FACT SHEET
FINAL AIR TOXICS REGULATION FOR WOOD FURNITURE MANUFACTURING OPERATIONS

SUMMARY

On December 7, 1995 (60FR62929) , the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) promulgated a final rule to reduce air toxics emissions from wood furniture manufacturing operations. Wood furniture manufacturing facilities, including cabinet shops and residential and industrial furniture makers, emit air toxics during finishing, gluing, and cleaning operations.

The EPA final rule is the result of successful partnerships among major stakeholders; the rule was developed largely through a regulatory negotiation with representatives from the furniture manufacturing industry (including small business), the coatings industry, environmental groups, and State and local air pollution agencies.

The final regulation demonstrates the EPA commitment to making pollution prevention an integral part of regulatory actions whenever possible; the control requirements outlined in the rule are based solely on pollution prevention options instead of end-of-pipe controls.

WHAT ARE THE HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS?

The EPA final rule is expected to reduce emissions of air toxics, such as toluene, xylene, methanol, and formaldehyde, by 33,000 tons annually, representing a 60 percent reduction from current 1995 levels. Exposure to these and other air toxics associated with wood furniture manufacturing can cause adverse health effects, including eye, nose, throat, and skin irritation; damage to the heart, liver, and kidneys; and reproductive effects.

BACKGROUND

Under the Clean Air Act (CAA) Amendments of 1990, the EPA is required to regulate emissions of listed toxic air pollutants. On July 16, 1992, the EPA published a list of source categories that emit one or more of these listed air toxics. For listed categories of "major" sources (those that emit or have the potential to emit 10 tons/year or more of a listed pollutant, or 25 tons or more of a combination of pollutants), the CAA required the EPA to develop standards that would require the application of very stringent controls known as maximum achievable control technology.

WHO WILL BE AFFECTED BY THE FINAL REGULATION?

The EPA final rule applies to about 750 wood furniture manufacturing facilities nationwide.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN COMPONENTS OF THE EPA FINAL RULE?

The EPA final rule is based on two requirements--emissions limits and work practice standards. The final rule provides flexibility to industry by offering a choice of four different compliance options.

The final rule limits the amount of hazardous air pollutants (HAP) that could be contained in the coatings used for finishing, gluing, and cleaning operations. The emissions limits could be met through using a variety of coatings that contain lower quantities of HAP.

The work practice standards would reduce waste and evaporation of HAP. Good housekeeping measures such as keeping containers of materials closed, periodic training of operators who use

solvent and/or coatings, and performing periodic inspections to locate and repair leaking equipment are required by the work practice provisions. In addition, the rule requires use of spray equipment which is believed to be more efficient in applying coatings. The work practice standards also require accounting for the quantity of solvent used for cleaning and washoff, the number of times each piece of equipment is washed off, and the reason for the washoff. These practices will focus attention on quality control issues that will result in the minimization of HAP and volatile organic compound emissions.

The EPA's final rule outlines the monitoring, recordkeeping, and reporting requirements.

HOW MUCH WILL THE RULE COST?

The total industry-wide capital investment is estimated to be $7.0 million. The total nationwide annual cost is estimated to be about $15 million.