



The 33/50 Program

Forging An Alliance For Pollution Prevention



Recycled/Recyclable
Printed on paper that contains
at least 50% recycled fiber

WHAT IS THE 33/50 PROGRAM?

In 1988, there were 1.4 billion pounds of releases and transfers of 17 priority pollutants reported to the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI)*. The 33/50 Program aims to cut this figure in half—a 700-million-pound reduction by 1995, through voluntary, direct action by industry.

EPA Administrator William K. Reilly asked 7,000 U.S. companies to reduce their releases of these 17 targeted chemicals. The 33/50 Program is EPA's voluntary pollution prevention initiative to reduce national pollution releases and off-site transfers by 50% in 1995 (with an interim goal of 33% in 1992).

WHAT ARE THE TARGET CHEMICALS?

BENZENE
CADMIUM & COMPOUNDS
CARBON TETRACHLORIDE
CHLOROFORM
CHROMIUM & COMPOUNDS
CYANIDES
LEAD & COMPOUNDS
MERCURY & COMPOUNDS

METHYL ETHYL KETONE
METHYL ISOBUTYL KETONE
METHYLENE CHLORIDE
NICKEL & COMPOUNDS
TETRACHLOROETHYLENE
TOLUENE
TRICHLOROETHANE
TRICHLOROETHYLENE
XYLENES

The 17 chemicals were chosen on the basis of 3 criteria:

- they pose environmental and health concerns
- they are high-volume industrial chemicals
- they *can* be reduced through pollution prevention

WHAT IS EPA ASKING COMPANIES TO DO?

- 1. Participate in the 33/50 program:**
 - examine production processes
 - identify cost-effective pollution prevention practices
- 2. Write a letter to EPA stating reduction goals and plans:**
 - reduce or eliminate releases of the 17 priority pollutants
 - incorporate pollution prevention
 - consider reducing releases of other chemicals
 - extend reductions to facilities outside the USA
- 3. Send letter to USEPA 33/50 Program (TS-792A)**
401 M Street SW, Washington, D.C. 20460

For those companies that have not yet made a commitment to participate in the 33/50 program, EPA encourages them to support this national pollution prevention initiative by developing their own reductions targets. Although EPA established a national goal of 50% by 1995, companies are free to set their own reduction goals, no matter what level. All reductions count toward the national 50% goal.

* 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.

WHY PARTICIPATE IN THE 33/50 PROGRAM?

By 1992, more than half of the nation's largest releasers of 33/50 chemicals have sent commitments in writing to EPA and are working to make these reductions a reality. Clearly, achievement of national reduction goals is well underway. Meanwhile, some of the most frequently expressed company concerns about participating in the 33/50 program include more fear than fact:

CONCERN - *My company can't handle the paperwork.*

FACT - The EPA is accepting one-page letters of commitment to voluntary reductions. Progress will be checked through the TRI program. No additional paperwork required.

CONCERN - *Voluntary today and mandatory tomorrow!*

FACT - No; 33/50 reduction commitments are truly voluntary and are **not enforceable**.

CONCERN -

Our company is growing—production is increasing; how are we going to calculate any reductions?

FACT - Many growing companies are participating in the 33/50 program. Some are indexing pollution reductions as a shrinking percentage of production, rather than an absolute percent reduction.

CONCERN -

What if the 33/50 chemicals are integral parts of our company products and no safer substitutes or technologies exist at this time?

FACT - EPA asks only that your company focus on the waste management hierarchy. Look at source reduction first; if it is not viable, look for opportunities to recycle, treat or dispose, in that order. (See section on how to get more information.)

CONCERN -

Our company is not comfortable with the 1988 TRI baseline because it was not a representative year.

FACT - The 33/50 program is flexible—you set whatever baseline you want. Be specific in your commitment letter. We will relate it to your TRI Reports.

CONCERN -

Our emissions are so small compared to the 1.4 billion pounds that our participation makes no difference.

FACT - Emissions of small volumes from small companies are, in fact, important to local communities and contribute to the total national reductions. Also, the success of 33/50 depends both on participation and reductions.

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. The reductions also will be looked at as an aggregate - total releases of all chemicals.

VOLUNTARY

Companies are free to decide if and how to participate in the program. Any steps taken to reduce targeted toxics will not be enforceable, unless these activities are otherwise required by law or regulation.

MULTI-MEDIA

Pollution 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.
- 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.
- By 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 Certificates of Appreciation for their commitments.
- By creating a prestigious national awards program 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.
- By working with the states through regional offices to coordinate implementation of the 33/50 Program.

WHAT IS POLLUTION PREVENTION?

As the centerpiece of EPA's voluntary pollution prevention initiatives the overall goal of the 33/50 Program is to promote the benefits of pollution prevention, while obtaining measurable reductions in pollution. Pollution prevention includes the use of materials, processes, or practices that reduce or eliminate the creation of pollutants or wastes.

Pollution prevention should be considered the first and most cost-effective 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.

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 5:00 pm EST).

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. 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).