



National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

Principal Center for Regulatory Risk Analysis and Communication

REGULATORY ALERT

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Date [Citation]: 8 December 2009 [[74 FR 64810](#)]

Regulatory Agency: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Rulemaking Type: Proposed Rule

Title: Primary National Ambient Air Quality Standard for Sulfur Dioxide

Summary:

On 8 December 2009, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed a rule revising the primary national ambient air quality standard (NAAQS) for sulfur dioxide (SO₂). A review of scientific information indicated that a 1-hour SO₂ standard would better protect public health than the existing 24-hour and annual standards by limiting the public's exposure to high short-term SO₂ concentrations. EPA is proposing to revise the primary standard to a level between 50 and 100 parts per billion (ppb) measured over 1 hour. The existing primary standards, which EPA is proposing to revoke, are 140 ppb measured over 24 hours and 30 ppb over 1 year. EPA is requesting comments about alternative levels for the 1-hour standard up to 150 ppb and the proposal to revoke the existing standards. The existing secondary SO₂ standard is unaffected by the proposed rule.

The proposal would establish a new form for the design value for compliance with the SO₂ standard. Compliance would be determined based on the 3-year average of the annual 4th highest daily maximum 1-hour average concentration, or its equivalent, the 3-year average of the 99th percentile of the annual distribution of daily maximum 1-hour average concentrations.

EPA also is proposing changes to the ambient air monitoring and reporting requirements for SO₂. These proposed requirements are expected to result in a minimum of 348 SO₂ monitoring sites. EPA estimates that at least one-third of the SO₂ monitors already in operation may meet the proposed siting requirements.

EPA will accept comments for 60 days after the rule's publication in the *Federal Register* on 8 December 2009. A public hearing on the proposed rule will be held in Atlanta, Georgia, on 5 January 2010. EPA plans to promulgate a final rule by 2 June 2010 and to designate non-attainment areas in 2012.

Potential Impacts to NASA:

Changes to the primary standard may result in additional counties being designated as nonattainment areas for SO₂. NASA Centers, contractors, and vendor facilities located in such counties may become subject to additional emission control requirements, more stringent permitting requirements, and requirements to perform conformity analyses. NASA Centers located in counties that EPA lists as potential nonattainment areas for the 50- to 100-ppb 1-hour SO₂ standard include the following (based on monitored air quality 2006 through 2008, 99th percentile):

- Glenn Research Center/Cuyahoga County: 85 ppb
- Johnson Space Center/Harris County: 56 ppb
- Langley Research Center/Hampton City: 61 ppb

Additional Information: <http://www.epa.gov/air/sulfurdioxide/actions.html>