



National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

Principal Center for Regulatory Risk Analysis and Communication

REGULATORY ALERT

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Date [Citation]: 2 June 2010 [[pre-publication version](#)]

Regulatory Agency: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Rulemaking Type: Final Rule

Title: 1-Hour Primary National Ambient Air Quality Standard for Sulfur Dioxide

Summary:

On 2 June 2010, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) revised the primary national ambient air quality standard (NAAQS) for sulfur dioxide (SO₂) by establishing a new 1-hour primary standard of 75 parts per billion (ppb). EPA has revoked both the annual primary standard of 30 ppb and the 24-hour standard of 140 ppb. The secondary standard to protect public welfare remains unaffected by the revisions.

EPA also is making changes to the data reporting requirements for SO₂. State and local agencies are required to report two data values for every hour of monitoring conducted:

- The 1-hour average SO₂ concentration
- The maximum 5-minute block average SO₂ concentration of each hour

The rule establishes a new form for the design value for compliance with the SO₂ standard. Compliance for the new 1-hour standard would be determined based on the 3-year average of the 99th percentile of the annual distribution of daily maximum 1-hour average concentrations.

EPA also is revising the ambient air monitoring requirements for SO₂. The final monitoring regulations require monitors to be placed in Core Based Statistical Areas (CBSAs) based on a population-weighted emissions index for the area. Additional monitoring might be required in areas with SO₂ sources that are not conducive to modeling and areas that have multiple SO₂ sources with overlapping plumes.

Adjustments to the existing monitoring network must be made to ensure that monitors meet the network design regulations for the new 1-hour SO₂ standard. All new and old monitors must be operational and adhere to the new standard by 1 January 2013. EPA estimates that 41 new monitoring sites will need to be established nationwide.

EPA anticipates initially designating areas based on either 2008-2010 monitoring data (for smaller sources), or refined dispersion modeling results (for medium to large sources). Final designations of attainment and non-attainment areas are scheduled for completion in June 2012. The final designations will be based on the most current available air quality data, which probably will be 2009-2011 data. EPA will address the secondary standard, designed to protect the public welfare, including the environment, as part of a separate review scheduled for completion in 2012.

The rule will become effective 60 days after it is published in the *Federal Register*.

Potential Impacts to NASA:

Changes to the primary standard might 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; or requirements to perform conformity analyses.

No NASA Centers are located in counties that EPA lists as potential nonattainment areas for the 75 ppb 1-hour SO₂ standard, based on the 99th percentile of monitored air quality data from 2007 through 2009. Data from the new monitors could indicate additional nonattainment areas in the future.

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