

# Ethylene Oxide/Ambient Air Monitoring: Illinois Pollution Control Board Proposed Rule



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The Illinois Pollution Control Board (“Board”) has proposed air monitoring rules intended to determine ambient levels of ethylene oxide (EtO). See 35 Ill. Adm. Code 249.

The Board cites provisions of the Illinois Environmental Protection Act as requiring the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (“IEPA”) to:

... both “conduct air testing to determine the ambient levels of [EtO] throughout the State” and, within a specified timeframe, “submit rules for ambient air testing of [EtO] to the Board.”

EtO is a flammable, colorless gas. Two key uses for EtO include:

- Production of other chemicals that are used to create everyday products (i.e., antifreeze, plastics, detergents, etc.)
- Sterilize devices that cannot be sterilized using steam (i.e., medical and dental equipment)

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) classified EtO as a human carcinogen in December 2016. Further, the Clean Air Act lists EtO as a Section 112 hazardous air pollutant. As a result, EPA regulates hazardous air pollutants such as EtO from specified categories of industrial facilities.

The Board states in public noticing the proposed rule that:

IEPA explains that there is no federal ambient air quality standard for EtO and that this particular rulemaking’s purpose “is not to establish a standard for EtO in Illinois,” but rather to establish “a system to ascertain baseline levels” of EtO across the State.

IEPA is stated to be expecting to collect EtO monitoring data to supplement the monitoring being conducted by EPA. Further, a sunset date is proposed which would result in the extinguishment of the requirements 24 months after they become effective.

A copy of the notice can be downloaded [here](#).