

SMALLBIZ@EPA

EPA's Asbestos and Small Business Ombuds Program

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE REGULATED SMALL BUSINESS COMMUNITY

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

▶ **Policy and Regulation**

- ▶ Asbestos Part 1; Chrysotile Asbestos; Regulation...
- ▶ EPA Launches New Website to Improve...
- ▶ National Emission Standards for Hazardous...
- ▶ Reconsideration of the National Ambient...
- ▶ Accidental Release Prevention Requirements...
- ▶ EPA Announces Final Rule...
- ▶ Biden-Harris Administration Finalizes Strongest...

▶ **Key Dates and Opportunities**

- ▶ Registration Open for National Small...
- ▶ EPA's RAIN-2024-G01...
- ▶ Safer Choice Partner of the Year...
- ▶ Biden-Harris Administration Announces...

▶ **Ask SBEAP**

▶ **Spotlight**

- ▶ 2024 National SBEAP...
- ▶ EPA Announces 2024 ENERGY STAR...
- ▶ Toxic Chemical Releases...
- ▶ 45 States, Large Metro Areas Submit...
- ▶ EPA Announces Most Energy-Efficient...
- ▶ EPA Celebrates 20 Years...



POLICY AND REGULATION

Asbestos Part 1; Chrysotile Asbestos; Regulation of Certain Conditions of Use Under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA)

EPA is issuing this final rule under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) to address to the extent necessary the unreasonable risk of injury to health presented by chrysotile asbestos based on the risks posed by certain conditions of use. The injuries to human health include mesothelioma and lung, ovarian, and laryngeal cancers resulting from chronic inhalation exposure to chrysotile asbestos.

EPA is banning the import of asbestos for chlor-alkali use immediately to close the door forever on the use of asbestos by this sector. The eight remaining facilities that use asbestos must transition to either non-asbestos diaphragms or to non-asbestos

membrane technology, and the final rule ensures that six of the eight will have completed this transition within five years, with the remaining two to follow.

The final rule also:

- Bans most sheet gaskets that contain asbestos two years after the effective date of the final rule, with five-year phase-outs for sheet gaskets to be used to produce titanium dioxide and for the processing of nuclear material.
- Allows asbestos-containing sheet gaskets to continue to be used through CY 2037 at the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site to ensure that the safe disposal of nuclear materials can continue on schedule while continuing to protect workers from exposure to radioactive materials.
- Bans the use of asbestos in oilfield brake blocks, aftermarket automotive brakes and linings, other vehicle friction products, and other gaskets six months after the effective date of the final rule.

This final rule is effective on May 28, 2024. [Read the press release](#)

EPA Launches New Website to Improve Transparency in Permitting

EPA recently announced the launch of a new website, epa.gov/permits, a centralized web-based platform for information about federal environmental permitting. It highlights EPA's permitting and environmental review programs and shares information on related statutes and environmental justice initiatives. In support of EPA's commitments under Title 41 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST-41), it also displays the status of EPA permits for large scale infrastructure projects covered by this statute. The website is a resource for the public, permit applicants and federal agency partners. [Read the April 2 press release](#)

National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants: Taconite Iron Ore Processing

EPA is finalizing amendments to the National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP) for Taconite Iron Ore Processing. Specifically, the EPA is finalizing maximum achievable control technology (MACT) standards for mercury (Hg) and establishing revised emission standards for hydrogen chloride (HCl) and hydrogen fluoride (HF). This final action ensures that emissions of all hazardous air pollutants (HAP) emitted from the Taconite Iron Ore Processing source category are regulated. This final rule is effective March 6, 2024. [Read the rule in the Federal Register](#)

Reconsideration of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Particulate Matter

Based on the EPA's reconsideration of the air quality criteria and the national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for particulate matter (PM), the EPA is revising the primary annual PM standard by lowering the level from 12.0 µg/m to 9.0 µg/m. EPA is also finalizing revisions to other key aspects related to the PM NAAQS, including revisions to the Air Quality Index (AQI) and monitoring requirements for the PM NAAQS. This final rule is effective May 6, 2024. [Read the rule in the Federal Register](#)

Accidental Release Prevention Requirements: Risk Management Programs Under the Clean Air Act; Safer Communities by Chemical Accident Prevention

EPA is amending its Risk Management Program (RMP) regulations as a result of Agency review. The revisions include several changes and amplifications to the accident prevention program requirements, enhancements to the emergency preparedness requirements, improvements to the public availability of chemical hazard information and several other changes to certain regulatory definitions or points of clarification. While many of the provisions of this final rule reinforce each other, it is EPA's intent that each one is merited on its own, and thus severable. The final rule is effective on May 10, 2024. [Read the rule in the Federal Register](#)

EPA Announces Final Rule to Slash Toxic Emissions of Ethylene Oxide and Reduce Cancer Risk

On March 14, 2024, EPA announced a rule that will reduce lifetime cancer risks for people living near commercial sterilization facilities across the country. The final amendments to the air toxics standards for ethylene oxide (EtO) commercial sterilization facilities put in place the strongest measures in U.S. history to reduce emissions of EtO, one of the most potent cancer-causing chemicals. Through the installation of proven and achievable air pollution controls, commercial sterilizers will reduce emissions by more than 90%. Access the final rule, fact sheet and Small Entity Compliance Guide [here](#). [Read the press release](#)

Biden-Harris Administration Finalizes Strongest-Ever Pollution Standards for Cars that Position U.S. Companies and Workers to Lead the Clean Vehicle Future, Protect Public Health, Address the Climate Crisis, Save Drivers Money

On March 20, 2024, EPA announced final national pollution standards for passenger cars, light-duty trucks, and medium-duty vehicles for model years 2027 through 2032

and beyond. These standards will avoid more than 7 billion tons of carbon emissions and provide nearly \$100 billion of annual net benefits to society, including \$13 billion of annual public health benefits due to improved air quality, \$62 billion in reduced annual fuel costs, and reduced maintenance and repair costs for drivers. The final standards deliver on the significant pollution reductions outlined in the proposed rule, while accelerating the adoption of cleaner vehicle technologies. EPA is finalizing this rule as sales of clean vehicles, including plug-in hybrid and fully electric vehicles, hit a record high last year. [Read the press release](#)



KEY DATES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Registration Open for National Small Business Week Virtual Summit

On March 12, 2024, the [U.S. Small Business Administration](#) (SBA) and [SCORE](#), mentors to America's small businesses and a resource partner of the SBA, announced that registration for the 2024 National Small Business Week Virtual Summit is now open. The two-day online event will take place from April 30-May 1. Attendance is free of charge, but registration is required. To register, visit [National Small Business Week Virtual Summit registration](#). [Read the press release](#)

EPA's RAIN-2024-G01 New Recipient Training Requirement

EPA's Recipient/Applicant Information Notice (RAIN) informs applicants of a new training requirement that must be completed by new applicants/recipients prior to receiving grant funds. This requirement will ensure that all new grant applicants/recipients are prepared to apply for and manage grant funds in compliance with all federal grant regulations and EPA-specific grants policy. New applicants are only required to complete the training once. [Read more on the training requirement](#)

Safer Choice Partner of the Year Awards for 2024; Call for Submissions

The Safer Choice program in the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is accepting submissions for its 2024 Safer Choice Partner of the Year Awards. EPA developed the Partner of the Year Awards to recognize the leadership contributions of Safer Choice partners and stakeholders who have shown achievement in the design, manufacture, promotion, selection, and use of products with safer chemicals, that further outstanding or innovative source reduction. Submissions are due on or before April 25, 2024. [Read the notice in the Federal Register](#)

Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$24 Million in Pollution Prevention Grants Under President's Investing in America Agenda

On March 18, 2024, EPA announced the availability of nearly \$24 million in grants to support states, U.S. territories, and Tribes in providing technical assistance to businesses to develop and adopt pollution prevention practices. The funding is available through two Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs) for EPA's Pollution Prevention program, with approximately \$14 million in grants available at no cost share/match requirement, thanks to funding made possible by President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. [Read the press release](#)



ASK SBEAP

Dear SBEAP:

I operate a business in a heavily regulated industry and each year my state's SBEAP sends me a compliance calendar. How can a compliance calendar assist me in preparing for environmental audits and inspections?

Sincerely, Compliance Calendar Calandra

Dear Calandra:

Compliance calendars serve as a tool to help regulated businesses maintain their compliance status and keep up with regulatory recordkeeping requirements. For instance, many businesses use their compliance calendars to track periodic inspections, trainings and inventories, and to store documents like hazardous waste manifests. Additionally, by using these calendars, businesses can stay aware of key dates, like reporting deadlines and permit renewals, which can help them avoid last-minute rushes and potential noncompliance issues. A well-used calendar can be invaluable, especially during audits and inspections, as it can demonstrate that your business is proactive and committed to maintaining regulatory compliance. You can find many different compliance calendars, such as those specific to dry cleaners and gasoline dispensing facilities, on National SBEAP's [compliance calendars webpage](#). If you can't find what you're looking for or need dedicated help, you can email [Ask SBEAP \(info@nationalsbeap.org\)](mailto:info@nationalsbeap.org) or call us at 800-578-8898.



SPOTLIGHT

2024 National SBEAP Annual Training

On March 12-14, 2024, the National Small Business Environmental Assistance Program (SBEAP) Annual Training was held in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and hosted by the Tennessee Department of Environmental Quality (TDEQ). The training featured a multitude of guest speakers including TDEQ Commissioner David Salyers; EPA Deputy Administrator Janet McCabe; Hillary Ward, Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist from the EPA Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards; Paula Hoag, EPA's Asbestos and Small Business Ombuds from the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization. More than 60 participants from across the country attended the training, representing various state SBEAPs, small business ombudsmen, and EPA organizations. [View the training agenda and presentations](#)

EPA Announces 2024 ENERGY STAR Awards for Outstanding Contributions to Energy Efficiency and a Clean Future

On March 26, 2024, the EPA announced the winners of the 2024 ENERGY STAR® Partner of the Year Awards. These 211 organizations, which represent the top ENERGY STAR program partners, are making significant contributions in support of the clean energy transition. They come from 38 states and localities, representing multiple economic sectors. The winners will be recognized at an event in Washington, D.C., on Thursday, April 25. [Read the press release](#)

Toxic Chemical Releases Have Declined 21% in 10 Years According to New Toxics Release Inventory Data

On March 21, 2024, EPA released its 2022 Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) National Analysis showing that environmental releases of TRI chemicals from facilities covered by the program were 21% lower in 2022 compared to 2013. This includes a 26% decrease in air releases. During this 10-year period, releases from manufacturing facilities decreased by 9% while the value added to the U.S. economy from manufacturing increased by 14%. While overall release increased by 1% from 2021 to 2022, there was a 6.5% increase in the number of pollution prevention activities reported under the TRI program compared to 2021. [Read the press release](#)

45 States, Large Metro Areas Submit Climate Action Plans Under President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act

On March 11, 2024, EPA announced a record 45 states, plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and dozens of Metropolitan Statistical Areas have now developed climate action plans through investments made possible by President Biden's [Investing in America agenda](#). The planning process is supported by EPA's [Climate Pollution Reduction Grants program](#), which offers a unique opportunity to help state and local governments develop strategies to reduce harmful pollution and address environmental justice concerns, while building the infrastructure, industry, and competitive economy for a clean energy future. Together, over 96% of the U.S. population is covered by these plans. [Read the press release](#)

EPA Announces Most Energy-Efficient Manufacturing Plants of 2023

On March 14, 2024, EPA recognized 103 U.S. manufacturing plants that earned the Agency's ENERGY STAR certification in 2023, a designation reserved for manufacturing plants in the top 25% of energy efficiency in their sector. Together, these plants prevented more than 8 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions, equivalent to the emissions from the electricity use of more than 1.5 million American homes. [Read the press release](#)

EPA Celebrates 20 Years of Methane Reduction Accomplishments at the Global Methane Forum

As part of the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to cut methane pollution that threatens the climate and public health, EPA and State Department officials convened a group of 450 global leaders at the 2024 Global Methane Forum last month. The Global Methane Forum provides an opportunity for members of the Global Methane Initiative, participants of the Global Methane Pledge, and others to share successful actions, discuss next steps, and learn from peers and technical experts. [Read the press release](#)

