

8/14/98

FACT SHEET

FINAL AIR REGULATION FOR AUTOMOBILE REFINISH COATINGS

TODAY'S ACTION...

- ◆ The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is today promulgating a regulation to control volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions from automobile refinish coatings. Coatings, such as primers and topcoats, are mostly used by painters at body shops to refinish cars and trucks.
- ◆ EPA developed the rule with extensive input from major stakeholders, including industry representatives and state and local agencies.
- ◆ Today's action demonstrates EPA's commitment to making pollution prevention an integral part of regulatory actions whenever possible. The requirements outlined in the rule are based on product reformulation, a pollution prevention method.

WHAT ARE THE HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS?

- ◆ EPA's rule would reduce emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) nationwide by 32,000 tons annually, representing a 33 percent reduction from current levels. VOCs contribute significantly to the formation of ground-level ozone (smog). Exposure to ground-level ozone can damage lung tissue and cause serious respiratory illness; it can also damage agricultural crops.

WHY IS EPA REGULATING AUTOMOBILE REFINISH COATINGS?

- ◆ In March 1995, EPA issued a report to Congress, Study of Volatile Organic Compound Emissions from Consumer and Commercial Products, which evaluated the contribution of VOC emissions from consumer and commercial products to ground-level ozone levels, and established criteria and a schedule for regulating these products under the Clean Air Act. Automobile Refinish Coatings is among the first group of products to be regulated.
- ◆ In the past, the Clean Air Act has focused on reducing VOC emissions from mobile sources (cars and trucks) and stationary sources, such as power plants and factories. Requiring additional controls on these sources may be very costly for the emissions reductions achieved. Regulating consumer and commercial products, such as automobile refinish coatings, is often a more cost-effective way of substantially reducing VOC emissions nationwide. Consumer and commercial products, such as surface coatings and metal cleaning solvents, automobile refinish coatings, personal care products, and household cleaning products, contribute about 6 million tons (approximately 30 percent) annually of VOC emissions nationwide.
- ◆ Under the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, EPA is required to 1.) study emissions of

VOCs from consumer and commercial products; 2.) list those categories of products that account for at least 80 percent of the total VOC emissions from consumer and commercial products in areas of the country that fail to meet the national air quality standards set for ground-level ozone; and 3.) divide the list into four groups, and regulate one group every two years using best available controls, as defined by the Clean Air Act.

WHAT DOES THE REGULATION REQUIRE?

- ◆ EPA's regulation is based on best available controls, as defined under the Clean Air Act, and sets specific VOC content limits on 7 categories of automobile refinish coatings (generally classified as primers and topcoats). VOC limits would be met by the pollution prevention method of product reformulation, requiring the use of coatings with lower VOC content than the coatings currently in use. Most manufacturers already produce low-VOC coatings.

WHO WOULD BE AFFECTED BY THE REGULATION?

- ◆ EPA's rule would affect approximately 5 large automobile refinish coating component manufacturers and importers and an additional 10-15 smaller manufacturers. EPA's regulation does not affect the application of automobile refinish coatings, and therefore body shops nationwide are not directly affected by the regulation's requirements.
- ◆ Several states have previously moved ahead with their own regulations for these coatings. EPA's rule will minimize the likelihood that companies will have to manufacture several different types of coatings to meet a "patchwork" of state regulations.
- ◆ Automobile refinish coating regulations currently in place in some states require VOC content limits on coatings as they are applied in body shops. Therefore, body shops are required, in most cases, to keep extensive records on the amount of each coating used, its VOC content, etc. This record keeping requirement can be time consuming and complicated for some body shops.
- ◆ In contrast, EPA's rule would affect only the manufacturers and importers of automobile refinish coating components. Therefore, body shops would not be subject to any federal record keeping requirements; however, some states may decide to keep their record keeping requirements after the national rule is effective.

HOW MUCH DOES THE REGULATION COST?

- ◆ The annual cost of the rule is approximately \$5 million. Much of the regulation's costs results from the training of coating manufacturer and distributor representatives, and body shop personnel in the use of low-VOC coatings.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION...

- ◆ Interested parties can obtain the final rule from EPA's website on the Internet under "recent actions" at the following address: (<http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg>). The notice and background documentation is also available through EPA's Air and Radiation Docket and Information Center (Docket Number A-92-18) by calling (202) 260-7548 or FAX (202) 260-4000 (a reasonable fee may be charged for copying). For further information about the rule, contact Mark Morris of EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards at (919) 541-5416 or by electronic mail at: *morris.mark@epa.gov*.

- ◆ The EPA's Office of Air and Radiation's home page on the Internet contains a wide range of information on air pollution programs and issues. The Office of Air and Radiation's home page address is: (<http://www.epa.gov/oar/>).