

FACT SHEET

Ambient Ozone Monitoring Regulations: Revisions to Network Design Requirements

ACTION

- On July 8, 2009, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed to revise the ozone air quality monitoring network design requirements. These proposed revisions would support changes to the primary and secondary National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone that EPA issued in March 2008.
- The proposed amendments would modify minimum monitoring requirements in urban areas, add new minimum monitoring requirements in non-urban areas, and extend the length of the required ozone monitoring season in some states.
- EPA is proposing additional monitoring requirements in urban areas with populations between 50,000 and 350,000 people. These urban areas would be required to operate at least one ozone monitor if monitoring is not already being conducted.
- EPA also is proposing additional monitoring requirements in non-urban areas. States would be required to operate a minimum of three ozone monitors in non-urban areas, to allow for:
 - Assessment of ozone concentrations in areas such as federal, state, or Tribal lands, including wilderness areas that have ozone-sensitive natural vegetation and/or ecosystems, to determine compliance with the revised secondary NAAQS.
 - Assessment of at least one smaller population center of between 10,000 and 50,000 people that is expected to have ozone concentrations of at least 85 percent of the NAAQS level of 0.075 ppm averaged over an 8-hour period (0.064 ppm).
 - Monitoring in the location of expected maximum ozone concentration outside of any urban area, potentially including the far-downwind transport zones of currently well-monitored urban areas.
- EPA is proposing to lengthen the required ozone monitoring season in many states to account for the tightened level of the revised NAAQS. We are also proposing that ozone monitors operated as part of a new multi-pollutant network be required to operate on a year-round schedule when the network is fully operational in 2011.
- EPA is proposing that the revised ozone monitoring season for existing monitors be effective for the 2011 monitoring season. New ozone monitors are proposed to be operational no later than January 1, 2012.

- This ozone monitoring proposal provides states with flexibility in meeting the new requirements, subject to approval by the EPA Regional Administrator. Some of these flexible provisions include:
 - Relocating existing monitors that are being operated in excess of minimum requirements.
 - Utilizing nearby monitors to represent ambient conditions within unmonitored urban areas in limited cases.
 - Partnering with other monitoring organizations, such as EPA or the National Park Service, to designate existing federally-operated non-urban ozone monitors as meeting state requirements. For example, monitors being operated as part of the Clean Air Status and Trends Network (CASTNet).
- EPA estimates that approximately 270 new ozone monitors could be required to satisfy the proposed monitoring requirements. We expect the actual number of new monitors to be considerably less due to the flexible provisions that have been included in the proposal.

BACKGROUND

- On March 12, 2008, EPA significantly strengthened its NAAQS for ground-level ozone, the primary component of smog. EPA revised the 8-hour “primary” ozone standard, designed to protect public health, to a level of 0.075 parts per million (ppm). EPA is also strengthening the secondary 8-hour ozone standard to the level of 0.075 ppm making it identical to the revised primary standard.
- In the NAAQS final rule, EPA committed to issue a separate rule to address monitoring requirements necessary to implement the new standards. Those monitoring requirements are detailed in this proposal.
- Presently, states are required to operate minimum numbers of EPA-approved ozone monitors based on the population of each of their Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) and the most recently measured ozone levels for each area.
- States also operate additional ozone monitors to meet objectives including assessment of compliance with the NAAQS, investigation of ozone transport issues, calculations of the Air Quality Index, verification of photochemical modeling efforts, and assessment of ozone-related effects on ecosystems with natural plants sensitive to air pollution damage.
- There are approximately 1,200 ozone monitors currently operating across the U.S. based on these objectives. Approximately 1,000 monitors are sited to represent urban areas and 200 monitors to represent non-urban areas.

HOW TO COMMENT

- Comments should be identified by Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR- 2008-0338 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, Mailcode 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 under “Recent Actions” at the following address: <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg>.
- For more information about ozone in the air, and the recent NAAQS revision, visit: <http://epa.gov/groundlevelozone/index.html>.
- For more information about today’s rulemaking, contact Lewis Weinstock at EPA’s Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards at (919) 541-3661 or weinstock.lewis@epa.gov.