



THE 33/50 PROGRAM

***FORGING AN ALLIANCE
FOR POLLUTION PREVENTION***



WHAT IS THE 33/50 PROGRAM?

The 33/50 Program is EPA's voluntary pollution prevention initiative to reduce national pollution releases and off-site transfers of 17 toxic chemicals by 33 per cent by the end of 1992 and by 50 per cent by the end of 1995. EPA is asking companies to examine their own industrial processes to identify and implement cost-effective pollution prevention practices for these chemicals. Company participation in the 33/50 Program is completely voluntary. The Program aims, through voluntary pollution prevention activities, to reduce releases and off-site transfers of a targeted set of 17 chemicals from a national total of 1.4 billion pounds in 1988 to 700 million pounds by 1995, a 50% overall reduction. The Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) (established by federal law, the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act of 1986) will be used to track these reductions using 1988 data as a baseline. As required by the Pollution Prevention Act of 1990, TRI industrial reporting requirements will be expanded, beginning in calendar year 1991, to include information on pollution prevention.

EPA announced the 33/50 Program in February 1991 when EPA Administrator William K. Reilly asked 600 U.S. companies to reduce their releases of these 17 toxic chemicals. EPA contacted these 600 companies first because TRI data indicated that these companies were the largest dischargers to the environment of these chemicals. EPA is also contacting thousands of additional companies that release these 17 chemicals and requesting their voluntary participation in the 33/50 Program. All companies are encouraged to participate in the 33/50 Program (even if they do not receive a letter from EPA inviting them to participate).

While EPA is seeking to reduce aggregate national environmental releases of these 17 chemicals by 50 per cent by 1995, individual companies are encouraged to develop their own reduction goals to contribute to this national effort. EPA also encourages companies to reduce releases of other TRI chemicals and to extend these reductions to their facilities outside the United States. For those companies that have not yet made a commitment to participate, EPA encourages those companies to participate in this national pollution prevention initiative. EPA will periodically recognize those companies that commit to reduce their releases and transfers of the targeted chemicals, and publicly recognize the pollution prevention successes companies achieve.

WHAT IS POLLUTION PREVENTION?

The overall goal of the 33/50 Program is to promote the benefits of pollution prevention while obtaining measurable reductions in pollution. Pollution prevention is the use of materials, processes, or practices that reduce or eliminate the creation of pollutants or wastes.

Pollution prevention should be considered the first step in a hierarchy of options for reducing the generation of pollution. The next step in the hierarchy is responsible recycling of any wastes that cannot be reduced or eliminated at the source. Wastes that cannot be recycled should be treated in accordance with environmental standards. Finally, any wastes that remain after treatment should be disposed of safely.

EPA is promoting pollution prevention because it is often the most cost-effective option to reduce pollution, and the environmental and health risks associated with pollution. Pollution prevention is often cost effective because it may reduce raw material losses, reduce reliance on expensive "end-of-pipe" treatment technologies and disposal practices, conserve energy, water, chemicals, and other inputs, and reduce the potential liability associated with waste generation. Pollution prevention is environmentally desirable for these very same reasons: pollution itself is reduced at the source while resources are conserved.

MAJOR 33/50 PROGRAM GOALS

The 33/50 Program has three basic goals. First, EPA is aiming to reduce national aggregate environmental releases of the 17 target chemicals from 1988 levels by 33 per cent by the end of 1992 and by 50 per cent by the end of 1995. Second, EPA is encouraging companies to use pollution prevention practices (rather than end-of-pipe treatment) to achieve these reductions. Third, EPA hopes that this Program will help **foster a pollution prevention ethic** in American business whereby companies routinely analyze all their operations to reduce or eliminate pollution before it is created.

WHAT ARE THE TARGET CHEMICALS?

The 17 chemical groups are:

Benzene	Methyl Ethyl Ketone
Cadmium & Cadmium Compounds	Methyl Isobutyl Ketone
Carbon Tetrachloride	Nickel & Nickel Compounds
Chloroform	Tetrachloroethylene
Chromium & Chromium Compounds	Toluene
Cyanide & Cyanide Compounds	1,1,1-Trichloroethane
Lead & Lead Compounds	Trichloroethylene
Mercury & Mercury Compounds	Xylenes
Methylene Chloride	

These chemicals were selected from the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI). The TRI is a computerized data base containing public information on the annual releases and transfers of approximately 300 toxic chemicals reported by U.S. manufacturing facilities to EPA and the States. Since 1987 federal law has required facilities to report the amount of both routine and accidental releases of the 300 listed chemicals to the air, water and soil, and the amount contained in wastes transferred off-site.

The chemicals listed above were selected for the 33/50 Program because: a) they are produced in large quantities and subsequently released into the environment in large quantities; b) they are generally identified as toxic or hazardous pollutants; thus there may be significant environmental and health benefits from reducing their releases to the environment; and c) of the potential to reduce releases of these chemicals through pollution prevention.

THE 33/50 PROGRAM SIGNALS A NEW APPROACH

The 33/50 Program complements EPA's traditional command and control approach. The key attributes of this new approach are:

NATIONAL IN SCOPE Success will be measured according to whether reductions have been achieved nationwide, rather than for each company or facility. The reductions also will be looked at as an aggregate — total releases of all chemicals rather than for each one.

VOLUNTARY Companies are free to decide if and how to participate in the program by: a) committing to meet their own specified reduction goals; and b) making good faith voluntary efforts to identify and implement cost-effective prevention measures. Any steps taken to reduce targeted toxics will not be enforceable, unless these activities are otherwise required by law or regulation.

MULTI-MEDIA The reduction goals apply to total releases and off-site transfers to air, land, and water.

PREVENTION-ORIENTED EPA's objective is to encourage these reductions through pollution prevention. However, companies are encouraged to participate in the 33/50 Program even if all of their reductions are not achieved through prevention.

ADVANTAGES OF A VOLUNTARY APPROACH

EPA's voluntary 33/50 Program is designed to benefit:

- THE PUBLIC**
- By significantly reducing the amount of pollution released to the environment.
 - By getting faster reductions than might be achieved by waiting for statutes or regulations to take effect, and by achieving permanent solutions where source reductions occur.
 - By promoting a pollution prevention ethic in American business which will lead to long-term reductions in pollution.
- INDUSTRY**
- By creating clear expectations in the form of a national goal for the targeted chemicals, and providing the flexibility to choose cost-effective environmental solutions which may result in improved efficiency and net economic benefits.

- By providing positive incentives through public recognition of efforts. All companies which commit in writing to EPA to participate in the 33/50 Program will receive official public recognition of their commitments.
- By creating prestigious national awards which companies may apply for to recognize exceptional pollution prevention achievements in reducing releases of the targeted chemicals.

GOVERNMENT

- By promoting pollution prevention and assisting in the identification of regulatory and nonregulatory impediments to pollution prevention. The Pollution Prevention Act of 1990 requires EPA to promote pollution prevention and report to Congress on barriers, incentives and disincentives to pollution prevention. EPA, through its regional offices, will be working with the states to coordinate implementation of the 33/50 Program.

WHAT IS EPA ASKING COMPANIES TO DO?

EPA is contacting thousands of companies to provide them with information on the 33/50 Program and to solicit their participation. Each company is being asked to examine its processes to identify and implement cost-effective pollution prevention practices that will reduce or eliminate releases of the 17 chemicals. In addition, companies are being asked to submit a letter to EPA publicly stating their reduction goals and how they plan to achieve them. All companies wishing to participate in the 33/50 Program and receive official public recognition of their commitments are encouraged to supply EPA with information on their reduction goals.

HOW TO GET MORE INFORMATION

Guidance on how a company can participate in the 33/50 Program is available upon request. For copies of this commitment guidance and other 33/50 documents, fax your request to the TSCA Assistance Service at (202) 554-5603. For more information on the 33/50 Program, contact the TSCA Hotline at (202) 554-1404, (8:30 am to 4:00 pm).

Information on pollution prevention (and the 33/50 Program) is available through the Pollution Prevention Information Exchange System (PIES), a free computer bulletin board associated with EPA's Pollution Prevention Information Clearinghouse. To learn how to use the Clearinghouse and the PIES, call (703) 821-4800. To access the PIES using a PC, a modem, and communications software, call (703) 506-1025 (set your communications software to no parity, 8 data bits, and 1 stop bit).