

FACT SHEET
Final Amendments to the New Source Performance Standards (NSPS)
for Steel Plants: Electric Arc Furnaces (EAF) and Argon-Oxygen Decarburization Vessels

ACTION

- On August 1, 2023, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finalized new source performance standards (NSPS) for Electric Arc Furnaces and Argon-Oxygen Decarburization Vessels Constructed After May 16, 2022 (subpart AAb). EPA finalized this Clean Air Act rule following a review of the NSPS for electric arc furnaces (EAF) and argon-oxygen decarburization vessels (AOD) constructed after August 17, 1983, and on or before May 16, 2022 (subpart AAa).
- EPA also finalized amendments to update the 1974 NSPS for EAF, also known as the Standards of Performance for Steel Plants: Electric Arc Furnaces Constructed After October 21, 1974, and On or Before August 17, 1983 (subpart AA) and subpart AAa.
- The EAF source category includes any facility that produces steel in an EAF and that also may use argon-oxygen decarburization (AOD) vessels.
- The pollutant addressed by the EAF NSPS is particulate matter (PM), a criteria pollutant.
- The EAF source category includes 88 facilities owned by 36 companies.
- After considering public comments on the proposed amendments to the NSPS that EPA issued in May 2022, EPA is finalizing the following changes to the NSPS for EAF facilities constructed after May 16, 2022:
 - Lowering the opacity limit for EAF melt shops during melting and refining from 6 percent to 0 percent (retaining the current 6 percent opacity limit during charging and tapping).
 - Changing the format of the PM emission limit for control devices from grains PM per dry standard cubic feet of control device exhaust for each device, to pounds of PM total facility-controlled emissions per ton of steel produced;
 - Adding electronic reporting;
 - Eliminating the exemption for opacity limits and other standards during periods of startup, shutdown, and malfunction, consistent with a 2008 decision of the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals; and
 - Requiring periodic compliance testing once every five years.
- The final rule also includes minor updates and technical corrections to the NSPS for EAF facilities constructed on or before May 16, 2022 (i.e., facilities regulated under subparts AA and AAa), including:
 - Minor rule corrections and clarifications suggested by EPA Region 5 and industry; and
 - Providing for electronic reporting from regulated facilities.

BACKGROUND

- CAA section 111 requires EPA to determine the best system of emission reduction (BSER) for the NSPS source category and the degree of emission limitation achievable through application of the BSER (taking into account the cost of achieving such reduction and any non-air quality health and environmental impact and energy requirements). EPA must then promulgate standards of performance for new sources that reflect that level of stringency. The 1974 and 1983 NSPS were established based on BSER available at that time.
- The CAA section 111 requires EPA to, “at least every eight years review and, if appropriate, revise,” the NSPS. The EPA reviews available data and information to determine if BSER has changed and, if so, proposes revised standards to reflect such changes.

COMMENTS

- EPA received eight sets of comments on the proposed rule from industry trade organizations, steel companies, environmental groups, states, and individual citizens.
 - Copies of the comments received can be found in the docket to the rule at www.Regulations.gov using the Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2002-0049.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Interested parties can download a copy of the final rule notice from EPA's website at the following address: <https://www.epa.gov/stationary-sources-air-pollution/electric-arc-furnaces-eafs-and-argon-oxygen-decarburization-vessels>.
- Today's action and other background information also are available either electronically at <https://www.regulations.gov/>, EPA's electronic public docket and comment system.
 - Materials for this final action can be accessed using Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2002-0049.
- For further technical information about the final rules, contact Donna Lee Jones, EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards, at (919) 541-5251 or jones.donnalee@epa.gov.