

FACT SHEET

FINAL RULE TO EXCLUDE T-BUTYL ACETATE (TBAC) FROM CONTROL AS A VOLATILE ORGANIC COMPOUND (VOC)

TODAY'S ACTION...

- ◆ On November 18, 2004, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a final rule stating that t-butyl acetate (TBAC) should no longer be controlled as a volatile organic compound (VOC) under the Clean Air Act.
- ◆ VOCs contribute significantly to the formation of ground-level ozone (smog). Exposure to ground-level ozone can cause serious respiratory illness.
- ◆ Today's action allows, but does not require, states to remove regulatory controls on TBAC. These regulatory controls are part of state implementation plans that are designed to help states meet the national air quality standards for ground-level ozone.
- ◆ Record-keeping, reporting and inventory requirements for TBAC have not been changed by this action.

WHY IS EPA EXCLUDING TBAC AS VOC?

- ◆ EPA is excluding TBAC as a VOC because scientific evidence shows it is "negligibly reactive," meaning it contributes little to the formation of smog. Since EPA does not believe that TBAC contributes to the smog problem, today's exclusion of the compound as a VOC will help states focus on controlling emissions of those pollutants that are demonstrated to be ozone precursors. Reducing emissions of those VOCs may assist the states in meeting the national ambient air quality standard for ground-level ozone.
- ◆ Under the Clean Air Act, EPA can take action to exclude a compound as a VOC as a result of public petitions and new scientific data that demonstrate its negligible effect on the formation of smog.
- ◆ Since 1977, EPA has removed 48 specific compounds or classes of compounds from the list of VOCs that contribute to smog formation. EPA's policy on VOCs was codified on February 3, 1992 in a revised regulation, "Requirements for Preparation, Adoption, and Submittal of State Implementation Plans."
- ◆ EPA carefully reviewed all submitted scientific data and considered all public comments

before making the final decision to exclude TBAC from regulation as a VOC. The proposal for this action provided for a public comment period which lasted for 60 days from the date of publication of the proposal notice.

- ◆ Recordkeeping, reporting and inventorying requirements for TBAC have not been changed by this action. EPA believes that it is desirable to track emissions of TBAC because the compound's reactivity is near that of ethane, our current benchmark for exemptions, and there is a potential for widespread use of TBAC. Also, it is important to track emissions of TBAC as part of the EPA's continuing effort to assess long-term health effects.

HOW DOES TODAY'S ACTION IMPACT THE ENVIRONMENT?

- ◆ TBAC is negligibly reactive, its use is not expected to have any significant impact on the formation of ground level ozone or smog. TBAC has a number of desirable chemical properties that make it a good substitute for several popular solvents that are more reactive and significantly contribute to the formation of ground-level ozone or smog. A number of manufacturers of paints, inks, and adhesives have indicated that if TBAC were excluded from regulation as a VOC, they would use it in their products in place of other more reactive compounds. Such substitutions may help decrease the formation of ground-level ozone or smog.
- ◆ TBAC shows no unusual acute toxic effects and is not considered by EPA to be a hazardous air pollutant. EPA maintains a list of hazardous air pollutants that are known or suspected of causing cancer or other serious health effects. While TBAC is not on this list, TBAC is a potential substitute for other solvents that are toxic and listed as hazardous air pollutants.
- ◆ Comments received on the Agency's proposal to exempt TBAC from the definition of VOC raised concerns about the chronic toxicity of TBAC. To address these concerns, Lyondell Chemical, a manufacturer of TBAC, is proactively assessing the potential for health risks that may result from long-term exposure to TBAC. Lyondell and the EPA are working cooperatively through a voluntary agreement to assure that toxicity studies conducted by Lyondell adequately addresses potential public health concerns. While the EPA does not expect that the presence of TBAC in the ambient air to negatively impact human health or the environment, the EPA will continue to consider any necessary regulatory action based on new toxicity information as it becomes available.
- ◆ Since TBAC contains no chlorine or bromine, it does not deplete stratospheric ozone.

HOW DOES TODAY'S ACTION PROVIDE FLEXIBILITY AND REGULATORY RELIEF TO INDUSTRY?

- ◆ By excluding TBAC as a VOC, today's action will make it easier and less expensive for industry to use this compound as a solvent in a variety of products including paints, inks and adhesives. TBAC may be used as a substitute for other solvents which are more harmful to the environment.

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

- ◆ Interested parties can download the rule 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 rule, contact Bill Johnson at EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards at (919) 541-5245.
- ◆ EPA's Office of Air and Radiation's home page on the Internet contains a wide range of information on the air pollution programs including air toxics issues. The Office of Air and Radiation's home page address is: *http://www.epa.gov/oar/*.