

FACT SHEET

PROPOSED RULE TO EXCLUDE 4 CHEMICAL COMPOUNDS FROM CONTROL AS VOLATILE ORGANIC COMPOUNDS

ACTION

È On August 27, 2003, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed to exempt four chemicals from being considered a volatile organic compounds (VOC). VOCs contribute to the formation of ground-level ozone (smog).

These compounds include:

<u>Compound</u>	<u>Potential Use</u>
1,1,1,2,2,3,3-heptafluoro-3-methoxy-propane (n-C ₃ F ₇ OCH ₃) (known as HFE-7000)	- solvent cleaner - aerosol propellant
3-ethoxy-1,1,1,2,3,4,4,5,5,6,6,6-dodecafluoro-2-(trifluoromethyl) hexane (known as HFE-7500, HFE-s702, T-7145, and L-15381)	- refrigerant
1,1,1,2,3,3,3-heptafluoropropane (known as HFC 227ea)	- fire suppressant - inhalation propellant - sterilant
methyl formate (HCOOCH ₃)	- blowing agent

È These four compounds are hydrofluorocarbons which may be used as an alternative to chlorofluorocarbons(CFCs). CFCs are being phased out of production because of their detrimental impact on stratospheric ozone.

È Scientific evidence shows these compounds to be "negligibly reactive," meaning they contribute little or nothing to the formation of smog. In addition, the presence of these 4 chemical compounds in the ambient air do not appear to negatively impact human health or the environment.

È Exposure to methyl formate can have adverse health impacts at certain levels, for example, it can cause irritation to the eyes, skin, and lungs, and at high levels may cause pulmonary damage. However, methyl formate is well regulated by other programs; including the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and therefore, exposures to this compound, even if use increases as a result of this action, will be below levels of concern.

- È Areas with ozone air pollution levels that exceed national air quality standards must develop plans, known as state implementation plans, or SIPs, that include strategies for reducing ground-level ozone. These plans may include VOC emission limits for industrial facilities and VOC content requirements for the manufacture of products such as paints.
- È This proposed rule would allow, but does not require, states to remove emissions controls on these 4 chemical compounds if they are part of the state's plans to meet the national air quality standards for ground-level ozone. This would allow states to focus on controlling emissions of more reactive compounds.
- , EPA would continue to track these compounds for purposes of record keeping emissions reporting, and emissions inventory requirements.
- È This rule also proposes to change the nomenclature of two previously exempted compounds. EPA proposes to add the nomenclature designations **HFE-7100** to 1,1,1,2,2,3,3,4,4-nonafluoro-4-methoxy-butane (C₄F₉OH) and **HFE-7200** to 1-ethoxy-1,1,2,2,3,3,4,4,4-nonafluorobutane (C₄F₉OCH₂H₅).

BACKGROUND

- È EPA issued its policy on VOCs, "Requirements for Preparation, Adoption, and Submittal of State Implementation Plans," on February 3, 1992.
- , The public may petition EPA to exclude a compound from the definition of a VOC. EPA reviews available scientific data that demonstrate its negligible effect on the formation of smog before taking action.
- , The 3M Company, Great Lakes Chemical Corporation, and Foam Supplies, Inc. petitioned EPA to exclude these 4 chemical compounds from the definition of a VOC.
- , Since 1977, EPA has removed 41 specific compounds or classes of compounds from the list of VOCs that contribute to smog formation.
- , With this proposed action EPA is not finalizing a decision on how future petitions will be evaluated. EPA is currently in the process of assessing its VOC policy in general. We intend to publish a future notice inviting public comment on the VOC exemption policy and the concept of negligible reactivity as part of a broader review of overall policy.
- È EPA will accept public comment on this proposal for 60 days after this rule is published in the

Federal Register. EPA will carefully review additional scientific data and consider all public comments, before issuing a final decision on this proposal.

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

- È Interested parties can download the proposal 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 David Sanders at EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards at (919) 541-3356.

- È The 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/*.