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## **FACT SHEET**

### **PROPOSED AIR TOXICS REGULATION FOR THE LEATHER FINISHING INDUSTRY**

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

- ! The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today is proposing a regulation to reduce emissions of air toxics from facilities involved in the finishing of leather.
- ! Air toxics, also called hazardous air pollutants, are those pollutants known or suspected to cause cancer or other serious health problems. Air toxics are released during the application of coatings to a leather substrate.
- ! Finished leather is used in products such as automobiles, furniture, shoes, garments, and handbags.
- ! Today's proposal covers all processes used in the finishing of leather substrate. This includes the application, drying, coatings, storage and mixing of coatings, as well as any cleanup of the equipment.
- ! The proposed rule will apply only to those leather finishing facilities considered "major" sources of air toxics. A major source emits 10 or more tons a year of a single air toxic, or 25 tons a year a combination of toxics.
- ! The rule will affect approximately 16 leather finishing facilities, plus any similar facilities built in the future.
- ! EPA developed today's proposal in close partnership with major stakeholders, including industry representatives and state and local agencies.

#### **BENEFITS AND COST**

- ! The proposed regulation would reduce emissions of glycol ethers, toluene, xylene and other air toxics from leather finishing facilities. Exposure to these air toxics can cause chronic health disorders, such as central nervous and reproductive systems disorders, and acute health disorders, such as narcosis and irritation of eyes, throat and mucous membranes.
- ! Today's proposal would reduce air toxic emissions from leather finishing facilities by about 375 tons annually, a 50 percent reduction from 1997 levels. In addition, today's proposal would reduce emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) by 750 tons from current levels. VOCs are a constituent of ground-level ozone (smog) which can aggravate a number of respiratory

diseases, including asthma.

- ! The total annual cost of the proposed rule, when fully implemented in 2003, is estimated to be \$500,000 for the entire industry.
- ! The cost reflects the cost of switching to coatings with lower air toxic contents, and the cost of monitoring, recordkeeping and reporting.

## **BACKGROUND**

- ! The Clean Air Act of 1990 requires EPA to identify source categories that emit one or more listed 188 air toxics.
- ! For major sources within each source category, the law 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 or more a year of a single air toxic or 25 tons or more a year of a combination of toxics.

## **WHAT THE RULE REQUIRES**

### General

- ! The proposed regulation contains emission standards that limit the amount of air toxics regulated leather finishing facilities may emit.
- ! The emission standards are more stringent for new facilities than they are for existing facilities.
- ! Emission testing and monitoring will be required to demonstrate compliance with the standard.

### Emission Standards

- ! The proposed standards consist of emission limits in the form of air toxic emissions allowed per square foot of leather finished. There are different emission limits for the different types of leather produced, such as automobile leather, furniture leather, waterproof leather and non-waterproof leather.
- ! EPA anticipates that all sources will comply with the emissions limits by switching to coatings containing lower levels of air toxics. Although no facilities currently use add-on control devices, the proposal does provide the option for a facility to comply by using an add-on control device.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

- ! To download the proposed rule from EPA's home page on the World Wide Web, go to <http://www.epa.gov/ttncaaa1/t3pfpr.html> .
- ! EPA will take public comment on this proposal for 60 days after it is published in the Federal Register. To comment, please submit your written comments to: Air and Radiation Docket and Information Center, Attention Docket Number A-99-38, Room M-1500, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20460.
- ! For more information about the proposal, contact William Schrock of EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards at (919) 541-5032.
- ! EPA's Office of Air and Radiation home page on the Internet contains a wide range of information on the air toxics program and many other air pollution programs and issues. The address is: <http://www.epa.gov/oar>.