

12-18-98

FACT SHEET

AMENDMENTS TO THE FINAL AIR TOXICS STANDARD FOR WOOD FURNITURE MANUFACTURING OPERATIONS

TODAY'S ACTION...

- ◆ The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is amending its final rule to regulate hazardous air pollutant emissions from wood furniture manufacturing operations. The original rule was issued on December 7, 1995. Hazardous air pollutants, also known as air toxics, are pollutants which are known or suspected to cause cancer or other serious health effects, such as birth defects or reproductive effects.
- ◆ These amendments would clarify that the requirements related to organic solvents used in the wood furniture manufacturing process are limited to those organic solvents that emit hazardous air pollutants, and would clarify requirements relating to the tracking system within the facility for the hazardous air pollutants of potential concern (i.e., the formulation assessment plan).
- ◆ EPA expects these amendments to be of interest to owners and operators subject to this rule and to State and local air pollution regulatory agencies with wood furniture manufacturing operations in their jurisdictions.

SUMMARY OF THE REVISIONS

- ◆ The amendments provide for a revised definition of “organic hazardous air pollutants” to reflect the Agency’s intent to regulate only those organic solvents that emit hazardous air pollutants.
- ◆ The amendments would also clarify which chemicals industry needs to report in the formulation assessment plan and would raise the cut-off levels (i.e., de minimus levels) that trigger industry reporting and recordkeeping requirements within the formulation assessment plan.
- ◆ The amendments do not alter the applicability, stringency or schedule of the rule.

BACKGROUND

- ◆ Under the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, EPA is required to regulate emissions of air toxics. Air toxics are those pollutants known or suspected to cause cancer or other serious health effects (e.g., reproductive effects and birth defects).

- ◆ On July 16, 1992, EPA published a list of industry groups (known as source categories) that emit one or more of these air toxics. For listed categories of "major" sources (those that emit 10 tons/year or more of a listed pollutant or 25 tons/year or more of a combination of pollutants), the Clean Air Act requires EPA to develop standards that require the application of stringent air pollution reduction measures known as maximum achievable control technology (MACT).
- ◆ In its July 16, 1992 published list of industry groups to be regulated, EPA identified wood furniture manufacturing operations as a major source of air toxics.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF EPA'S FINAL RULE

- ◆ EPA's December 1995 final rule will reduce emissions of air toxics, such as toluene, xylene, methanol, and formaldehyde by approximately 33,000 tons annually, representing a 60 percent reduction from current levels.
- ◆ Exposure to these and other air toxics associated with wood furniture manufacturing can cause adverse health effects, including eye, nose, throat, and skin irritation; damage to the heart, liver, and kidneys; and reproductive effects.
- ◆ Today's amendments do not change the emission reductions of the December 1995 final rule.

HOW DO THE AMENDMENTS REDUCE THE REGULATORY BURDEN ON INDUSTRY?

- ◆ The amendments reduce the regulatory burden on industry by clarifying that the scope of requirements relating to organic solvents are limited to those organic solvents that are hazardous air pollutants, and by raising the cut-off levels (i.e., de minimum levels) that trigger reporting and recordkeeping requirements within the formulation assessment plan.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

- ◆ Interested parties can download the amendments from EPA's web site on the Internet under recent actions at the following address: <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg>. For further information about the amendment or the rule itself, contact Paul Almodóvar at (919) 541-0283 of the EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards.
- ◆ EPA's Office of Air and Radiation's homepage on the Internet contains a wide range of information on the air toxics program, as well as many other air pollution programs and issues. The Office of Air and Radiation's home page address is: <http://www.epa.gov/oar/>.