

6/18/96

## FACT SHEET

### PROPOSED AIR REGULATIONS FOR ARCHITECTURAL COATINGS

#### INTRODUCTION...

- ◆ The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is today proposing regulations to control volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions from architectural coatings. VOCs contribute significantly to the formation of ground-level ozone (smog).
- ◆ Architectural coatings are commonly used by consumers and contractors, and include products such as exterior and interior paints, industrial maintenance coatings, wood and roof coatings, primers, traffic paints, and specialty coatings.

#### WHY IS EPA REGULATING ARCHITECTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL MAINTENANCE COATINGS?

- ◆ In the past, the Clean Air Act has focused on reducing VOC emissions from mobile sources (cars and trucks) and stationary sources, such as power plants and factories. Requiring additional controls on these sources may be very costly for the emissions reductions achieved. Regulating consumer and commercial products may prove to be a more cost-effective way of substantially reducing VOC emissions nationwide. Consumer and commercial products, such as surface coatings, personal care products, and household cleaning products, contribute about 6 million tons (approximately 30 percent) annually of VOC emissions nationwide.
- ◆ Under the Clean Air Act, EPA was required to 1) study emissions of VOCs from consumer and commercial products; 2) list those categories of products that account for at least 80 percent of the total VOC emissions from consumer and commercial products in areas of the country that fail to meet the national ambient air quality standards set for ground-level ozone; and 3) divide the list into four groups, and regulate one group every two years using best available controls, as defined by the Clean Air Act.
- ◆ In March 1995, EPA issued a report to Congress, Study of Volatile Organic Compound Emissions from Consumer and Commercial Products, which evaluated the contribution of VOC emissions from consumer and commercial products on ground-level ozone levels, and established criteria and a schedule for regulating these products under the Clean Air Act. Architectural coatings are in the first group of products to be regulated no later than March 1997.
- ◆ EPA has already proposed two regulations for consumer and commercial products. EPA proposed a regulation for 24 types of consumer and commercial products (including household cleaning products, personal care products, etc.) in March 1996. EPA also proposed a regulation for automobile refinish coatings in April 1996.

## **WHAT ARE THE HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS?**

- ◆ EPA's proposed regulation would reduce emissions of VOCs by 106,000 tons per year, representing a 20 percent reduction from 1990 levels. VOCs are the main component in forming ground-level ozone. Exposure to ground-level ozone can damage lung tissue and cause serious respiratory illness.
- ◆ The requirements outlined in the proposed rule are based on product reformulation, a pollution prevention method.

## **WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSED REGULATION REQUIRE?**

- ◆ EPA's proposed rule would set a VOC content level for each of the 55 categories of architectural coatings.

## **HOW WOULD THE PROPOSED RULE PROVIDE FLEXIBILITY TO INDUSTRY?**

- ◆ EPA has held hundreds of discussions with industry, environmental groups, and State and local agencies over the past 4 years to develop a rule to reduce emissions from architectural and industrial maintenance coatings. Although EPA and the major stakeholders were unable to reach a negotiated conclusion, the information obtained from these discussions was useful in developing the proposed rule.
- ◆ EPA's proposed rule is expected to provide companies with several compliance options for meeting their regulatory requirements. One market-based option on which EPA is taking comment would enable a company to continue manufacturing higher VOC content paint by paying an "exceedance fee" on the VOC in excess of the VOC level in the regulation. EPA is also taking comment on a low volume exemption which would establish a sales volume cut-off under which specialty, niche products could be exempted from VOC requirements. In addition, a variance provision would provide a mechanism for a manufacturer or importer to apply for extended compliance time if economic hardship would result from timely compliance.
- ◆ Another compliance option would allow manufacturers of architectural coatings to calculate a higher allowable VOC content to account for the amount of recycled paint incorporated into their products.
- ◆ EPA is requesting public comment on many components of the proposed rule and will carefully consider all comments in developing the final regulation.

## **WHO WOULD BE AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSED RULE?**

- ◆ EPA's proposed rule would apply to architectural coatings manufactured and imported for sale or distribution in the United States after April 1, 1997. The regulation would affect approximately 500 architectural coating manufacturers and importers nationwide.

EPA's proposed rule would not affect the following: architectural coatings that are manufactured exclusively for sale or use outside the United States; architectural coatings manufactured or imported prior to April 1, 1997; architectural coatings that are sold in nonrefillable aerosol containers; architectural coatings that are collected and redistributed at community-based paint exchanges; and architectural coatings sold in containers with a volume of one liter or less.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION...**

- ◆ Anyone with a computer and a modem can download the proposed rule from the Clean Air Act Amendments bulletin board (look under "Recently Signed Rules") of EPA's electronic Technology Transfer Network (TTN) by calling (919) 541-5742. For further information about how to access the board, call (919) 541-5384. For further information about the proposed rule, contact Ellen Ducey at EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards at (919) 541-5408.