Fact Sheet

AUGUST 14, 2000

PROPOSED AIR TOXICS RULE FOR PAPER AND OTHER WEB COATING

TODAY'S ACTION

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is proposing a rule to reduce air toxic emissions from paper and other web coating facilities. Air toxics, also known as hazardous air pollutants, are those pollutants known or suspected to cause cancer or other serious health and environmental problems.

- Paper and other web coating refers to the process of applying a coating to one or both sides of a continuous web substrate, such as a roll of paper, plastic, film or foil. The coatings are applied for decorative and/or functional purposes.
- Paper and web coating is used in the manufacture of produce products such as pressure-sensitive tapes and labels, photographic film, coated vinyl, wall coverings, sandpaper and other abrasives, paperboard boxes, vinyl flooring, industrial and decorative laminates, carbon and carbonless paper, circuit boards and business forms.

A variety of air toxics are emitted during the coating process, mostly during the coating application and curing operations. Those air toxics include: toluene; methanol; methyl ethyl ketone; xylenes; and phenol.

The rule proposed today would set emissions limits for to all facilities that operate web coating lines and are at major sources of air toxics. A major source is one that has the potential to emit 10 or more tons a year of a single air toxic, or 25 tons or more a year of a combination of toxics. EPA estimates there are about 200 major sources that would be affected by the proposed rule.

- EPA developed this rule with the involvement of industry representatives, state regulatory agencies, and other EPA offices. After analyzing public comments received on this proposal, the EPA expects to issue the final rule by August 2001.

COSTS/BENEFITS

The proposed rule is expected to reduce air toxic emissions from paper and other web coating operations by approximately 32,000 tons a year, about an 80 percent reduction over estimated 1996 levels.

- Among the air toxics reduced are toluene; methanol; methyl ethyl ketone; xylenes; and phenol. These pollutants can cause reversible or irreversible health problems, including eye, nose, throat and skin irritation; and blood cell, heart, liver and kidney damage.

- Many of these air toxics also are volatile organic compounds (VOCs). VOCs are a constituent of ground-level ozone (smog). Ground-level ozone can cause respiratory irritation and lung inflammation and can aggravate asthma.

EPA estimates the total capital cost of controlling air toxic emissions from paper and web coating operations at $198 million for existing major sources, and $12 million for new major sources. The Agency estimates the total annual cost for complying with the rule at $63 million for existing major sources and $5 million for new major sources nationwide.

WHAT THE RULE WOULD REQUIRE

Facilities subject to the rule would be required to meet specific emission limits. The following emission limits would apply to "coating lines," where coating is applied to web substrates and subsequently dried. Existing sources would have to reduce air toxic emissions by 95 percent; new sources, by 98 percent.

- The proposed emission limits for offer industry flexibility by providing cost-effective options for emission control. Sources may upgrade or install new capture-and-control systems to reduce air toxics, switch to coating materials with a lower air toxic content, or use a combination of controls and coating reformulation.

BACKGROUND

Under the Clean Air Act, EPA is required to regulate sources of 188 listed toxic air pollutants. 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, the law requires the EPA to develop standards that require the application of stringent air pollution reduction measures known as maximum achievable control technology, or MACT. "Paper and Other Web Coating" was included as a source category listed for regulation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO COMMENT

To download the rule from the EPA's website on the Internet, go to "Recent Actions" at the following address: http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/rules.html.

For general questions about the proposal, contact Mr. Paul Almodóvar of the EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards at (919) 541-0283 (or by electronic mail at: almodovar.paul@epa.gov).

To comment on the proposed rule, send your comments (in duplicate if possible) to: Air and Radiation Docket and Information Center (6102), Attention Docket Number A-99-09, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20460. EPA requests a separate copy also be sent to Mr. Paul Almodóvar, Coatings and Consumer Products Group, Emission Standards Division (MD-13), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina 27711; facsimile number (919) 541-5689); electronic mail address:

almodovar.paul @epa.gov.

Commenters wishing to submit proprietary information must clearly distinguish such information from other comments and clearly label it as **confidential business information**. Send submissions containing such information directly to the following address, and not to the public docket, to ensure that proprietary information is not inadvertently placed in the docket: Paul Almodóvar, c/o Document Control Officer (Room 740B), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 411 W. Chapel Hill Street, Durham, NC 27701.