



NEWS

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VINYL PLASTICS MINOR DIOXIN SOURCE, INDUSTRY TELLS EPA

MORRISTOWN, New Jersey, January 16, 1995 – Documents submitted to the U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency by the Vinyl Institute confirm that vinyl (polyvinyl chloride, or PVC) plastics are, at most, a minimal contributor to overall dioxin emissions in the United States. The documents were submitted by the Institute January 13 in response to the agency's request for public comment on its draft dioxin reassessment, *Estimating Exposure to Dioxin-Like Compounds*.

Robert H. Burnett, executive director of the Vinyl Institute, said that the association's comments addressed the three areas the agency had identified as being of concern: emissions generated during the vinyl production process; emissions generated during incineration of vinyl-containing wastes; and emissions generated by house fires involving vinyl products.

As part of the comments it submitted relative to the manufacture of vinyl products, the Institute provided the agency with new test data collected from eleven different samples of PVC pipe resin provided by six different manufacturers. The tests, conducted by Triangle Laboratories using EPA methodologies, found no measurable amounts of dioxin at the parts-per-trillion level, indicating no apparent risk or migration in finished PVC pipe – the largest single use for vinyl plastics. The results are the first phase of a larger testing program which the Institute informed the EPA it would undertake last August when the two parties met to

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discuss the dioxin reassessment. According to Burnett, the results for all testing should be available by the end of 1995.

In response to concerns about the incineration of vinyl products in municipal waste incinerators, the Institute submitted a new study conducted by Rigo & Rigo Associates, an environmental engineering firm, which analyzed over 1,700 test results from 155 incineration facilities. That analysis found no relationship between the chlorine content of waste and dioxin emissions from combustion processes. Instead, the Rigo study states the scientific literature is clear that the operating conditions of combustors are the critical factor in dioxin generation.

In the area of house fires, the Institute submitted a new analysis conducted by Dr. William F. Carroll, one of the industry's leading authorities on vinyl's fire performance properties, which finds that fires involving the combustion of vinyl products most likely contribute less than half a gram a year to overall dioxin emissions. The findings support a number of recent European reports, which essentially discount any relationship between the presence of vinyl and dioxin formation in fires. Summaries of these reports also were provided to the EPA.

"When we met with the EPA in August, we indicated that we believed our industry represented a minimal contribution to overall dioxin levels in the United States," said Bob Burnett. "Nevertheless, we acknowledged the agency's concern about the subject and we pledged to develop the information that would confirm that level of contribution. The data we're seeing now convinces us even more that the dioxin debate lies elsewhere, not within the PVC industry."

Burnett added that the industry would continue its good-faith effort to work with the EPA on the dioxin issue until the reassessment process is complete.

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