- The final rule will require existing facilities that are subject to the rule to limit air toxic emissions. These facilities will have up to 3 years from the date of publication of the final rule to comply with its requirements.

- For both new and existing sources, the emission limits can be met by pollution prevention techniques.

BENEFITS AND COST

- The final rule will reduce total emissions of air toxics by approximately 7,560 tons per year. This represents an 80 percent reduction from the estimated 1997 baseline.

- Many of these air toxics are also volatile organic compounds. These compounds contribute significantly to the formation of ground-level ozone, or smog, which has been shown to cause adverse effects on human health and can damage forests and crops.

- EPA estimates that the total nationwide annualized cost would be about $10.9 million per year.

- After assessing the impact of the final rule on small businesses, EPA determined that it will not significantly impact a substantial number of small businesses.

BACKGROUND

- Under the Clean Air Act, EPA is required to regulate emissions of 188 listed toxic air pollutants. The Act also requires EPA to identify industrial or source categories that emit one or more of these pollutants. The Act further requires EPA to develop emissions standards requiring stringent air pollution reduction measures for each of the identified source categories.

- EPA's published list of industry groups to be regulated includes surface coating of plastic parts and products.

- Plastic parts and products surface coating operations emit a number of toxic air pollutants including toluene, methyl ethyl ketone, glycol ethers including ethylene glycol monobutyl ether, xylenes, and methyl isobutyl ketone. Health effects associated with these pollutants include irritation of the lung, skin, and mucous membranes; effects on the central nervous system; and damage to the liver.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- To download the standard from EPA's website on the Internet, go to "Recent Actions" at the following address: http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/ramain.html.

- For general information about the standards, contact Ms. Kim Teal of EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards, Emission Standards Division, Coatings and Consumer Products Group at (919) 541-5580, or by electronic mail at: teal.kim@epa.gov. Or visit the plastic parts and products (surface coating) website at: http://www.epa.gov/ttn/atw/plastic/plasticpg.html.

- The EPA's Office of Air and Radiation (OAR) homepage on the Internet contains a wide range of information on the air toxics program and many other air pollution programs and issues. The OAR's home page address is: http://www.epa.gov/oar/.

- This source category was assigned electronic docket number OAR-2002-0074.