

July 3, 2002

FACT SHEET

FINAL RULE TO REDUCE TOXIC AIR EMISSIONS FROM POLYVINYL CHLORIDE AND COPOLYMERS PRODUCTION FACILITIES

TODAY'S ACTION

- ! The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is promulgating national standards to limit toxic air emissions from facilities that manufacture polyvinyl chloride (PVC). These plants manufacture a variety of PVC raw and end products and are known as PVC and copolymers production plants.
- ! Toxic air pollutants, also called air toxics, are those pollutants known or suspected to cause cancer or other serious human health problems. Air toxics emitted from polyvinyl chloride and copolymers production facilities include vinyl chloride, vinyl acetate and vinylidene chloride.
- ! EPA proposed this rule in December 2000. The Agency has worked with industry representatives and state and local agencies to develop this final rule.

BACKGROUND

- ! The Clean Air Act requires EPA to regulate emission of 188 listed toxic air pollutants. For major sources (those that emit 10 tons per year or more of a single air toxic or 25 tons per year or more of a combination of air toxics), the law requires EPA to develop rules that require facilities to meet emissions standards reflecting the highest level of emissions control possible with current technology. Such standards are known as “maximum achievable control technology,” or MACT.
- ! In 1976, EPA promulgated a rule, known as the vinyl chloride rule, to reduce toxic air emissions during the production of vinyl chloride a primary compound used in the production of PVC. Between 1986 and 1996, while production capacity increased, reported emissions dropped 400 tons per year through improved plant operations encouraged by the vinyl chloride rule.
- ! Vinyl chloride is associated with liver cancer in humans. Acute, short-term exposure to vinyl chloride can cause dizziness, drowsiness and headaches.

FINAL RULE REQUIREMENTS

- ! Today's final rule contains the existing requirements for other industrial sources to reduce vinyl chloride. In addition, it requires new sources to apply a more comprehensive leak detection and repair program.
- ! The final standards regulate air toxic emissions from process vents, reactor openings, storage and transfer operations, equipment leaks, waste, and will continue to reduce residual air toxics in the PVC products.
- ! Together with the 1976 rule to reduce vinyl chloride emissions, today's action will reduce emissions of vinyl chloride, and other air toxics including vinyl acetate and vinylidene chloride
- ! The final rule also requires the same reductions for volatile organic compounds (VOC) as the 1976 vinyl chloride rule. VOC contribute to the formation of ground-level ozone (smog), which can aggravate asthma and other respiratory conditions, and can damage crops and other plants.
- ! The rule will affect about 28 existing facilities that are major sources of air toxics, plus any similar facilities built in the future.
- ! There are no costs associated with today's final rule.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- ! For more information about today's action, contact Warren Johnson of EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards at (919) 541-5124. The final rule is available on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.epa.gov/ttncaaa1/t3pfpr.html>.
- ! 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>.