

FACT SHEET

Final Rule – Implementation of the New Source Review Program for Particulate Matter Less Than 2.5 Micrometers: Amendment to the Definition of “Regulated NSR Pollutant” Concerning Condensable Particulate Matter

ACTION

- On October 12, 2012, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued final amendments to its rules for the Clean Air Act New Source Review (NSR) permitting program regarding the definition of “regulated NSR pollutant.” This action clarifies when condensable particulate matter should be measured.
- Condensable particulate matter is not directly emitted as a solid or liquid at the stack. Instead gaseous emissions such as sulfuric acid mist, ammonium sulfate, and certain metal vapors condense upon cooling and dilution in the ambient air to form solid or liquid particles following discharge from the stack.
- When an industrial facility applies for a New Source Review permit to construct or modify an emissions source, it must show that it does not interfere with an area’s ability to meet or maintain the national air quality standards. EPA has established National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for particulate matter less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter (PM_{2.5}) and particulate matter less than 10 micrometers in diameter (PM₁₀). Condensable particulate matter emissions contribute to monitored levels of PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀. The impact of those emissions on monitored air quality levels of PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ must be considered as part of a source’s permit.
- This final rule continues to require that condensable particulate matter be included as part of the emissions measurements for regulation of PM_{2.5}PM₁₀.
- This final rule removes the inadvertent requirement in the 2008 PM_{2.5} NSR Implementation Rule, that measurements of condensable particulate matter emissions be included as part of the measurement and regulation of “particulate matter emissions.”
- The terminology “particulate matter emissions” includes particles that are significantly larger than either PM_{2.5} or PM₁₀, and is used primarily to measure compliance with the EPA’s existing New Source Performance Standards for particulate matter. The amount of “particulate matter emissions” that a source has the potential to emit is not intended to be used for determining whether an area can attain or maintain either of the existing sets of standards for particle pollution.

BACKGROUND

- Congress established the NSR program as part of the 1977 Clean Air Act Amendments and modified it in the 1990 Amendments. NSR is a preconstruction permitting program that serves two important purposes.
- It ensures the maintenance of air quality standards when factories, industrial boilers and power plants are modified or added. In areas that do not meet the national air quality standards, NSR ensures that new emissions do not slow progress toward cleaner air. In areas that meet the standards, especially pristine areas like national parks, NSR ensures that new emissions fall within protective air quality standards. The part of NSR that applies to major stationary sources locating in attainment areas is called the Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) program; the part that applies in nonattainment areas is called nonattainment NSR (NNSR).
- The NSR program also ensures that state of the art control technology is installed at new plants or at existing plants that are undergoing a major modification.
- This action applies to three NSR regulations, including two regulations for the prevention of significant deterioration of air quality (PSD) and one for nonattainment area new source review called the Emissions Offset Interpretative Rule.
- EPA proposed this action on March 16, 2012.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Interested parties can download information on this action from EPA's Web site at: www.epa.gov/nsr.
- The notice of proposed rulemaking for this rulemaking is also available either electronically in www.regulations.gov, EPA's electronic public docket and comment system. Docket ID No. is EPA-HQ-OAR-2003-0062.
- For more information, call Mr. Dan deRoeck at 919-541-5593 or email at deroeck.dan@epa.gov.