

## Air Contaminants: Air Permits

### 5-Minute Talk

#### Overview of topic

Operating permits are documents issued to air pollution sources. Most permits are issued by state and local permitting authorities. The purpose is to reduce violations of air pollution laws by:

- recording the air pollution control requirements that apply to the source in one document;
- requiring regular reports on how the source tracks and controls emissions of pollution;
- adding monitoring, testing, or recordkeeping requirements to assure compliance with emission limits or other requirements;
- requiring the source to certify whether it has met the air pollution requirements in its permit;
- making the terms of the permit federally enforceable by the Environmental Protection Agency as well as the state.

There are two types of permits: construction permits and operating permits.

**Construction Permits** are required for all new stationary sources and all existing stationary sources that are adding or modifying emissions units.

“Stationary source” means a place that releases pollutants and does not move around. Stationary sources include power plants, gas stations, and incinerators (as opposed to “mobile sources,” such as vehicles).

“Emissions units” include equipment that emit air pollutants at a stationary source. Common emissions units include:

- stationary internal combustion engines,
- boilers or steam generators,
- printing presses, and
- paint spray booths.



**Operating Permits** are required for all major stationary sources. In general, a source is “major” if it emits more than a defined number of tons per year. Some local agencies also require operating permits for minor sources. Air quality permits impose conditions on the source. The permit conditions establish:

- limits on the types and amounts of air pollution allowed,
- operating requirements for pollution control devices or prevention activities, and
- monitoring and recordkeeping requirements.

### **Permitting costs**

Permitting authorities charge annual fees to cover the permit program costs. Sources that emit more air pollution pay more for their permits. Some sources hire consultants to help them prepare their permit applications and assist them throughout the permitting process.

### **Permit violations**

A source that violates the enforceable permit conditions may be subject to penalties and corrective action.

### **Training tips**

There are no training requirements regarding air permits. However, if your facility changes the chemicals it uses in certain processes to maintain compliance with emission limits, employees should be informed of why the changes are needed to help ensure compliance.

Prior to training, review the participant handout. Explain to the attendees what their responsibilities are to help the employer meet the requirements of the air permit.

### **Where to go for more information**

40 CFR Part 70

