

FACT SHEET

Revisions to Ambient Nitrogen Dioxide Monitoring Requirements

ACTION

- On October 5, 2012, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a proposed rule to revise the deadlines by which the near-road monitors within the nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) monitoring network are to be operational. This monitoring network will collect data that are compared to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for NO₂.
- EPA is proposing to establish a series of deadlines that would require states and local agencies to begin operating the near-road component of the NO₂ network in phases between January 1, 2014 and January 1, 2017. This would replace the 2010 rule requirement that all new NO₂ monitors are required to begin operating no later than January 1, 2013.
- A phased deployment of near-road NO₂ monitors allows more time for state and local air monitoring agencies to establish the required monitors based on the agencies' anticipated available resources.
- These proposed revisions do not change the number of monitors already required.
- Today's proposal would also give the EPA Regional Administrators the authority to approve states' annual NO₂ monitoring network plans. Currently, the EPA Administrator approves the plans. This change would make the NO₂ network approval authority consistent with other criteria pollutant approval authorities.

BACKGROUND

- The Clean Air Act requires EPA to set national ambient air quality standards for pollutants considered harmful to public health and the environment. National standards exist for six pollutants: nitrogen dioxide, ozone, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and lead.
- Nitrogen dioxide is one of a group of highly reactive gases known as "oxides of nitrogen." NO₂ forms quickly from emissions from cars, trucks and buses, power plants, and off-road equipment. In addition to contributing to the formation of ground-level ozone and fine particle pollution, NO₂ is linked with a number of adverse effects on the respiratory system.
- On January 22, 2010, EPA strengthened the health-based NAAQS for NO₂. A new 1-hour NO₂ standard was set at the level of 100 parts per billion (ppb), a level which defines the maximum allowable concentration anywhere in an area. EPA also retained, with no change, the annual average NO₂ standard of 53 ppb.

- To determine compliance with the 2010 standard, EPA at that time also established new ambient air monitoring and reporting requirements for NO₂. These included:
 - monitors near major roads in urban areas as well as in other locations where maximum concentrations are expected;
 - additional monitors in large urban areas to measure the highest concentrations of NO₂ that occur more broadly across communities, and
 - EPA, working with the states, will site a subset of monitors in locations to help protect communities that are susceptible and vulnerable to NO₂-related health effects.

HOW TO COMMENT

- The EPA will accept comment on this proposal for 30 days following publication in the Federal Register.
- Comments should be identified by Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2012 -0486 and submitted by one of the following methods:
 - Federal eRulemaking Portal (<http://www.regulations.gov>),
 - e-mail (a-and-r-docket@epa.gov),
 - Mail (EPA Docket Center, Environmental Protection Agency, Mail code 6102T, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20460), or
 - Hand delivery (EPA Docket Center, Environmental Protection Agency, Room 3334, 1301 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC).

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>.
- Other places to read the proposed rule and background information (use Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2012-0486):
 - **EPA's electronic public docket and comment system** at <http://www.regulations.gov>.
 - **The EPA Docket Center's Public Reading Room** (for hard copies).
 - The Public Reading Room is located at EPA Headquarters, Room Number 3334 in EPA West Building, 1301 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington,
 - DC. Hours of operation are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. eastern standard time, Monday through Friday, excluding federal holidays.
 - You will have to show photo identification, pass through a metal detector, and sign the EPA visitor log. Any materials you bring with you will be processed through an X-ray machine as well. You will be provided a badge that must be visible at all times.
- For further information about the rulemaking, contact Neilson Watkins at EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards at (919) 541-5522.