

2015 Spring Air Quality Update



Air Quality Improving

The amount of fine particles (PM_{2.5}) in the air continues to decline, providing Iowans with cleaner air to breathe, as well as greater air resources to allow for continued growth of our economy. Since 2003-2005, the median state-wide three year levels of PM_{2.5} in the air have been reduced from about 32 micrograms per cubic meter (mcg/m³) of air down to 23 mcg/m³ in 2012-2014. The 24-hour National Ambient Air Quality Standard for fine particles is 35 mcg/m³.

Ground level ozone trends, although more cyclical have trended down since high median state-wide levels in 2005-2007 of 68 parts per billion (ppb), to 64 ppb in 2012-2014. The standard is 75 ppb.

Emissions reduction projects in Council Bluffs and Muscatine continue to bring down Lead, Fine Particulate, and Sulfur Dioxide levels.

Permit Turn-Around Times Dropping

As newer staff move toward achieving expected permit issuance levels, air construction permit issuance rates are dropping. The air quality construction permit section has been working to streamline new staff training by providing better training plans, and increased mentorship. The bureau's goal has been to completely eliminate the backlog of permit applications with no increase in staffing, so that agency permit issuance goals are met consistently by no later than the fall of 2016. Current projections based on these achievements, combined with expectations for more seamless permit processing as a result of clarifications to permit application forms developed collaboratively with industry, keep us on track to meet or exceed that goal!

Title V Fees Stay at \$56 per ton

At the May 19, 2015, Environmental Protection Commission Meeting, the department will recommend to the Commission that the Title V Emission Fees, for the sixth year in a row, be set at \$56 per ton.

In state fiscal year 2016 (July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016), the Title V fee will continue to support a large portion of the cost of operations at the Air Quality Bureau. These fees also fund the University of Northern Iowa Air Emissions Assistance Program for Small Businesses, University of Iowa State Hygienic Laboratory operation of the ambient monitoring network, portions of Linn County and Polk County air programs, and increased costs that allow the air quality program to maintain current service levels.

New Advisory Groups Being Formed

This spring the air quality bureau will be seeking volunteers to provide input on the development of new rules and fees that will implement legislation established to fund air quality application review and permit issuance (see item below). Although not finalized, pencil in the following dates and times:

- Title V Operating Permit Application Fee Advisory Group - June 9, 9:30-11:30am,
- Major Source Construction Permit Application Fee Advisory Group - June 9, 1:00-3:00pm,
- Minor Source Construction Permit Application Fee Advisory Group - June 10, 9:30-11:30am,
- Asbestos Notification Fee Advisory Group - June 10, 1:00-3:00pm,
- The second meetings of each Advisory Group tentatively scheduled for July 7th (Major Sources), and July 8th (Minor Sources and Asbestos).

Draft rules, program costs, application volumes, possible fee rates, and a schedule for rulemaking and the effective date of the fees will be discussed at the meetings.

Please watch your mail and our website (www.iowacleanair.gov) for confirmation of these dates and times in the near future.

Legislature Establishes User Fees for Air Permit Applications

As a result of the considerable efforts of the 2014 Air Quality Stakeholder Group and their report to the legislature, ongoing funding for certain services provided by the air quality bureau (such as air construction permit issuance; operating permit issuance; and asbestos program implementation) will be provided through user fees.

Passed by the Iowa Senate on a 41:6 vote on April 13, 2015, and by the Iowa House on a 93:3 vote on April 22, 2015, Senate File 488 is ready for consideration by the Governor.

The legislation establishes a common process for setting each of the fees:

- Annually convened separate stakeholder Advisory meetings for each of the fee areas. Stakeholders will be asked to provide input on fee setting (please see Advisory Group item above);
- The department will calculate projections of permitting volumes and program costs on which to base the fees; and
- The Environmental protection commission will review and approve fee levels and fee adjustments;
- The calculated expense projections used to establish the fees shall not exceed the following levels each fiscal year:
 - Title V Air Emissions fee: \$8,250,000
 - Title V Operating Permit Application fee: \$1,250,000
 - Major Source Construction Permit Application fee: \$1,500,000
 - Minor Source Construction Permit Application fee: \$250,000
 - Asbestos Notification fee: \$450,000

These projections are expected to adequately fund ongoing air quality program costs assuming an annual cost increase of 1.9% for up to 5 years (FY2016 - FY2020).

If signed, the bill will allow the department to take rules to the Environmental Protection Commission to establish requirements for the submission of:

1. Application fees for minor source construction permits (for new or modified permits). This *may* include separate fee rates for:
 - a) Applications for new Construction permits, or permit modifications;
 - b) Applications for Templates;
 - c) Applications for permits-by-rule; or
 - d) Notifications of installations in lieu of a permit application.For minor sources, no annual operating or emissions fee will be assessed.
Modifications of equipment lists for issued Template permits are not anticipated to trigger a fee.
2. Application fees for major source construction permits (for new or modified permits). This *may* include separate fee rates for:
 - a) Applications for new Construction permits, or permit modifications;
 - b) Applications for Prevention of Significant Deterioration Permits;
 - c) Applications for regulatory determinations; and
 - d) Applications including dispersion modeling.
3. Application fees for major sources for Title V permits. This *may* include separate fee rates for:
 - a) Applications for initial permits;
 - b) Applications for renewal permits; and
 - c) Applications for permit modifications.
4. Notification fees for regulated asbestos demolitions or renovations.
No charges will be assessed for existing construction permits, templates, etc. unless the facility applies for a modification.

Questions?

If you have any questions, please feel free to call Catharine Fitzsimmons, Air Quality Bureau Chief, at (515) 725-9534.