

**Subpart D—Criteria and Standards for Determining Fundamentally Different Factors Under Sections 301(b)(1)(A), 301(b)(2) (A) and (E) of the Act**

**§ 125.30 Purpose and scope.**

(a) This subpart establishes the criteria and standards to be used in determining whether effluent limitations alternative to those required by promulgated EPA effluent limitations guidelines under sections 301 and 304 of the Act (hereinafter referred to as “national limits”) should be imposed on a discharger because factors relating to the discharger’s facilities, equipment, processes or other factors related to the discharger are fundamentally different from the factors considered by EPA in development of the national limits. This subpart applies to all national limitations promulgated under sections 301 and 304 of the Act, except for the BPT limits contained in 40 CFR 423.12 (steam electric generating point source category).

(b) In establishing national limits, EPA takes into account all the information it can collect, develop and solicit regarding the factors listed in sections 304(b) and 304(g) of the Act. In some cases, however, data which could affect these national limits as they apply to a particular discharge may not be available or may not be considered during their development. As a result, it may be necessary on a case-by-case basis to adjust the national limits, and make them either more or less stringent as they apply to certain dischargers within an industrial category or subcategory. This will only be done if data specific to that discharger indicates it presents factors fundamentally different from those considered by EPA in developing the limit at issue. Any interested person believing that factors relating to a discharger’s facilities, equipment, processes or other facilities related to the discharger are fundamentally different from the factors considered during development of the national limits may request a fundamentally different factors variance under § 122.21(l)(1). In addition, such a

variance may be proposed by the Director in the draft permit.

(Secs. 301, 304, 306, 307, 308, and 501 of the Clean Water Act (the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972, Pub. L. 92-500 as amended by the Clean Water Act of 1977, Pub. L. 95-217 (the “Act”); Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, Clean Air Act, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act; 42 U.S.C. 6905, 6912, 6925, 6927, 6974)

[44 FR 32948, June 7, 1979, as amended at 45 FR 33512, May 19, 1980; 46 FR 9460, Jan. 28, 1981; 47 FR 52309, Nov. 19, 1982; 48 FR 14293, Apr. 1, 1983]

**§ 125.31 Criteria.**

(a) A request for the establishment of effluent limitations under this subpart (fundamentally different factors variance) shall be approved only if:

(1) There is an applicable national limit which is applied in the permit and specifically controls the pollutant for which alternative effluent limitations or standards have been requested; and

(2) Factors relating to the discharge controlled by the permit are fundamentally different from those considered by EPA in establishing the national limits; and

(3) The request for alternative effluent limitations or standards is made in accordance with the procedural requirements of part 124.

(b) A request for the establishment of effluent limitations less stringent than those required by national limits guidelines shall be approved only if:

(1) The alternative effluent limitation or standard requested is no less stringent than justified by the fundamental difference; and

(2) The alternative effluent limitation or standard will ensure compliance with sections 208(e) and 301(b)(1)(C) of the Act; and

(3) Compliance with the national limits (either by using the technologies upon which the national limits are based or by other control alternatives) would result in:

(i) A removal cost wholly out of proportion to the removal cost considered during development of the national limits; or

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(ii) A non-water quality environmental impact (including energy requirements) fundamentally more adverse than the impact considered during development of the national limits.

(c) A request for alternative limits more stringent than required by national limits shall be approved only if:

(1) The alternative effluent limitation or standard requested is no more stringent than justified by the fundamental difference; and

(2) Compliance with the alternative effluent limitation or standard would not result in:

(i) A removal cost wholly out of proportion to the removal cost considered during development of the national limits; or

(ii) A non-water quality environmental impact (including energy requirements) fundamentally more adverse than the impact considered during development of the national limits.

(d) Factors which may be considered fundamentally different are:

(1) The nature or quality of pollutants contained in the raw waste load of the applicant's process wastewater;

[*Comment:* (1) In determining whether factors concerning the discharger are fundamentally different, EPA will consider, where relevant, the applicable development document for the national limits, associated technical and economic data collected for use in developing each respective national limit, records of legal proceedings, and written and printed documentation including records of communication, etc., relevant to the development of respective national limits which are kept on public file by EPA.

(2) Waste stream(s) associated with a discharger's process wastewater which were not considered in the development of the national limits will not ordinarily be treated as fundamentally different under paragraph (a) of this section. Instead, national limits should be applied to the other streams, and the unique stream(s) should be subject to limitations based on section 402(a)(1) of the Act. See §125.2(c)(2).]

(2) The volume of the discharger's process wastewater and effluent discharged;

(3) Non-water quality environmental impact of control and treatment of the discharger's raw waste load;

(4) Energy requirements of the application of control and treatment technology;

(5) Age, size, land availability, and configuration as they relate to the discharger's equipment or facilities; processes employed; process changes; and engineering aspects of the application of control technology;

(6) Cost of compliance with required control technology.

(e) A variance request or portion of such a request under this section shall not be granted on any of the following grounds:

(1) The infeasibility of installing the required waste treatment equipment within the time the Act allows.

[*Comment:* Under this section a variance request may be approved if it is based on factors which relate to the discharger's ability ultimately to achieve national limits but not if it is based on factors which merely affect the discharger's ability to meet the statutory deadlines of sections 301 and 307 of the Act such as labor difficulties, construction schedules, or unavailability of equipment.]

(2) The assertion that the national limits cannot be achieved with the appropriate waste treatment facilities installed, if such assertion is not based on factor(s) listed in paragraph (d) of this section;

[*Comment:* Review of the Administrator's action in promulgating national limits is available only through the judicial review procedures set forth in section 509(b) of the Act.]

(3) The discharger's ability to pay for the required waste treatment; or

(4) The impact of a discharge on local receiving water quality.

(f) Nothing in this section shall be construed to impair the right of any State or locality under section 510 of the Act to impose more stringent limitations than those required by Federal law.

### § 125.32 Method of application.

(a) A written request for a variance under this subpart D shall be submitted in duplicate to the Director in accordance with §§ 122.21(m)(1) and 124.3 of this chapter.

(b) The burden is on the person requesting the variance to explain that:

(1) Factor(s) listed in §125.31(b) regarding the discharger's facility are fundamentally different from the factors EPA considered in establishing the national limits. The requester should