

Steel producer to pay \$1.6 million civil penalty for alleged violations

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By **Chris Paul**

Steel producer Allegheny Ludlum will pay a \$1.6 million civil penalty for alleged Clean Air Act violations at its Natrona plant in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, under the terms of a proposed Consent Decree lodged in federal court (*United States v. Allegheny Ludlum Corp.*, W.D. Pa., No. 10-cv-673-NBF, 5/17/10). The alleged Clean Air Act violations to be resolved relate to excessive opacity (visible emissions) coming from the Natrona facility's basic oxygen furnace shop. The proposed Consent Decree is subject to a 30-day public comment period and court approval. The EPA and the Allegheny County Health Department will each receive half of the penalty payment.



In the settlement, Allegheny Ludlum agreed to a permanent shutdown of operations at the Natrona facility no later than November 30, 2010. (Some reports indicate that this provision was included in the settlement based on a business decision by Allegheny Ludlum to consolidate steelmaking operations at another facility). The settlement requires Allegheny Ludlum to take interim steps to minimize visible emissions at the Natrona facility until it ceases operations. Stipulated penalties include \$5,000 a day for each day the facility operates after November 30 and \$1,500 a day for noncompliance with the interim measures.

Previously, the Allegheny County Health Department and Allegheny Ludlum settled alleged Clean Air Act violations of opacity limits. The prior actions required the installation and repair of a baghouse, scrubbers, and other air pollution control equipment. But subsequent EPA inspection determined that the emission control efforts were inadequate to meet compliance requirements, resulting in the current action.

According to the EPA, settlement of this matter will improve air quality by reducing emissions of particulate matter and will reduce emissions of carbon monoxide, volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds, and nitrogen oxides.

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