

Canada-Wide Standards for Mercury (New Base Metal Smelters)  
- Manitoba Implementation Plans -

Overview of the Standard:

Canada-wide Standards (CWS) are being established and implemented pursuant to the 1998 Canada-wide Accord on Environmental Harmonization of the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) and its Canada-wide Environmental Standards Sub-agreement. The Council of Ministers (COM) at their June 2000 meeting endorsed Standards for mercury from base smelting smelters. CWS are developed through an intergovernmental process engaging external stakeholders in advisory or consultative roles. Implementation of the standards are the responsibility of each jurisdiction.

The base metal smelting sector has historically been responsible for much of the mercury emitted in Canada. However, the application of a number of process changes and stack control technologies have combined to reduce emissions by more than 90% since 1988. As of the year 2000, mercury emissions from this sector remained the single largest emission source with a release of 2.8 tonnes per year.

In Manitoba, the Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting Co., Limited (HBM&S) zinc-copper smelter in Flin Flon has been identified to have mercury emissions to the atmosphere. With the commissioning of its pressure leaching process for zinc in 1993, significant reductions in mercury emissions were achieved. Since 1994, a continuing small annual decrease has been realized. For the year 2001, HBM&S emitted 1.06 tonnes of mercury at a rate of 6.2 grams per tonne of total metal production from its operation. Manitoba's other base metal smelter, INCO Thompson, processes ores that contain very low levels of mercury and, therefore, emissions of mercury are accordingly low.

CWS Numeric Target and Timeframe:

For new and expanding facilities:

application of best available pollution prevention and control techniques to minimize mercury emissions throughout the life-cycle of the minerals in question to achieve an environmental source performance (atmospheric emission) guideline of 0.2 g Hg/tonne production of finished zinc, nickel and lead, and 1 g Hg/tonne of finished copper, and consideration of a mercury offset program to ensure no "net" emission increases occur.

Any new facility will be required to design for and achieve compliance immediately upon full scale operation.

Implementation of the CWS for Mercury at New Base Metal Smelters (BMS) - Manitoba

General Accountability:

Manitoba's overall approach to new BMS facilities, should such additional facilities be constructed in the province, will be to incorporate the CWS requirements into the facility's Environment Act Licence or to include the requirements in a covering

regulation. [A 'smelter' is a Class 2 type of development as listed in the Class of Development Regulation 164/88 under the Manitoba Environment Act. No person shall construct, alter, operate or set into operation any Class 2 development unless a proposal is submitted and a valid Licence obtained unless specifically exempt or covered by regulation.]

Milestones and Timeframes:

Since environmental licencing of a facility involves a site-specific environmental assessment, on a case-by-case basis, implementation of the CWS would be addressed at the time a proposal for licencing was received by the Department. Therefore, no milestones or deliverables have been set for new facilities within this sector at this time.

Public Role:

In support of Licencing under the Manitoba Environment Act, public involvement in the environmental assessment and licencing processes is mandated by the Act. The Act requires public notice of proposals and an opportunity to participate in the review through the submission of comments. Public meetings and hearings may also be convened, as necessary. Additionally, Section 41(2) of the Act also requires that in the formulation or substantive review of regulations, the Minister shall provide opportunity for public consultation and shall seek advice and recommendations. As part of these broader processes, a public role in the implementation of the CWS would be provided.

Access to Information:

Under its Environment Act, Manitoba maintains a number of 'public registries' across the Province where information related to environmental assessment, licencing and other information can be placed and will be publicly accessible. Information related to this CWS would be deposited at the appropriate registry sites as well as at key central locations.

Verifiable Progress:

As a condition of its Licence or by Regulation, new facilities would be required to annually report on achievement of the CWS.

Manitoba Conservation  
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