Message

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Subject: Air Toxics in Region 6 – Overview

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Regulatory Framework

The Federal Clean Air Act mandates that EPA issue regulations for emissions of air toxics released from specific sources. These are primarily technology-based controls at the specific emission points within a source that release air toxics into the air. EPA HQ issues these technology-based emisisons regulations for which states request delegation to implement in lieu of EPA. EPA does **not** have ambient standards for air toxics – specific health-based amounts of air toxics in the air people breathe – as Federal requirements.

Beyond the Regulatory Framework

At times, EPA supports air toxics efforts by our state and local partners which go beyond the scope of the Federal regulatory programs.
These supportive actions may include assistance in emergency response efforts and assistance in responding to local air toxics concerns.
Current significant Region 6 efforts to support our state partners on air toxics efforts include:

Chloroprene

R6 is assisting LDEQ respond to concerns regarding chloroprene emissions and health risks around the Denka facility in LaPlace, LA.
This is the only facility in the country that emits significant amounts of chloroprene, so this issue is specific to Region 6 and Louisiana.
There is no specific EPA rule that addresses this issue. EPA is supporting LDEQ efforts to work with the facility to reduce emissions.
See https://www.epa.gov/la/laplace-louisiana-epa-response for more information.

Ethylene Oxide

Ethylene oxide is a concern nationally based on estimated risks identified in the most recent EPA National Air Toxics Assessment.
Two EPA rulemakings on ethylene oxide emissions are in progress, but they will not reduce emissions sufficiently in all areas of concern.
R6 is assisting states, particularly LA, TX & OK respond to concerns about estimated health risks from ethylene oxide emissions.
See https://www.epa.gov/hazardous-air-pollutants-ethylene-oxide for more information on EPA activities.

State-Program Efforts

State and local agencies may have air toxics requirements that go beyond the scope of Federal programs which apply only within that specific state or local agency jurisdiction. Some significant Region 6 State-only efforts to address air toxics concerns include:

LDEQ has state ambient air toxics standards. These are regulatory limits on amounts of air toxics in the air people breathe in Louisiana.
Problems can arise if EPA air toxics screening levels, which are not regulatory, are significantly more stringent than state requirements.

TCEQ state air toxics screening levels. These are non-regulatory air toxics levels considered in permitting and monitoring data reviews.
Note: On June 28, 2019, TCEQ announced a public comment period for their draft state Ethylene Oxide Effects Screening Level (ESL) Development Decision Document. EPA is in communication with TCEQ as they proceed with their state screening level development.

The ODEQ state air toxics program emphasizes ambient monitoring to evaluate the air toxic concerns unique to Oklahoma.
Note: EPA will be analyzing samples from Oklahoma monitors as part of a national effort to research ethylene oxide background levels.