

June 10, 1999

FACT SHEET

FINAL FEDERAL PLAN FOR MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE LANDFILLS

TODAY'S ACTION

- ! The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is today finalizing a Federal plan to implement emission guidelines for existing municipal solid waste (MSW) landfills. EPA issued final emission guideline requirements for MSW landfills in 1996 (61 FR 9905) and revised the guidelines in 1998 (63 FR 32743) and 1999 (64 FR 9258). EPA's emission guidelines apply to existing landfills that handled everyday household waste and were in operation from November 8, 1987 to May 30, 1991 or have capacity available for future waste deposition. Landfills constructed on or after May 30, 1991 or which undergo changes in design capacities on or after May 30, 1991 are subject to EPA's new source performance standards and not this Federal plan.
- ! This Federal plan applies to any existing MSW landfill which is not covered by an approved and effective State or Tribal plan. This action is a gap filling requirement until States and Tribes begin implementation of State and Tribal plans that have been approved by EPA. Following implementation of an approved State or Tribal program, EPA's Federal plan is rescinded and no longer applies in the applicable area.

WHAT ARE THE HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS?

- ! Implementation of EPA's 1996 emission guidelines for landfills through Federal, State and Tribal plans will reduce national emissions of nonmethane organic compounds (NMOC) from landfills by over fifty percent. Landfills emit NMOC which include hazardous air pollutants (HAPs), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and odorous compounds. Exposure to HAPs can lead to cancer, respiratory irritation, and damage to the nervous system. VOC emissions contribute to ozone formation which can result in adverse effects on human health and vegetation.
- ! While the overall goal of EPA's Federal plan is to reduce emissions of NMOC, the same controls will also reduce national methane emissions from landfills by forty percent. Landfills are the largest manmade source of methane emissions in the country. Methane emissions contribute to global climate change and can also result in fires or explosions if they accumulate in structures on or off the landfill site.
- ! EPA's Federal plan ensures that emission guidelines are implemented at existing MSW landfills until State or Tribal plans are approved, thus ensuring the environmental benefits envisioned by the 1996 rules.

WHAT LANDFILLS ARE SUBJECT TO EPA'S FINAL FEDERAL PLAN?

- ! EPA's emission guidelines apply to existing landfills that handled everyday household waste and were in operation from November 8, 1987 to May 30, 1991 or have capacity available for future waste deposition. Landfills constructed on or after May 30, 1991 or which undergo changes in design capacities on or after May 30, 1991 are subject to EPA's new source performance standards and not the emissions guidelines.
- ! The Federal plan applies to any existing landfill located in a State that is not covered by an approved and effective State plan. Currently 34 of the 63 States, territories, and municipalities are expected to be covered by this Federal plan, the bulk of which are expected to have fully approvable plans within 1 to 2 years.
- ! EPA's Federal Plan also applies to existing landfills located in Indian country. At this time, Tribal plans have not been submitted to EPA for approval. EPA anticipates that fewer than 12 landfills located in Indian country will come under EPA's Federal plan which will be large enough to warrant controls.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN COMPONENTS OF EPA'S FEDERAL PLAN?

- ! EPA is requiring landfill owners and operators subject to this Federal plan to submit a report identifying the design capacity within 150 days following publication in the Federal Register.
- ! For large landfills with a design capacity of 2.5 million megagrams and 2.5 million cubic meters or more of waste, EPA is also requiring them to submit an NMOC emission rate report within 150 days of publication in the Federal Register.
- ! For any landfill with a design capacity of 2.5 million megagrams and 2.5 million cubic meters that emits NMOC at a rate of 50 megagrams per year or more, EPA is requiring the installation of a gas collection and control system within 30 months after the NMOC emission rate report first shows emissions of 50 megagrams per year or more.

BACKGROUND

- ! EPA's final emission guideline regulations for MSW landfills are expected to significantly reduce methane and NMOC emissions, including volatile organic compounds and hazardous air pollutants.
- ! States with existing MSW landfills subject to the MSW landfill emission guidelines were required to submit State plans to EPA within nine months after EPA finalized the landfill guidelines (i.e. by December 12, 1996).
- ! The Clean Air Act requires EPA to develop and implement a Federal plan in any State with an existing MSW landfill that did not submit an approvable plan to EPA within the required deadline. EPA is fulfilling its obligation under the Clean Air Act to establish

reporting and collection and control requirements for MSW landfills in States and portions of Indian country that do not have approved plans.

- ! This final Federal plan contains the same requirements as a State or Tribal plan, including an emission limit, a source and emission inventory, testing, monitoring, record keeping and reporting requirements, as well as a compliance schedule that includes increments of progress.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

- ! Interested parties can download the final MSW landfills Federal plan from EPA's web site on the Internet under Office of Air and Radiation Recent Actions at the following address: <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/ramain.html>. Also, the State plan implementation assistance document for MSW landfills can be downloaded at the following address: <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/tled.html>. For further information about the final MSW landfills Federal plan, contact Ms. Mary Ann Warner of EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards at (919) 541-1192.
- ! For more information on other air pollution programs and issues, the Office of Air and Radiation homepage can be accessed at the following address: <http://www.epa.gov/oar>.

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