

# The new *Canadian Environmental Protection Act*

## The new CEPA and the National Pollutant Release Inventory (NPRI)

### Further information:

#### Internet:

Additional information on the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999* is available on Environment Canada's Green Lane on the Internet at: [www.ec.gc.ca/cepa](http://www.ec.gc.ca/cepa)

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March 2000

### What is the National Pollutant Release Inventory?

The National Pollutant Release Inventory (NPRI) provides Canadians with facility-specific information regarding on-site releases and off-site transfers of 268 substances listed on the inventory. Companies that manufacture, process or otherwise use one of the listed substances, and meet the reporting thresholds, must report their releases or transfers to Environment Canada annually. The information is used by the department in its toxics management programs, and is made publicly available to Canadians each year.

### What sections of CEPA 1999 cover the NPRI?

CEPA 1999 includes information-gathering provisions (sections 46 to 53) that specifically address the creation of inventories of data (section 46) and state that the Minister shall establish a national inventory of releases of pollutants (section 48).

### Why specifically include the NPRI in this legislation?

The NPRI is the only publicly accessible inventory of its type in Canada. It provides Canadians with company-specific information on the releases and transfers in their communities for the 268 pollutants currently listed on the NPRI. The publication of this

information encourages companies to take voluntary action to reduce their releases and transfers, and allows the Government of Canada to track reductions or increases in releases and transfers. The NPRI also helps governments determine if regulatory action is necessary to ensure reductions, and if so, the form that action should take.

The federal government considers the information provided by the NPRI vital in its efforts to reduce releases of substances of concern to the environment and to the health of Canadians.

### Will the types of information reported to the NPRI change under the CEPA 1999?

The reporting requirements will continue to be outlined, as they are now, in notices in the *Canada Gazette*. Industry will continue to be provided each year with guidance and reporting packages by Environment Canada. The only change is a Ministerial option of issuing a notice in the *Canada Gazette* that may be in effect for up to three years, rather than a requirement to publish the notice each year.

## What are the types of information that must be reported to the NPRI?

If a facility meets the NPRI reporting thresholds for the list of substances specified in the *Canada Gazette*, the company must report the following:

- information about the company, its location and number of employees,
- information about each substance that meets the reporting requirements, including the substance name and Chemical Abstracts Service registry, the nature of the activities (such as whether the substance is manufactured, processed or otherwise used at the facility),
- the quantity of the substance that is released at the facility to water, air or land, underground injection and/or
- the quantity of the substance that is transferred off site to another location for final disposal or treatment prior to disposal and the nature of the treatment,
- the quantity of each reported substance that is transferred off-site for recycling and for energy recovery, and the address of the receiving facility,
- the reasons for year-to-year changes in releases, transfers and recycling,
- information on anticipated changes (mandatory for the three years following the reporting year) in releases, transfers and recycling, and
- information on the types of pollution prevention activities undertaken at the facility.

## Will the NPRI information still be accessible to Canadians?

CEPA 1999 specifically states that the Minister shall publish a national inventory of releases of pollutants in any manner that the Minister considers appropriate (section 50). As in the past, all information reported to the NPRI that is considered non-confidential will be made accessible to Canadians.

## Will more NPRI information be confidential under CEPA 1999?

The confidentiality provisions (section 52) under CEPA 1999 are essentially the same as those included in CEPA 1988.

## Where is there more information on the NPRI?

For more information on the NPRI, including guidance to industry, annual summary reports, the NPRI Query site and databases, please visit the NPRI site on the Internet, which can be found at: [www.ec.gc.ca/pdb/npri/](http://www.ec.gc.ca/pdb/npri/)

