

February 28, 2003

## **FACT SHEET**

### **FINAL RULE TO REDUCE TOXIC AIR POLLUTANT EMISSIONS FROM REINFORCED PLASTIC COMPOSITES PRODUCTION**

#### **TODAY'S ACTION**

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is issuing a final regulation to reduce emissions of toxic air pollutants during the production of reinforced plastic composites.
- Reinforced plastic composites facilities produce a variety of reinforced plastic products, including fiberglass bath tubs and showers, automobile and recreational vehicle parts, storage tanks, and engine and tool covers.
- Toxic air pollutants, or air toxics, are those pollutants known, or suspected, to cause cancer and other serious health problems. Air toxics are emitted during the production of reinforced plastic composites, when styrene, present in the resins and gel coats, evaporates. Styrene has been associated with effects on the central nervous system such as headache, fatigue, weakness, and hearing loss. Styrene is emitted at several points in the production of reinforced plastic composites, including resin and gel coat application, storage and mixing.
- Today's final rule will affect 435 existing facilities that are defined as "major sources" of air toxics. A major source is a facility that emits, or has the potential to emit, 10 tons per year of any one air toxic, or 25 tons per year of a combination of air toxics.
- Most existing major sources are required to incorporate pollution-prevention techniques in their production processes. These techniques include: using raw materials containing low amounts of air toxics; non-atomized resin application; and covering open resin baths and tanks. New facilities that emit less than 100 tons per year of air toxics must also meet these requirements.
- Today's final rule requires new large facilities (those emitting 100 tons per year or more of air toxics) that perform processes known as: open molding, pultrusion, centrifugal casting, and continuous lamination/casting to install air pollution control equipment for these operations. Large new facilities that manufacture sheet molding compound and bulk molding compound must also install emission control equipment. Other operations at new facilities must meet the same requirements as existing facilities.

#### **BENEFITS AND COST**

- Today's final regulation will reduce air toxics emissions by 7,680 tons per year, a 65 percent reduction over 1997 levels. The final rule also will reduce emissions of volatile

organic compounds (VOCs). VOCs contribute to the formation of ground-level ozone (smog), which can aggravate a number of respiratory problems, including asthma.

- EPA estimates that the total annualized cost to comply with this final rule is \$21.5 million.
- The Agency estimates that the total capital cost to comply with this final rule is \$12.6 million.

## **BACKGROUND**

- The Clean Air Act requires EPA to regulate emissions of 188 listed toxic air pollutants.
- For categories of “major” sources, EPA must develop standards that require the application of stringent air pollution reduction measures known as “maximum achievable control technology.”
- EPA’s published list of industry categories to be regulated includes Reinforced Plastic Composite Production.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

- To read a copy of today’s final rule on EPA’s homepage on the Internet, go to “Recent Actions” at <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/>.
- For further information about this final regulation, contact Mr. Keith Barnett of EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards at (919) 541-5605 or [barnett.keith@epa.gov](mailto:barnett.keith@epa.gov).
- EPA's Office of Air and Radiation's homepage on the Internet contains a wide range of information on the air toxics program, as well as many other air pollution programs and issues. The Office of Air and Radiation's home page address is: <http://www.epa.gov/oar>.