

National Pollutant Inventory (NPI)

What is the NPI?

The NPI is an Internet database containing information on the types and amounts of certain substances being emitted to air, land and water. The NPI has been developed as a National Environment Protection Measure by the National Environment Protection Council (a national statutory body).

Who does the NPI apply to?

The NPI applies to larger Australian facilities and requires these facilities to estimate and report annually on their emissions for the NPI from 1 July 1998. The requirement to report depends on the amount of particular substances on the NPI reporting list that the facility uses.

There are 90 substances listed on the NPI. However, in the first two reporting years (until July 2000) facilities are only required to report on 36 substances. There are some exemptions from the requirement to report, for example; facilities solely engaged in agricultural production and mobile emissions sources (such as aircraft in flight and ships at sea).

Each substance on the NPI reporting list has at least one threshold. If the facility triggers a threshold for a substance then the operator is required to report the emissions of that substance from the facility to the NPI. There are five categories of thresholds: Category 1, Category 1a, Category 2a, Category 2b and Category 3. Most substances on the NPI reporting list fall into Category 1. In relation to this category, if a facility handles, manufactures, imports, processes, coincidentally produces or otherwise uses 10 tonnes or more per year of Category 1 substance, then the emissions of that substance from the facility must be reported.

It is important to note that the Category 1 thresholds are based on use, not on how much a facility emits of a substance.

When does the obligation to report commence?

Industrial facilities are only required to compile a report when an "Industry Handbook" relating to the relevant industry has been released. The Industry Handbook helps facility operators or managers to carry out the estimation of their emissions.

The Industry Handbook is made up of two components:

- a National Pollutant Inventory Guide (the "Guide") that applies to all industries; and
- Emission Estimation Technique Manuals ("EETs") that are specific to particular industries.

The Guide provides general information on the NPI and helps facilities determine whether they need to report. The EETs are manuals designed to help facilities estimate their emissions from different industrial facilities. A sector specific Industry Handbook is created by combining the Guide with an EET applicable to that industry. Larger industrial facilities may depart from the Industry Handbook and use their own method of estimation if it is approved by the relevant State or Territory authority.

Where a company is involved in a number of industries, the company may have to comply with a number of EETs. However, the requirement to report will only be triggered when the EET that applies to its core business is released. A list of EETs that are currently available can be found on the NPI website (www.environment.gov.au/net/mpi.html).



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