

**EPA Announces Revised Priorities for VOC and Hazardous Air Pollutants Limits
For Consumer and Commercial Products under
Section 183(e) of the Clean Air Act**

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You may have noticed over the last few years a gradual change in the characteristics of paints, wood finishing, and adhesives available when you go to your local hardware store or home improvement center. Many consumer products which historically used hazardous substances such as toluene, xylene, and MEK have been replaced by new products using alcohols, water based acrylics, and other materials. The changes in those consumer products have been responsible for reductions of over one million tons per year of emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOC). These reductions have helped reduce ground level ozone concentrations. Ground level ozone is a major component of smog which forms from reactions of VOC and oxides of nitrogen in sunlight. As often happens, many of the new products have characteristics which are very popular such as brighter colors and more resistant finishes. Sometimes good things result from Clean Air Act requirements, such as right turns on red, which reduce auto emissions and also your commuting time.

Over the next few years there will be further changes in products which are expected to further eliminate almost two (2) million more tons per year of VOC emissions (*Federal Register/Volume 70, Number 221, November 17, 2005*). You can expect to see changes in products including industrial cleaning solvents, aerosol spray paints, dry cleaning solvents, and industrial adhesives. If we are lucky, research and development departments of the chemical industry and various manufacturers will find replacement products which provide excellent performance while air quality is improved under this EPA program.

(Stan Jorgensen works with industries to help find cost effective ways to address Clean Air Act requirements. He is chairman of the Arkansas Environmental Federation Air Committee and President of a Little Rock, Arkansas, environmental engineering firm.)