

**FACT SHEET**  
**PROPOSED RULE TO REDUCE TOXIC AIR POLLUTANT EMISSIONS FROM**  
**REINFORCED PLASTIC COMPOSITES PRODUCTION**

**TODAY'S ACTION**

- ! The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is proposing a rule to reduce emissions of toxic air pollutants during the production of reinforced plastic composites.
- ! Toxic air pollutants are those pollutants known, or suspected, to cause cancer and other serious health problems. Air toxics are emitted during the production of reinforced plastic composites, when styrene present in the resins and gel coats used as raw materials evaporates.
- ! Reinforced plastic composites facilities produce a variety of reinforced plastic products, including fiberglass bath tubs and showers, automobile and recreational vehicle parts, storage tanks, and engine and tool covers.
- ! The primary air toxic emitted during the production of reinforced plastic composites is styrene. Styrene has been associated with effects on the central nervous system such as headache, fatigue, weakness, and hearing loss. Styrene is emitted at several points in the production of reinforced plastic composites, including resin and gel coat application, storage and mixing.
- ! EPA will take comment on this proposed rule for 60 days after the proposal is published in the Federal Register. A final rule is expected to be published approximately one year after proposal.

**BENEFITS AND COST**

- ! When final, EPA expects this rule to reduce air toxics emissions by 14,500 tons per year – a 65 percent reduction over 1997 levels. The final rule also will reduce emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOCs). VOCs contribute to the formation of ground-level ozone (smog), which can aggravate a number of respiratory problems, including asthma.
- ! EPA estimates that the total annual cost to comply with the proposed rule is \$26 million.
- ! The Agency estimates that the capital cost to comply with this proposed rule is \$74 million.

**BACKGROUND**

- ! The Clean Air Act requires EPA to regulate emissions of 188 listed toxic air pollutants.

- ! For categories of “major” sources, EPA must develop standards that require the application of stringent air pollution reduction measures known as “maximum achievable control technology.”
- ! A major source is a facility that emits, or has the potential to emit, 10 tons per year of any one air toxic, or 25 tons per year of any combination of air toxics.
- ! EPA’s published list of industry categories to be regulated includes Reinforced Plastic Composite Production.

### **WHAT THE PROPOSED REGULATION WOULD DO**

- ! Today’s proposal will affect 433 existing facilities that are defined as “major sources.” If an affected facility emits 100 tons per year or more of air toxics, and is not a facility owned by an operating small business, today’s proposal requires the installation and use of air pollution controls for most operations, including resin and gel coat application, storage, and mixing. Facilities owned by a small business (500 - 1,000 employees) that emit more than 250 tons per year of air toxics are also required to install air pollution controls.
- ! Today’s proposal treats major sources that emit less than 100 tons per year of air toxics and existing small business major sources that emit less than 250 tons per year of air toxics differently than bigger emitters. These sources are required to incorporate pollution prevention techniques in their production processes. These techniques include: use of raw materials containing low amounts of air toxics; non-atomized resin application, including flow coaters, pressure rollers and fluid impingement technology; and covering open resin baths and tanks.

### **MORE INFORMATION**

- ! To read a copy of today’s proposal on EPA’s homepage on the Internet, go to “Recent Actions” at <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/> .
- ! For further information about the proposal, contact Keith Barnett of EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards at (919) 541-5605.
- ! To comment on today’s proposal, submit two copies (if possible) to Air and Radiation Docket Center (6102), Attention Docket Number A-92-52, U. S. EPA, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20460. Send a separate copy to Mr. Keith Barnett, U. S. EPA, Emission Standards Division, Mail Drop - 13, Research Triangle Park, NC, 27711.
- ! EPA's Office of Air and Radiation's homepage on the Internet contains a wide range of information on the air toxics program, as well as many other air pollution programs and issues. The Office of Air and Radiation's home page address is: <http://www.epa.gov/oar>.