

listed in paragraph (b) of this section that is forwarded by the State Director, or that is submitted to the Regional Administrator by the requester where EPA is the permitting authority.

(d) The EPA Office Director for Water Enforcement and Permits may approve or deny any variance request submitted under paragraph (c) of this section. If the Office Director approves the variance, the Director may prepare a draft permit incorporating the variance. Any public notice of a draft permit for which a variance or modification has been approved or denied shall identify the applicable procedures for appealing that decision under § 124.64.

(e) The State Director may deny or forward to the Administrator (or his delegate) with a written concurrence a completed request for:

(1) A variance based on the presence of “fundamentally different factors” from those on which an effluent limitations guideline was based;

(2) A variance based upon certain water quality factors under CWA section 301(g).

(f) The Administrator (or his delegate) may grant or deny a request for a variance listed in paragraph (e) of this section that is forwarded by the State Director, or that is submitted to EPA by the requester where EPA is the permitting authority. If the Administrator (or his delegate) approves the variance, the State Director or Regional Administrator may prepare a draft permit incorporating the variance. Any public notice of a draft permit for which a variance or modification has been approved or denied shall identify the applicable procedures for appealing that decision under § 124.64.

[48 FR 14264, Apr. 1, 1983; 50 FR 6941, Feb. 19, 1985, as amended at 51 FR 16030, Apr. 30, 1986; 54 FR 256, 258, Jan. 4, 1989]

§ 124.63 Procedures for variances when EPA is the permitting authority.

(a) In States where EPA is the permit issuing authority and a request for a variance is filed as required by § 122.21, the request shall be processed as follows:

(1)(i) If, at the time, that a request for a variance based on the presence of

fundamentally different factors or on section 301(g) of the CWA is submitted, the Regional Administrator has received an application under § 124.3 for issuance or renewal of that permit, but has not yet prepared a draft permit under § 124.6 covering the discharge in question, the Administrator (or his delegate) shall give notice of a tentative decision on the request at the time the notice of the draft permit is prepared as specified in § 124.10, unless this would significantly delay the processing of the permit. In that case the processing of the variance request may be separated from the permit in accordance with paragraph (a)(3) of this section, and the processing of the permit shall proceed without delay.

(ii) If, at the time, that a request for a variance under sections 301(c) or 302(b)(2) of the CWA is submitted, the Regional Administrator has received an application under § 124.3 for issuance or renewal of that permit, but has not yet prepared a draft permit under § 124.6 covering the discharge in question, the Regional Administrator, after obtaining any necessary concurrence of the EPA Deputy Assistant Administrator for Water Enforcement under § 124.62, shall give notice of a tentative decision on the request at the time the notice of the draft permit is prepared as specified in § 124.10, unless this would significantly delay the processing of the permit. In that case the processing of the variance request may be separated from the permit in accordance with paragraph (a)(3) of this section, and the processing of the permit shall proceed without delay.

(2) If, at the time that a request for a variance is filed the Regional Administrator has given notice under § 124.10 of a draft permit covering the discharge in question, but that permit has not yet become final, administrative proceedings concerning that permit may be stayed and the Regional Administrator shall prepare a new draft permit including a tentative decision on the request, and the fact sheet required by § 124.8. However, if this will significantly delay the processing of the existing draft permit or the Regional Administrator, for other reasons, considers combining the variance request and the existing draft permit

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inadvisable, the request may be separated from the permit in accordance with paragraph (a)(3) of this section, and the administrative disposition of the existing draft permit shall proceed without delay.

(3) If the permit has become final and no application under §124.3 concerning it is pending or if the variance request has been separated from a draft permit as described in paragraphs (a) (1) and (2) of this section, the Regional Administrator may prepare a new draft permit and give notice of it under §124.10. This draft permit shall be accompanied by the fact sheet required by §124.8 except that the only matters considered shall relate to the requested variance.

[48 FR 14264, Apr. 1, 1983, as amended at 51 FR 16030, Apr. 30, 1986]

§ 124.64 Appeals of variances.

(a) When a State issues a permit on which EPA has made a variance decision, separate appeals of the State permit and of the EPA variance decision are possible. If the owner or operator is challenging the same issues in both proceedings, the Regional Administrator will decide, in consultation with State officials, which case will be heard first.

(b) Variance decisions made by EPA may be appealed under the provisions of §124.19.

(c) *Stays for section 301(g) variances.* If an appeal is filed under §124.19 of a variance requested under CWA section 301(g), any otherwise applicable standards and limitations under CWA section 301 shall not be stayed unless:

(1) In the judgment of the Regional Administrator, the stay or the variance sought will not result in the discharge of pollutants in quantities which may reasonably be anticipated to pose an unacceptable risk to human health or the environment because of bioaccumulation, persistency in the environment, acute toxicity, chronic toxicity, or synergistic propensities; and

(2) In the judgment of the Regional Administrator, there is a substantial likelihood that the discharger will succeed on the merits of its appeal; and

(3) The discharger files a bond or other appropriate security which is required by the Regional Administrator

to assure timely compliance with the requirements from which a variance is sought in the event that the appeal is unsuccessful.

(d) Stays for variances other than section 301(g) variances are governed by §§ 124.16 and 124.60.

[48 FR 14264, Apr. 1, 1983, as amended at 65 FR 30912, May 15, 2000]

§ 124.65 [Reserved]

§ 124.66 Special procedures for decisions on thermal variances under section 316(a).

(a) The only issues connected with issuance of a particular permit on which EPA will make a final Agency decision before the final permit is issued under §§124.15 and 124.60 are whether alternative effluent limitations would be justified under CWA section 316(a) and whether cooling water intake structures will use the best available technology under section 316(b). Permit applicants who wish an early decision on these issues should request it and furnish supporting reasons at the time their permit applications are filed under §122.21. The Regional Administrator will then decide whether or not to make an early decision. If it is granted, both the early decision on CWA section 316 (a) or (b) issues and the grant of the balance of the permit shall be considered permit issuance under these regulations, and shall be subject to the same requirements of public notice and comment and the same opportunity for an appeal under §124.19.

(b) If the Regional Administrator, on review of the administrative record, determines that the information necessary to decide whether or not the CWA section 316(a) issue is not likely to be available in time for a decision on permit issuance, the Regional Administrator may issue a permit under §124.15 for a term up to 5 years. This permit shall require achievement of the effluent limitations initially proposed for the thermal component of the discharge no later than the date otherwise required by law. However, the permit shall also afford the permittee an opportunity to file a demonstration under CWA section 316(a) after conducting such studies as are required