

Fact Sheet: Nonylphenols and Nonylphenol Ethoxylates

- [Q1. What are NP/NPEs?](#)
- [Q2. How are NP/NPEs used?](#)
- [Q3. What action is EPA taking?](#)
- [Q4. Why is EPA proposing a SNUR for NP/NPEs?](#)
- [Q5. How many chemicals are in the proposed SNUR?](#)
- [Q6. What are the potential risks to people?](#)
- [Q7. Is there an easy way for consumers to avoid using products with NP/NPEs?](#)
- [Q8. Are there alternatives to NP/NPEs?](#)
- [Q9. What other action is EPA taking to evaluate the potential risks of NP/NPEs?](#)

Q1. What are NP/NPEs?

NP/NPEs, also known as nonylphenols and nonylphenol ethoxylates, are nonionic surfactants, or detergent-like substances, with uses that lead to widespread release into aquatic environments. NP/NPEs are highly toxic to aquatic life. Note: EPA's September 2014 proposed Significant New Use Rule covers only NP/NPEs that are no longer being used in manufacturing or in products; the SNUR would give EPA the opportunity to review new or resumed use of these 15 NP/NPEs. Read more below.

Q2. How are NP/NPEs used?

NPs/NPEs, which are produced in large volumes, are used for industrial processes and in consumer laundry detergents, personal hygiene, automotive, latex paints, and lawn care products.

Q3. What action is EPA taking?

EPA is proposing a Significant New Use Rule, also known as a SNUR, under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). The rule would require manufacturers to provide at least 90 days notice to EPA before commencing or resuming any significant new use of the 15 NP/NPEs that are no longer used in commerce. This would give EPA the opportunity to evaluate the intended use and, if warranted, take action to prohibit or limit the activity before it occurs.

Q4. Why is EPA proposing a SNUR for NP/NPEs?

NP/NPE chemicals are highly toxic to aquatic life and have a wide variety of industrial and consumer uses that could lead to environmental releases. This action is part of EPA's work to ensure chemical safety in order to protect human health and the environment.

Q5. How many chemicals are in the proposed SNUR?

There are 15 NP/NPE chemicals in this proposed SNUR; four NPs and 11 NPEs.

Q6. What are the potential risks to people?

NP has been detected in human breast milk, blood, and urine and is associated with reproductive and developmental effects in rodents.

Q7. Is there an easy way for consumers to avoid using products with NP/NPEs?

Consumers can avoid products with NP/NPEs by looking for products with EPA's Design for the Environment (DfE) Safer Product Label on the shelves of major retailers. When you see the safer product label on a product it means that EPA scientists have evaluated every ingredient in the product to ensure it meets stringent human health and environmental criteria. Learn more about consumer products that carry the safer product label at: http://www.epa.gov/dfe/product_label_consumer.html#consumers.

Q8. Are there alternatives to NP/NPEs?

As part of its Safer Product Labeling Program, DfE has evaluated hundreds of surfactants. DfE has posted almost 200 non-NPE safer surfactants on its Safer Chemical Ingredient List (SCIL) available at <http://www.epa.gov/dfe/saferingredients.htm>.

Q9. What other action is EPA taking to evaluate the potential risks of NP/NPEs?

In 2010, under EPA's DfE Safer Detergents Stewardship Initiative (SDSI), the Textile Rental Services Association of America and its members achieved a 50 percent phase out of NPEs from the industrial laundry detergents market. In May 2012, a DfE Program Alternatives Assessment identified eight classes of surfactants that are safer alternatives to NPEs in a broad range of uses. More information on the NPE alternatives assessment can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/dfe/pubs/projects/npe/index.htm>.