

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: EPA's VOC Test Methods 25 and 25A

FROM: John B. Rasnic, Director
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Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards

TO: Air, Pesticides, and Toxics Management Division
Directors
Regions I and IV

Air and Waste Management Division Director
Region II

Air, Radiation, and Toxics Division Director
Region III

Air and Radiation Division Director
Region V

Air, Pesticides, and Toxics Division Director
Region VI

Air and Toxics Division Directors
Regions VII, VIII, IX and X

As a result of requests from industry, Regional Offices and State programs, we have reviewed our guidance regarding the use of Methods 25 and 25A for measuring gas stream volatile organic compounds (VOC) concentration. Information obtained during this review has resulted in the following revised guidance, which is effective immediately and which supersedes all previous guidance on this matter. This revision has been coordinated with the other divisions within the Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards.

The EPA has decided to add an option 3 to permit further the use of Method 25A in lieu of Method 25 under certain conditions. Therefore, our new guidance is as follows. The EPA mandates the use of Method 25 for measuring gas stream VOC concentration when determining the destruction efficiency (DE) of afterburners. It also allows the use of Method 25A, in lieu of Method 25, under any of the following circumstances: 1) when the applicable regulation limits the exhaust VOC concentration to less than 50 ppm; 2) when the VOC concentration at the inlet of the control system and the required level of control are such to result in exhaust VOC concentrations of 50 ppm or less; or 3) if, because of the high efficiency of the control device, the anticipated VOC concentration at the control system exhaust is 50 ppm or less, regardless of the inlet concentration.

Further, if a source elects to use Method 25A under option 3, above, the exhaust VOC concentration must be 50 ppm or less and the required DE must be met for the source to have demonstrated compliance. If the Method 25A test results show that the required DE apparently has been met, but the exhaust concentration is above 50 ppm, this is an indicator that Method 25A is not the appropriate test method and that Method 25 should be used.

BACKGROUND

The primary industry impacted by this policy is the printing industry, which has consistently claimed that the Method 25 test procedure is too expensive and cumbersome to be used as a compliance demonstration tool. They have stated that current state-of-the-art technology afterburners routinely achieve 98-99 percent destruction efficiency, generally significantly greater than is required by regulations. As a result, control system outlet VOC concentrations are commonly less than 50 ppm, regardless of the inlet concentration.

Regulations which specify performance requirements for the subject control systems have typically been based on older technology, which was less efficient than current technology. We agree with the printing industry's claim

that VOC destruction technology currently available can perform at greater levels than as specified by the regulations. It is therefore appropriate to revise our guidance on the usage of these compliance demonstration methods.

This guidance specifies the circumstances under which Method 25 and Method 25A are to be used. It will reduce the administrative burden on a significant number of regulated industrial sources but will not reduce the stringency of any currently applicable regulatory requirements.

cc: OAQPS Division Directors