

09-20-01

FACT SHEET

Performance Standards for Industrial-Commercial-Institutional Steam Generating Units - Direct Final Amendment and Proposed Amendment

TODAY'S ACTION

- ! The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is amending certain provisions in the standards of performance for industrial-commercial-institutional steam generating units. These provisions permit owners and operators of new steam generating units located at chemical manufacturing plants and petroleum refineries burning high-nitrogen byproduct/wastes to petition the Administrator for a site specific nitrogen oxides emission limit.
- ! Today's amendment extends the provisions to owners and operators of new steam generating units located at pulp and paper mills.
- ! EPA is publishing this direct final rule without prior proposal because the agency views the action as a noncontroversial amendment and does not anticipate adverse comments. However, if EPA receives significant adverse comments on the amendments to either of the standards, we will withdraw the notice and carefully evaluate the comments before taking any final action.

BACKGROUND

- ! Under the Clean Air Act, EPA is required to set "new source performance standards" to ensure that emissions from newly built or reconstructed facilities meet strict limits. These limits are generally more stringent than emission limits set for existing facilities already in operation.
- ! EPA adopted new source performance standards for industrial-commercial-institutional steam generating units in November 1986.
- ! A site specific nitrogen oxides emission limit is very unusual and applies to a specific boiler at an industrial site. It supercedes the nitrogen oxides limits set in any other new source performance standard that may apply.
- ! On April 15, 1998, EPA promulgated national regulations to limit air emissions of toxic air pollutants from pulp and paper mills. Toxic air pollutants are those pollutants known or suspected to cause cancer and other serious human health problems. These standards require control of toxic waste gases from certain pulp vents. One alternative to control these waste gases is to co-fire them in a steam generating unit.

- ! Recently, EPA learned that the most reasonable alternative at one pulp and paper mill subject to the April 1998 regulation is to co-fire these toxic waste gases in a steam generating unit subject to the standards of performance for industrial-commercial-institutional steam generating units. The toxic waste gases, however, contain nitrogen compounds and, as a result, it is unlikely the steam generating unit could comply with the emission limit for oxides of nitrogen emissions.
- ! If this steam generating unit were located at a chemical plant or a petroleum refinery, the owners and operators could petition the EPA Administrator for a site specific nitrogen oxide emission limit. These provisions to petition the Administrator were included for chemical plants or petroleum refineries, only because these were the only two industries which demonstrated a need for this type of flexibility at the time the standards were developed.

EFFECT OF TODAY'S AMENDMENT

- ! This amendment will affect owners and operators of pulp and paper mills who comply with EPA's regulations limiting air toxics from various operations within the mill by burning gaseous emissions in a boiler that is required to comply with the 1986 performance standards for industrial-commercial-institutional steam generating units.

BENEFITS AND COST

- ! EPA is taking this action to provide flexibility to the pulp and paper mill industry. The Agency does not expect this action to affect the environmental benefits or costs of the original rulemaking.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- ! To download the standards from EPA's web site under "Recent Actions," go to the following address: <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg>.
- ! For further information, contact Fred Porter at EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards at 919-541-5251.