

China to rein in dioxin emissions to help air quality

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Smoke rises from a chimney in the northern port city of Tianjin in October 2010. China has said it aims to cut the intensity of dioxin emissions in key industries by 10 percent by 2015, as part of efforts by the world's top polluter to tackle ever-worsening air quality.

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The Ministry of Environmental Protection said in a statement that 17 key industries must install filters on all emission-producing equipment by June 2011.

However, the 10 percent target is not an outright cut in dioxin emissions, but instead a reduction in intensity -- language that China has previously

used to refer to the ratio of emissions to a unit of gross domestic product.

"By 2015, the country should have in place a sound, long-term mechanism for monitoring and preventing dioxin pollution," said the notice, which was dated October 16 but appeared to have been published this week.

"The intensity of dioxin emissions in key industries should be cut by 10 percent to offset the increase in emissions," it said.

China's national standard for dioxin emissions allows one nanogram per cubic metre -- 10 times the amount legally allowed in the European Union and the United States, the official China Daily newspaper reported on Tuesday.

Dioxin, a by-product of garbage burning and industrial activities, can cause a range of illnesses in humans including cancer and miscarriages.

The trial dioxin emission controls will first be implemented in the northern cities of Beijing and Tianjin, Hebei province, the eastern Yangtze River Delta and the southern Pearl River Delta, the ministry said.

Waste incineration facilities will be required to release annual environmental impact reports to the public, and update online statistics on their release of oxysulfide, [nitrogen oxides](#) and [hydrogen chloride](#) in real time, with annual tests for accuracy, the notice said.

Local environmental protection departments were ordered to inspect waste incineration facilities every two months.

China this year passed the United States to become the biggest energy

consumer, according to the International Energy Agency -- although Beijing disputes those findings.

China's [environmental protection](#) ministry published a report last week which showed that about a third of 113 cities surveyed failed to meet national air standards last year.

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