

**Excerpt from
EPA FACT SHEET
FINAL REVISIONS TO THE
NATIONAL AMBIENT AIR QUALITY STANDARDS
FOR PARTICLE POLLUTION (PARTICULATE MATTER)
SUMMARY OF ACTION**

On September 21, 2006 EPA issued new national air quality standards for particle Pollution. The final standards address two categories of particle pollution: *fine particles* (PM_{2.5}), which are 2.5 micrometers in diameter and smaller; and *inhalable coarse particles* (PM₁₀) which are smaller than 10 micrometers. (A micrometer is 1/1000th of a millimeter; there are 25,400 micrometers in an inch). EPA selected levels for the final standards after completing an extensive review of thousands of scientific studies on the impact of fine and coarse particles on public health and welfare. The Agency also carefully reviewed and considered public comment on the proposed standards. EPA held three public hearings and received about 120,000 written comments.

The EPA actions include:

- EPA is lowering the 24-hour PM_{2.5} standard from the 1997 level of 65µg/m³ to 35µg/m³.
- EPA will retain the current annual fine particle standard at 15µg/m³.
- The Agency will retain the existing national 24-hour PM₁₀ standard of 150µg/m³.
- The Agency is revoking the annual PM₁₀ standard, because available evidence generally does not suggest a link between long-term exposure to current levels of coarse particles and health problems.

An area will meet the 24-hour standard if the 98th percentile of 24-hour PM_{2.5} concentrations in a year, averaged over three years, is less than or equal to the level of the standard of 35 µg/m³. This is the same form as the current 24-hour standard.

An area will meet the annual PM_{2.5} standard when the three-year average of the annual average PM_{2.5} concentration is less than or equal to 15 µg/m³. This is the same form as the current annual standard.

Interested parties can download additional information from EPA's Web site at:

<http://www.epa.gov/air/particles/actions.html>

Timeline

Milestone	1997 PM_{2.5} Primary NAAQS	2006 PM_{2.5} Primary NAAQS
Promulgation of Standard	July 1997	Sep. 2006
State Recommendations to EPA	Feb. 2004 (based on 2001-2003 monitoring data)	Dec. 2007 (based on 2004-2006 monitoring data)
Final Designations Signature	Dec. 2004	Dec. 2009
Effective Date of Designations	April 2005	April 2010
SIPs Due	April 2008	April 2013
Attainment Date	April 2010 (based on 2007-2009 monitoring data)	April 2015 (based on 2012-2014 monitoring data)
Attainment Date with Extension	Up to April 2015	April 2020