

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards
Research Triangle Park, North Carolina 27711

DATE: Dec 1, 1980

SUBJECT: Revised Seasonal Afterburner Policy

FROM: Walter C. Barber, Director
Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards (MD-10)

TO: Director, Air and Hazardous Materials Division
Regions I-X

On July 28, 1976, the Agency issued its policy on the "Seasonal Operation of Natural Gas-Fired Afterburners." This policy authorized the approval of SIP revisions without a detailed, time consuming analysis of air quality impact if the seasonal shut down period was consistent with that delineated in a staff study ("Oxidant Air Quality and Meteorology," February 6, 1976) and if existing air quality showed past Violations in the months during which the afterburners were shutdown. Because of the nation's continuing need to conserve energy resources and because of the revision to the national ambient air quality standard for ozone, we have reconsidered a portion of this policy.

An analysis of available ambient air quality data concluded that exceedances of the revised national ambient air quality standard for ozone do not occur in the November through March period, except for areas of southern California and the Gulf Coast. As a result of this analysis, it is appropriate at this time to modify the "seasonal afterburner policy" to state that any plan revisions which provide for afterburner shutdown in the period of November through March outside of Southern California and the Gulf Coast should be proposed for approval. All other portions of the original policy remain unchanged, namely:

- (1) The policy applies to gas-fired afterburners installed to control emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) for the purpose of reducing ambient ozone concentrations. It does not apply to flares (which do not use natural gas as an auxiliary fuel), VOCs vented to boilers, afterburners operated principally for odor control, or afterburners operated to control toxic or hazardous substances; and

- (2) A policy to seasonally control afterburners can only be implemented through the SIP process. The attached staff report, supported by air quality data, should be adequate technical support for approving a SIP revision allowing for seasonal shutdown of afterburners in a given location.

It is recommended that you notify the State agencies in in your Region that EPA supports a policy which permits sources to shut off afterburners during the months of November through March except for areas of southern California and the Gulf Coast. Should you have any questions in this regard, please contact Mr. Richard G. Rhoads, Director, Control Programs Development Division, Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards at FTS 629-5251.

Attachment

cc: Chief, Air Programs Branch, Regions I-X