

The Clean Air Act (CAA)

Established in 1970, the Clean Air Act (CAA) is the comprehensive federal law that regulates air emissions from stationary and mobile sources. Among other things, this law authorizes EPA to establish National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) to protect public health and to regulate emissions of hazardous air pollutants. EPA works with its federal and state regulatory partners to monitor and ensure compliance with clean air laws and regulations in order to protect human health and the environment.

On the state level, NJDEP manages air quality with ambient air monitoring, inventories of sources, emission reduction plans, rules, permits, air quality modeling, risk assessment, vehicle inspections and voluntary programs to modernize fleets and promote electric vehicles.

Federal and State authorities regulate both criteria pollutants and air toxics.

Criteria Pollutants - These are six pollutants for which the USEPA has set National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). They are ozone, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter, and lead. For many years, they have been addressed throughout the country through a standard planning process, and the concentrations of these pollutants in air have been extensively monitored and tracked for compliance with the air quality standards.

Air Toxics - Any other air pollutants that are not criteria pollutants, and that may be emitted into the air in quantities that can cause adverse health effects, can be classified as air toxics. These health effects cover a wide range of conditions from lung irritation to birth defects to cancer. There are no national air quality standards for these pollutants, but in 1990 the U.S. Congress directed the USEPA to begin to address a list of almost 200 of these air toxics by developing control technology standards.

NJIT engages environmental engineering consultants to assist with regulatory compliance issues related to the CAA including the implementation and maintenance of an institutional air pollution control permit. Additionally, EHS tracks the use of certain chemicals in university laboratories that have specific characteristics of interest to the NJDEP.