

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR THE REVISED GROUND-LEVEL OZONE AND PARTICULATE MATTER NATIONAL AMBIENT AIR QUALITY STANDARDS

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is issuing a series of guidance memoranda during 1998 for States to use in planning for the revised ground-level ozone and particulate matter air quality standards.
- The guidance issued this month (“Early Planning Guidance”) addresses two Clean Air Act requirements. First, the guidance addresses the requirement for Governors to submit recommendations for designations (i.e., nonattainment, attainment and unclassifiable) for the revised ground-level ozone and particulate matter standards. Second, the guidance explains the process EPA plans to follow for ensuring that general authority/infrastructure State implementation plans (SIPs) are adequate for the revised standards.
- By December 1998, EPA plans to issue subsequent implementation planning guidance covering other areas related to implementation of the revised ozone and particulate matter standards.
- This series of guidance is intended to help States meet Clean Air Act requirements that relate to implementation of revised ambient air quality standards. EPA will implement the concepts discussed in this guidance through subsequent guidance and rulemaking actions, as appropriate. Such rulemaking actions include approving or disapproving State implementation plan submittals.
- This guidance reflects President Clinton’s July 16, 1997 directive to EPA Administrator Browner, which laid out a common-sense implementation strategy for the revised standards.

WHAT DOES EPA RECOMMEND THAT GOVERNORS SUBMIT FOR THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NONATTAINMENT AREA DESIGNATIONS WHICH ARE DUE IN JULY 1998?

- For ozone, States should assess which monitors violate the revised ozone standard, which monitors attain the standard and those for which there is insufficient information to determine a violation. States may also submit boundary recommendations. Prior to ozone designations, EPA will provide Governors an opportunity to supplement these recommendations.
- For PM_{2.5} (particles 2.5 micrometers in diameter or smaller), due to the lack of data, Governors may recommend an unclassifiable designation for all areas. Prior to the

2002-2005 time frame, Governors will be able to recommend which areas should be redesignated to nonattainment.

- For PM₁₀ (particles 10 micrometers in diameter or smaller), using the best information available, States should assess which monitors are believed to violate the revised PM₁₀ standard, which monitors have the potential to attain the standard and those for which there is insufficient information to determine a violation. States may also use the best available information to submit boundary recommendations.

WHAT SHOULD STATES DO BY JULY 2000 FOR THEIR GENERAL AUTHORITY/INFRASTRUCTURE SIPS?

- States are required to revise and update their general State implementation plans (SIPs) as needed to ensure they are adequate for the revised ozone and particulate matter air quality standards. These revisions cover the air program infrastructure and the general legal authority provisions of State SIPs. For example, States must ensure that they have adequate authority to monitor air quality.

WHAT SUBSEQUENT IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE DOES EPA PLAN TO ISSUE THIS YEAR?

- One set of guidance -- the Initial Planning Guidance -- will provide an overview of the nonattainment area classification scheme and related requirements for the revised ozone and particulate matter standards. This initial guidance will detail the process by which an ozone nonattainment area can seek the transitional classification. The guidance will also provide the policy for ozone and PM₁₀ nonattainment area control requirements (known as "RACM" or "reasonable available control measures"). EPA expects to have a draft of the Initial Planning Guidance available for comment in mid-1998.
- A second set of guidance -- the Program Structure Guidance -- will provide detailed guidance for areas other than transitional ozone areas (i.e., non-transitional ozone areas) and will include guidance for Clean Air Act requirements not previously addressed for the revised particulate matter standards. EPA expects to have a draft of the Program Structure Guidance available for comment in September 1998.

Background

- On July 17, 1997, following a lengthy scientific review process, the EPA revised the national ambient air quality standards for ground-level ozone and particulate matter.
- Specifically, the EPA is phasing out and replacing the previous 1-hour ozone standard with a new 8-hour standard to protect against longer exposure periods. In addition, the EPA revised the primary and secondary particulate matter standards by establishing

annual and 24-hour standards for smaller or “fine” particles (particles 2.5 micrometers in diameter or smaller) and by changing the form of the existing 24-hour and annual particulate matter standards (for particles 10 micrometers in diameter or smaller).

- Under the Clean Air Act, within one year after EPA revises any national ambient air quality standards, States are required to submit recommendations to EPA on designations of areas within their State that are nonattainment, attainment, and unclassifiable under the revised standards. Since the ground-level ozone and particulate matter standards were revised in July 1997, these recommendations are due in July 1998. Today’s guidance provides information to States to help them prepare these submittals.
- EPA plans to “designate” areas as nonattainment for the revised ozone and particulate matter standards based on the most recently available 3 consecutive years of air quality data. For the revised ozone and PM₁₀ standards, EPA plans to designate areas as nonattainment in the 1999-2000 timeframe.
- Under the Clean Air Act, within three years after EPA revises national ambient air quality standards, States are required to revise and update their general State implementation plans (SIPs) as needed. These revisions cover the air program infrastructure and the general legal authority provisions of State SIPs. Today’s guidance details the process EPA plans to follow to determine the plans are adequate in these areas.
- Today’s guidance notes that States will also have to update their infrastructure SIPs within 12 months after EPA finalizes the Regional Haze rule. EPA will issue further guidance for State implementation plans related to the regional haze program when the rule is finalized. The Regional Haze rule, which was proposed on July 17, 1997, addresses visibility impairment in more than 150 important natural areas across the country.

For Further Information

- Interested parties can download the Early Planning Guidance from the following website on the Internet: (<http://tnwww.rtpnc.epa.gov/implement/>). This website also contains a complete list of planned activities related to implementation of the new national ambient air quality standards.
- For further information about the Early Planning Guidance or the Initial Planning Guidance, contact Chris Stoneman of EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards at (919) 541-0823. For further information about the Program Structure Guidance, contact John Silvasi of EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards at (919) 541-5666.

- EPA's Office of Air and Radiation's homepage on the Internet contains a wide range of information on the ozone and particulate matter standards, 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/>). The web site for general information about the new ozone and particulate matter standards is: (<http://www.epa.gov/airlinks>).