

## **Ethylene Oxide: Technical Reviews and Outreach to Potentially Affected Communities Status Report for Midwest Sterilization Corporation – Laredo, TX**

As EPA pursues its mission to protect public health and the environment, addressing ethylene oxide (EtO) remains a major priority for the Agency. EPA's National Air Toxics Assessment (NATA), released in August 2018, identified a number of areas (census tracts) with potentially elevated risk from continuous exposure, over 70 years, to EtO in the outdoor air. NATA estimated these risks based on EtO emissions from 2014, which were the most recently available at the time.

NATA is a screening-level analysis that is intended to identify pollutants or areas for closer examination. Because of this, additional work is needed to better understand emissions in areas that NATA identified as potentially having elevated risk. EPA has been supporting its state air agency partners as they conduct that work and identify opportunities for reducing EtO emissions from individual facilities, while the Agency reviews its national regulations for industrial facilities that emit EtO. Actual risks today may be higher or lower than NATA estimated due to several factors, including updated or more refined facility emissions information, or recent facility changes such as the installation of pollution controls.

The information below describes the technical analyses conducted for Midwest Sterilization Corporation in Laredo, TX as part of the follow-up work conducted since NATA was issued in August 2018. It also summarizes outreach to nearby communities about the NATA results. EPA is providing this information, in part, in response to the EPA Office of Inspector General's March 31, 2020, Management Alert which called on EPA to provide information to the 25 communities that NATA identified as potentially having the highest risk from EtO emissions.

Note: For commercial sterilizers, including Midwest Sterilization EPA is compiling more current and complete emissions data to generate new risk estimates for ethylene oxide sterilizers across the country as part of its work to develop a proposed revision for the National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants for EtO sterilization facilities. EPA will share this information, which will include refined risk estimates at the census block level, with the public as part of its upcoming proposed rule.

### **Technical reviews conducted:**

- On October 25, 2020, EPA Region 6 sent a letter to request assistance from the State of Texas in gathering the most current information on the specific ethylene oxide emitting facilities, including Midwest Sterilization Corporation, and to assist with the development of technical assessments. The letters outline the Region's proposed technical approach/steps to complete these assessments, including the information needed from our state regulatory partners.
- Recent state permit amendments have lowered the allowable ethylene oxide emissions at this facility. Additional details will be provided in future updates, after EPA Region 6

consults with the State of Texas to obtain the most up to date information on this facility.

- Midwest Sterilization Corporation facility in Laredo, TX, is subject to 40 CFR Part 63 Subpart O. This regulation is the National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP) for ethylene oxide commercial sterilization and fumigation operations. EPA is in the process of evaluating this existing regulation for potential changes. On December 5, 2019, EPA issued an advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPRM) to solicit information from the public regarding a potential future rulemaking to revise the standards for commercial ethylene oxide sterilization and fumigation facilities. EPA anticipates issuing a proposed rule in 2021.
- Additional information on Midwest Sterilization Corporation will be provided on this website in future updates.

**Outreach conducted:**

EPA Region 6 is currently focused on developing additional, more refined assessments. EPA Region 6 will then discuss with the state of Texas how to share information with nearby communities. Additional information on Midwest Sterilization Corporation will be provided on this website in future updates.