

**AIR FORCE**

**AIR QUALITY ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT  
ANALYSIS PROCESS (EIAP) GUIDE**

**VOLUME II - ADVANCED ASSESSMENTS**



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**AIR FORCE  
AIR QUALITY  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
IMPACT ANALYSIS  
PROCESS (EIAP)  
GUIDE VOLUME II -  
ADVANCED  
ASSESSMENTS  
(July 2020)**

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Based on information and belief formed after reasonable inquiry, the statements and information in the document are true, accurate, and complete.

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# PREFACE

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This guide provides comprehensive instructions for performing a Level III, Advanced Air Quality Assessment (see chapter 5 for step-by-step procedures) and Overseas Environmental Impact Analysis Process assessments. Air quality assessments for proposed Federal actions are required for compliance with the *National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)*, the *Clean Air Act (CAA)*, the *General Conformity Rule* (for areas in nonattainment or maintenance for any National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS)) and other environment-related regulations and directives. The *Environmental Impact Analysis Process (EIAP)*, is the United States Air Force's (USAF) implementing tool for NEPA and provides the USAF with a framework on how to comply with NEPA and the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations. Additionally, for air quality, all EIAP documents must address the CAA Conformity Rules requirements. The USAF expands on the EIAP process with this guide to address specific air quality concerns.

The Air Quality EIAP process is broken down into three progressive levels of assessment:

- Level I, Exempt Actions (a determination if a formal Air Quality Assessment is required);
- Level II, Quantitative Assessment (a formal assessment of air impacts); and
- Level III, Advanced Assessment (an expanded assessment that is part science and part art, both quantitative and qualitative assessments).

This volume of the *Air Force Air Quality EIAP Guide* provides comprehensive instructions for performing Level III air quality EIAP assessments and Overseas Air Quality EIAP and is intended to assist Air Quality Program Managers and/or Environmental Specialists in assessing advanced air quality impacts, if needed, of USAF proposed actions. Furthermore, it provides guidance, procedures, and methodologies for use in carrying out an advanced quantitative and qualitative air quality EIAP assessment (which includes General Conformity Determinations) when a Level II, *Quantitative Air Quality Assessment*, indicates a Level III, *Advanced Air Quality Assessment*, is warranted. Transportation Conformity assessments are generally not applicable to the USAF; therefore, Transportation Conformity assessments are outside the scope of this guidance. Specific guidance on Overseas Air Quality EIAP is provided.

See *Air Force Air Quality EIAP Guide Volume I* for detailed guidance and procedures for air quality EIAP Level I and/or Level II assessment.



## 2 INTRODUCTION

This document [*Air Force Air Quality Environmental Impact Analysis Process (EIAP) Guide, Volume II – Advanced Assessments*] provides guidance in assessing the air quality impact of proposed United States Air Force (USAF) projects (i.e., actions). The procedures in this guide are consistent with all current Federal air quality laws and regulations affecting the USAF mission including the *National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA); Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations; *Clean Air Act and Amendments of 1990* (CAA); and other related statutes, regulations, directives and orders.

The *Environmental Impact Analysis Process* [EIAP, 32 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 989] is the USAF's implementation tool for NEPA. EIAP provides the USAF with a framework on how to comply with NEPA and CEQ's *Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA* (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508, referred to as the CEQ Regulations). Additionally, for air quality (according to 32 CFR 989.30), all EIAP documents must address the CAA *Conformity Rules* (CRs) requirements when applicable.

This volume of the Air Quality EIPA Guide (Volume II) also addresses USAF actions abroad outside the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) jurisdiction (overseas). Overseas actions are assessed in accordance with Executive Order 12114, *Environmental Effects Abroad of Major Federal Actions*, and 32 CFR Part 187, *Environmental Effects Abroad of Major DoD Actions*, which effectively implements NEPA overseas.

### 2.1 Regulatory Context

Air quality assessments for proposed Federal actions may be necessary for compliance with the requirements of EIAP, NEPA, CAA CRs, and other environment-related regulations and directives. There are Federal regulations and orders that establish air quality requirements applicable to air bases, as well as U.S. Department of Defense (DoD)/USAF-specific regulations and orders that cover aspects of air quality. In addition to Federal requirements, many states and/or local areas have air quality requirements that may address requirements relevant to air bases. Pertinent general DoD/USAF-specific Federal requirements and documents are summarized below, along with a brief discussion of possible state and/or local requirements (see *Air Force Air Quality EIAP Guide Volume I* for greater details).

### 2.2 Federal Requirements and Documents - General

#### 2.2.1 *National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA)*

NEPA and its amendments establish a broad national policy to protect the quality of the human environment and provide for the establishment of a CEQ. The act provides polices and goals to ensure that environmental considerations are given careful attention and appropriate weight in all decisions of the Federal Government. The NEPA environmental review process requires federal agencies to assess and disclose the potential environmental impacts of proposed Federal actions.

#### 2.2.2 *CEQ Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the NEPA*

The CEQ regulations implement the procedural provisions of NEPA which requires federal agencies to evaluate the potential environmental effects of a major action prior to its

implementation and notify and involve the public in the agency's decision-making process. The regulations also identify and describe the appropriate environmental documents [i.e., Environmental Assessment (EA), Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)] that serve to document compliance with NEPA requirements (40 CFR 1500).

### 2.2.3 *Executive Orders*

There are several Executive Orders (EOs) relating to NEPA that are general in nature; however, they should be consulted as they may affect an action's impact analysis. The following are examples of these orders:

- EO 12114: *Environmental Effects Abroad of Major Federal Actions (EO 12114)*,
- EO 11514: *Protection and Enhancement of Environmental Quality*, (EO 11514), amended by EO 11990, *Protection of Wetlands*;
- EO 11593: *Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment* (EO 11593), and
- EO 12898: *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations* (EO 12898).

### 2.2.4 *Clean Air Act (CAA)*

Principal features of the CAA and Amendments of 1990 include a comprehensive strategy to achieve and maintain National Ambient Air Quality Standards [NAAQS, see Table 2-1, *National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)*] for specified criteria pollutants; further reductions in mobile source emissions; and, regulation of air toxics [e.g., Hazardous Air Pollutants (HAPs)]. The CAA also provide methods for establishment of a new acid rain control scheme; the phase-out of production and sale of ozone-depleting chemicals [e.g., chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs)]; and new enforcement sanctions. (Congress 1970) (EPA 2014a)

The CAA and its associated regulations address air pollution control in two ways: an air quality-based approach and a technology-based approach, with the former being the most important for the purpose of this discussion. EPA has implemented the air quality approach by establishing a set of NAAQS for six "criteria pollutants", per 40 CFR 50, *National Primary and Secondary Ambient Air Quality Standards*: Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>); Carbon Monoxide (CO); Particulate Matter (PM<sub>10</sub> & PM<sub>2.5</sub>); Sulfur Oxides (SO<sub>x</sub>) which is measured in the ambient air as Sulfur Dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>); Oxides of Nitrogen (NO<sub>x</sub> with Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) as the indicator in the ambient air); and Lead (Pb).

Note that while SO<sub>x</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> are actual criteria pollutants, the NAAQSs for these pollutants are based on SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub> respectively as indicator compounds of the actual criteria pollutant.

**Table 2-1, National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)**

Pollutant [final rule cite]		Primary/ Secondary	Averaging Time	Level	Form
<b>Carbon Monoxide (CO)</b> [76 FR 54294; Aug 31, 2011]		primary	8-hour	9 ppm	Not to be exceeded more than once per year
			1-hour	35 ppm	
<b>Lead (Pb)</b> [81 FR 71906; Oct 18, 2016]		primary and secondary	Rolling 3 month average	0.15 µg/m <sup>3</sup> <sup>(1)</sup>	Not to be exceeded
<b>Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>)</b> [75 FR 6474; Feb 9, 2010] [67 FR 20218; Apr 3, 2012]		primary	1-hour	100 ppb	98th percentile of 1-hour daily maximum concentrations, averaged over 3 years
		primary and secondary	Annual	53 ppb <sup>(2)</sup>	Annual Mean
<b>Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>)</b> [80 FR 65292; Oct 26, 2015]		primary and secondary	8-hour	0.070 ppm <sup>(3)</sup>	Annual fourth-highest daily maximum 8-hr concentration, averaged over 3 years
<b>Particle Pollution (PM)</b> (78 FR 3085; Jan 15, 2013)	<b>PM<sub>2.5</sub></b>	primary	Annual	12 µg/m <sup>3</sup>	Annual mean, averaged over 3 years
		secondary	Annual	15 µg/m <sup>3</sup>	Annual mean, averaged over 3 years
		primary and secondary	24-hour	35 µg/m <sup>3</sup>	98th percentile, averaged over 3 years
	<b>PM<sub>10</sub></b>	primary and secondary	24-hour	150 µg/m <sup>3</sup>	Not to be exceeded more than once per year on average over 3 years
<b>Sulfur Dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>)</b> (75 FR 35520; Jun 22, 2010) (77 FR 20218; April 3, 2012)		primary	1-hour	75 ppb <sup>(4)</sup>	99 <sup>th</sup> percentile of 1-hour daily maximum concentrations, averaged over 3 years
		secondary	3-hour	0.5 ppm	Not to be exceeded more than once per year

(1) In areas designated nonattainment for the Pb standards prior to the promulgation of the current (2008) standards, and for which implementation plans to attain or maintain the current (2008) standards have not been submitted and approved, the previous standards (1.5 µg/m<sup>3</sup> as a calendar quarter average) also remain in effect.

(2) The level of the annual NO<sub>2</sub> standard is 0.053 ppm. It is shown here in terms of ppb for the purposes of clearer comparison to the 1-hour standard level.

(3) Final rule signed October 1, 2015, and effective December 28, 2015. The previous (2008) O<sub>3</sub> standards additionally remain in effect in some areas. Revocation of the previous (2008) O<sub>3</sub> standards and transitioning to the current (2015) standards will be addressed in the implementation rule for the current standards.

(4) The previous SO<sub>2</sub> standards (0.14 ppm 24-hour and 0.03 ppm annual) will additionally remain in effect in certain areas: (1) any area for which it is not yet 1 year since the effective date of designation under the current (2010) standards, and (2) any area for which an implementation plan providing for attainment of the current (2010) standard has not been submitted and approved and which is designated nonattainment under the previous SO<sub>2</sub> standards or is not meeting the requirements of a SIP call under the previous SO<sub>2</sub> standards (40 CFR 50.4(3)). A SIP call is an EPA action requiring a state to resubmit all or part of its State Implementation Plan to demonstrate attainment of the required NAAQS.

Source: EPA (July 23, 2020) <https://www.epa.gov/criteria-air-pollutants/naaqs-table>

NAAQS represent a critical element in the national environmental regulatory structure, and many of the issues in the public arena relate to efforts to attain these standards. Ground-level ozone, for example, poses a significant concern in many locations. Extensive regulations govern air emissions of so-called “ozone precursors” (pollutants from which ozone is formed), including

nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), in these regions. Each state with any ozone nonattainment region is required to develop a State Implementation Plan (SIP) containing regulations that range from limiting industrial emissions of specific pollutants to regulations governing emission sources from manufacturing, transportation, and other sectors. Typically, a SIP addresses other nonattainment pollutants in a manner similar to that described here for ozone.

States must identify geographic areas, termed “nonattainment” areas, which do not meet the NAAQSs for the criteria pollutants. For nonattainment areas, the affected state must develop a SIP that include a variety of emission control measures that the state deems necessary to ensure attainment of the NAAQS in the future. Although developed initially by the state and local air pollution control officials, SIPs must be adopted by municipal and state governments and then approved by EPA for nonattainment areas above a “marginal” nonattainment severity. Areas designated as a “marginal” nonattainment severity do not require a SIP; however, must meet all the requirements of 40 CFR 93 Subpart B.

Once a SIP developed and is fully approved, it (and any emissions control measures) is legally binding under both State and Federal law and may be enforced by either government. Many states have designated nonattainment areas and, subsequently, have adopted a SIP. If a SIP already exists, it must be revised as necessary to include and address emission control measures necessary to ensure attainment. An area previously designated nonattainment pursuant to the CAA Amendments of 1990 and subsequently redesignated to attainment is termed a “maintenance” area. A maintenance area has a “maintenance” plan, or revision to the applicable SIP, to ensure sustainment of the air quality standards. Areas previously designated nonattainment and are subsequently redesignated to attainment must remain designated as a maintenance area for two consecutive ten-year probation periods. (Congress 1970)

### **2.2.5 Conformity Rules**

A key component of the CAA strategy to achieve and maintain the NAAQS is the concept of “conformity,” required in Section 176(c)(1) of the CAA. Conformity Rules (40 CFR 51 Subpart W and 40 CFR 93 Subpart A & B) apply only to air quality and only in areas that are designated by the EPA as nonattainment or maintenance areas. Conformity is intended to ensure that the Federal government does not take, approve, or support actions that are in any way inconsistent with a State’s plan to attain and maintain the NAAQS for criteria pollutants. The CAA defines conformity to a SIP as demonstrating consistency with the SIP’s “purpose of eliminating or reducing the severity and number of violations of the national ambient air quality standards and achieving expeditious attainment of such standards.” For example, from a practical standpoint this means that emission increases that result from an USAF project should not exceed the emission forecast or budget included in a SIP for that USAF facility.

The *Conformity Rules* require an air quality assessment (i.e., Conformity Evaluation) to ensure Federal actions do not interfere with a state’s plans to meet NAAQS (i.e., SIPs). Under 40 CFR 51.850-51.860 (Subpart W), States or eligible Tribes may create conformity provisions that can contain criteria and procedures more stringent than the requirements described in 40 CFR 93. There are two separate *Conformity Rules*:

1. *Transportation Conformity* (40 CFR 93 Subpart A): Applies to federal highway and transit actions only and sets policy, criteria, and procedures for demonstrating and assuring conformity of federal highway and transit activities to applicable implementation plans (i.e., SIPs). It applies to metropolitan transportation plan and transportation improvement program updates and amendments. Transportation conformity also applies to “FHWA/FTA projects”, which are defined as “any highway or transit project which is proposed to receive funding assistance and approval through the Federal Aid Highway program or the Federal mass transit program, or requires Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) or Federal Transit Administration (FTA) approval for some aspect of the project, such as connection to an Interstate highway or deviation from applicable design standards on the interstate system.” Generally, USAF actions are not associated with metropolitan transportation plans and they are not FHWA/FTA funded; therefore, **normally *Transportation Conformity* does NOT apply to USAF actions.**
2. *General Conformity* (40 CFR 93 Subpart B): Applies to all other (i.e., non-federal highway and non-transit actions) Federal actions. *General conformity* applies to all federal actions (e.g., funding, licensing, permitting or approving) that do not include FHWA/FTA funded projects and that take place in nonattainment or maintenance areas for any criteria pollutant. Therefore, ***General Conformity* applies to ALL USAF actions in nonattainment or maintenance areas.**

### **2.2.6 *Environmental Effects Abroad of Major DoD Actions (32 CFR 187)***

NEPA does not directly apply to areas abroad that are outside EPA’s jurisdiction (i.e., overseas); however, EO 12114, *Environmental Effects Abroad of Major Federal Actions*, requires overseas federal agencies to consider the impact of major actions on the environment. EO 12114 is implemented and supplemented through 32 CFR 187, *Environmental Effects Abroad of Major DoD Actions*, which effectively implements NEPA overseas. U.S. Air Force Instruction (AFI) 32-7091, *Environmental Management Outside the United States*, identifies requirements for environmental compliance, remediation, and EIAP at Air Force installations and other enduring locations in overseas areas. Therefore, EIAP applies to USAF actions impacting the environment both within the EPA’s jurisdiction and outside the United States.

## **2.3 Federal Requirements and Documents - DoD/USAF Specific**

### **2.3.1 *DoDD 6050.1: Environmental Effects in the U.S. of DoD Actions***

This DoD Directive (DoDD) implements CEQ regulations on decision-making process for DoD actions within the U.S. The directive includes policy, responsibilities, how to determine if an EA or EIS is needed, EA content and format, and categorical exclusions. (DoDD 6050.1)

### **2.3.2 *DoDI 4715.05: Environmental Compliance at Installations Outside the U.S.***

This DoD Instruction (DoDI) established policy and assigned responsibilities for managing environmental compliance to protect human health and safety outside the United States on installations under DoD control.

### **2.3.3 AFPD 32-70: Environmental Considerations in Air Force Programs and Activities**

This Air Force Policy Directive (AFPD) establishes the USAF's policy to address the environmental considerations in all Air Force programs and activities using a management system framework. It also assigns duties and responsibilities, and establishes long-term goals and objectives, with specific programs in support of those objectives. It aims to create a culture where personnel incorporate environmental considerations into all we do, with environmental compliance, risk reduction, and continuous improvement serving as central tenets for sustainable Air Force operations. (AFPD 32-70)

### **2.3.4 AFMAN 32-7002: Environmental Compliance and Pollution Prevention**

This Air Force Manual (AFMAN) implements AFPD 32-70, *Environmental Considerations in Air Force Programs and Activities*, and AFI 32-7001, *Environmental Management*. Chapter 3 provides details of the Air Force Air Quality Compliance and Resource Management Program; and explains how to assess, attain, and sustain compliance with the CAA; other federal, state, and local environmental regulations. **AFMAN 32-7002 mandates the use of accurate site-specific data along with the most accurate calculation methodologies or estimating techniques and tools validated by the AFCEC/CZ Air Quality SME. Currently the *Air Conformity Applicability Model (ACAM)* is the only estimating technique and tool validated by the AFCEC/CZ Air Quality SME for performing all air quality impact assessments under both NEPA and General Conformity.** (AFMAN 32-7002)

### **2.3.5 AFI 32-7091: Environmental Management Outside the U.S.**

Identifies requirements for environmental compliance, remediation, and EIAP at Air Force installations and other enduring locations in overseas areas. Chapter 5 implements and supplement 32 CFR 187, *Environmental Effects Abroad of Major DoD Actions*.

### **2.3.6 Environmental Impact Analysis Process (EIAP; 32 CFR 989)**

32 CFR 989, EIAP (formally AFI 32-7061), implements AFPD 32-70 and describes specific tasks and procedures for the EIAP both within the U.S. and abroad. This regulation also identifies directives and instructions with further environmental requirements.

### **2.3.7 EO 12114: Environmental Effects Abroad of Major Federal Actions**

EO 12114 requires overseas federal agencies to consider the environmental impacts of proposed actions and effectively implements EIAP assessments for Federal actions outside the jurisdiction of the EPA. Proposed actions under EO 12114 include actions that significantly affecting the environment. Note that EO 12114 is implemented and supplemented through 32 CFR 187, *Environmental Effects Abroad of Major DoD Actions*, and AFI 32-7091, *Environmental Management Outside the United States*.

### **2.3.8 State and/or Local Requirements**

In addition to Federal requirements, often there are state and/or local air quality requirements applicable to USAF activities. These requirements vary widely from location to location and are more appropriate to address on a project-by-project basis. Examples of state and/or local air quality requirements applicable to USAF projects are state indirect source thresholds, state-level environmental assessments, approved state general conformity rules, and state and local ambient



air quality standards. The analyst/specialist is directed to review state and local regulations at various points throughout the guide and as early in the assessment process as possible.

Some states and local air districts maintain their own General Conformity rules, which predate the 2010 amendments to 40 CFR Part 93, Subpart B and 40 CFR 51.851(g). These state/local conformity rules which remain in a SIP must be followed in determining general conformity requirements.

#### **2.4 Roles and Responsibilities**

All roles and responsibilities for EIAP execution (including NEPA and Conformity) are prescribed in 40 CFR 989 (general roles and responsibilities) and AFMAN 32-7002 (air quality related roles and responsibilities).

### **3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS PROCESS**

32 CFR 989, EIAP, is the USAF's implementation and compliance tool for NEPA and provides the USAF with a framework on how to comply with the CEQ Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508, referred to as the CEQ Regulations). Additionally, for air quality (according to 32 CFR 989.30), EIAP documents addresses the *General Conformity Rule* requirements as applicable.

#### **3.1 What is NEPA?**

NEPA, enacted on January 1, 1970, requires federal agencies to give appropriate consideration to all potential environmental impacts, to all affected resources, due to any proposed action and/or alternatives. NEPA applies to all federal agencies and the activities they manage, regulate, or fund. In addition, it mandates use of public involvement to promote full disclosure of potential impacts and as a means of helping the decision maker to reach an informed decision. (Congress 1969)

#### **3.2 What are the Conformity Rules (CRs)?**

Conformity Rules (40 CFR 51 Subpart W and 40 CFR 93 Subpart A & B) apply only to air quality and only in areas that are designated by the EPA as nonattainment or maintenance for meeting the NAAQS. The Conformity Rules require an air quality assessment to ensure Federal actions do not interfere with a SIP's strategy to meet NAAQS. Under 40 CFR 51.851 (Subpart W), States or eligible Tribes may create conformity provisions that contain criteria and procedures more stringent than the requirements described in 40 CFR 93 Subpart B. Conformity Applicability Analyses and Determinations are developed in parallel with EIAP documents but are separate and distinct requirements and should be either documented separately or addressed independently in a single document. To increase the utility of a conformity determination in performing the EIAP, the conformity determination should be completed prior to the completion of the EIAP so as to allow incorporation of the information from the conformity evaluation/s into the EIAP document. There are two separate Conformity Rules, the *Transportation Conformity Rule*, and the *General Conformity Rule*.

##### **3.2.1 Transportation Conformity Rule (40 CFR 93 Subpart A)**

Transportation Conformity applies to federal highway and transit actions only. Generally, USAF actions do not impact federal highway and transit; therefore, Transportation Conformity is not addressed in this guide.

##### **3.2.2 General Conformity Rule (GCR, 40 CFR 93 Subpart B)**

Applies to all non-federal highway and non-transit actions being proposed/taken by a federal agency. For USAF actions that do not impact federal highways and transit, only the General Conformity Rule applies.

#### **3.3 What Triggers NEPA/GCR?**

For NEPA, any major federal action that may significantly affect the quality of the human and natural environment requires NEPA analysis. For the USAF, a major change may include changes of aircraft, reconfiguration of airspace, construction and/or renovation of facilities, range

activities, exercises, or real estate actions. For GCR, any proposed action potentially impacting air quality AND to be located within an area designated by the EPA as nonattainment or maintenance for any NAAQS requires a GCR assessment known as a Conformity Evaluation.

### **3.4 When Does EIAP/NEPA/GCR Begin?**

EIAP is the USAF's implementing tool for both NEPA and GCR requirements. Generally, actions that trigger NEPA will also require a Conformity Evaluation if the action is located in a nonattainment or maintenance area. Therefore, conformity evaluations should be performed in tandem with NEPA evaluations and be incorporated into the EIAP process/document. EIAP begins early in the planning process for a proposed action. USAF EIAP responsibilities start when adequate information is known about a proposed action to allow an estimate of its effects on the environment. The earlier the potential impacts are identified, the easier it is to refine the proposed action and alternatives to avoid or lessen the adverse environmental and regulatory effects.

### **3.5 What are The Different Levels of NEPA Documentation?**

Three levels of NEPA documents exist: categorical exclusion, environmental assessment (EA), and environmental impact statement (EIS). When the action requires EIAP/NEPA the USAF evaluates the proposal in one of three ways:

- Is it a continuation of normal or routine activities?
- If not routine, could the action present any potential affects to the environment?
- Could the action present any significant impacts or be controversial in nature?

### **3.6 What are the Different Levels of GCR Documentation?**

Two progressive levels of GCR documentation exist under a Conformity Evaluation: *Applicability Analysis* and *Conformity Determination*. GCR evaluations should be performed in tandem with NEPA evaluations and should be incorporated into the EIAP process/document at any level.

#### ***3.6.1 Applicability Analysis***

Applicability Analysis is the process of determining if a Federal action must be supported by a Conformity Determination under the GCR. This is accomplished through the use of the USAF's automated Air Conformity Applicability Analysis Model (ACAM) or other AFCEC approved automated tool. ACAM performs a quantitative analysis of a proposed action's projected emissions against regulatory thresholds (Conformity Thresholds) which trigger a Conformity Determination. If the ACAM evaluation indicates the action would exceed a Conformity Threshold, a Conformity Determination is required.

#### ***3.6.2 Conformity Determination***

Conformity Determination is the next progressive evaluation made after an Applicability Analysis is completed which identifies if a Conformity Determination is required. The Conformity Determination is a complex assessment of air quality impacts and, if necessary,

contains mitigation measures to ensure that a Federal action conforms to the applicable implementation plan and meets the requirements of the GCR. Generally, Conformity Determination are extensive air impact assessments which may include more refined modeling of emissions and emission mitigation and/or offsets.

### **3.7 Categorical Exclusion (CATEX)**

A CATEX is a category of actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on human environment based on agency experience. CATEX's have been found to have no such effect in procedures adopted by a Federal agency in implementation of these regulations (40 CFR 1507.3) and do not require any further impact assessment.

### **3.8 Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)**

If a CATEX cannot be applied and it is unknown whether an EIS is required, the USAF prepares an EA. An EA is a concise, public document that determines if an action would result in significant impacts. An EA results in one of the following outcomes: FONSI, preparation of an EIS, or no action is taken.

When an EA results in no significant impact and Conformity Evaluation (if required) is complete, a FONSI (32 CFR 989.15) summarizes the findings and describes the Conformity Evaluation and why an action would not require preparation of an EIS. The FONSI is signed before the action is implemented.

### **3.9 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD)**

For actions having a potential for significant environmental impacts, an EIS is prepared. An EIS is the most intensive level of EIAP analysis. The decision to prepare an EIS can be made early in the planning process or following preparation of an EA where the analysis shows the potential for significant impacts. Actions such as new weapon systems, beddowns, major aircraft realignments, large land withdrawals, establishment of training ranges, and creation of supersonic airspace typically require preparation of an EIS. In general, an EIS contains:

- Detailed explanation of the purpose and need for the action;
- Thorough description of the proposed action, no action and reasonable alternatives;
- Identification of the resources affected by the proposal;
- A full description of the affected environment;
- Rigorous analysis of the potential impacts on affected resources;
- Cumulative impact analysis for past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions;
- Permitting requirements;

- Agency consultation information;
- Public involvement overview;
- Defined mitigation and management actions not already included in the proposed action or alternatives; and
- If required, a discussion and conclusions of GCR Conformity Evaluations.

An EIS is focused and issue-driven rather than encyclopedic. It provides the public and the decision maker an adequate level of information about the potential impacts of the action prior to making a decision.

A ROD serves as a public record documenting the USAF decision relating to a proposed action. The ROD provides:

- An explanation of the decision;
- A description of alternatives considered;
- Identification of both the preferred and environmentally preferred alternatives;
- The factors considered in making the decision;
- A statement on whether practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the selected alternative have been adopted;
- A summary of any applicable monitoring and enforcement program for mitigation; and
- If required, a discussion and conclusions of GCR Conformity Evaluations.

Overall, the ROD summarizes the major factors weighed in making the decision, including essential considerations of national policy.

## 4 AIR QUALITY EIAP OVERVIEW

The NEPA established a national policy with goals for the protection, maintenance, and enhancement of the environment, and provides a process for implementing these goals within federal agencies. Under NEPA, the CEQ was established and charged with the development of implementing regulations and ensuring federal agency compliance with NEPA. The CEQ regulations mandate that all federal agencies develop and use a systematic interdisciplinary approach to environmental planning and the evaluation of actions that may affect the environment. 32 CFR Part 989, *Environmental Impact Analysis Process (EIAP)*, outlines the USAF's systematic procedures for the analysis of environmental impacts on installations to ensure USAF compliance with NEPA and the CEQ regulations. EIAP expands beyond traditional NEPA requires to include overseas EIAP and General Conformity (where relevant).

The EIAP provides the USAF with a methodical interdisciplinary approach to environmental planning and the evaluation of proposed actions that may affect the environment. The EIAP regulation outlines a detailed process for preparing EISs and discusses the use of EAs. This process is intended to assist USAF officials in decision-making based on an understanding of the potential environmental consequences and to take actions that protect, restore, and enhance the environment. The level of analysis required to meet NEPA requirements will depend on the scope and severity of the environmental impacts threatened by the proposed action.

The USAF expanded the EIAP process to address specific air quality concerns through *AFMAN 32-7002, Environmental Compliance and Pollution Prevention*. The *Air Force Air Quality EIAP Guide Volume I & II* implements the air quality requirements of AFMAN 32-7002 and outlines the steps for the analysis of air quality related environmental impacts on installations in the U.S. and abroad. The policies and procedures set forth in the guidance are designed to ensure USAF compliance with NEPA and the CEQ regulations as they relate to air quality. See the *Air Force Air Quality EIAP Guide Volume I* for a more detailed discussion.

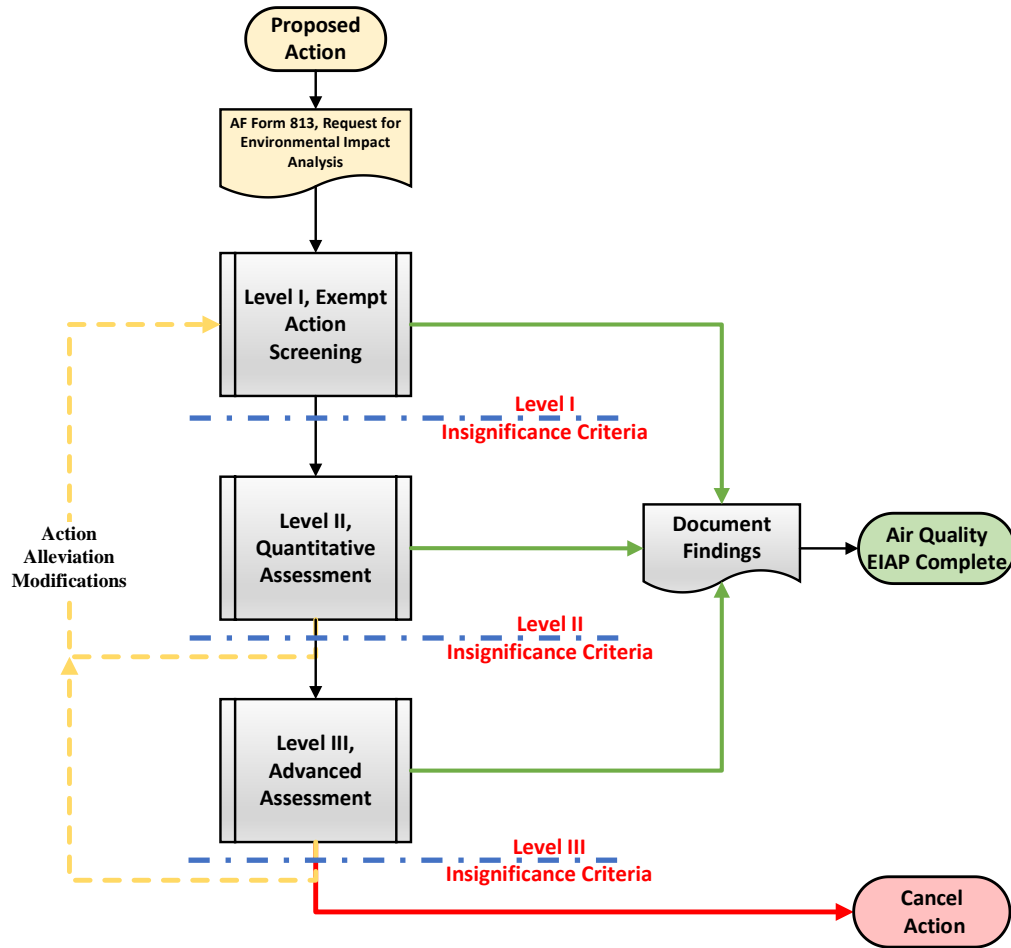
### 4.1 Air Quality EIAP Levels

Generally speaking, actions that trigger an assessment under NEPA will also require a conformity evaluation if the action will be located in a nonattainment or maintenance area. As such, the USAF conducts NEPA and GCR assessments in tandem within the EIAP process. The EIAP process starts with the office formally initiating a proposed action (the "proponent") by submitting an AF Form 813, *Request for Environmental Impact Analysis*, to begin the environmental impact analysis process. The air quality EIAP process then proceeds through up to three progressive levels of assessment (see Figure 4-1, Air Quality EIAP Process). An assessment only proceeds to the next level if the current level's insignificance criteria (indicator) is exceeded. The goal is to exit the air quality EIAP process at the lowest possible level.

### 4.2 Level I, Exempt Action Screening

Under this level, the proposed action is assessed to determine if a formal Air Quality Assessment is required. If no air emissions will occur or the proposed action is exempt from NEPA and the GCR, this indicated the action is insignificant and no further assessment is required. Details on Level I exemption screenings are address in the *Air Force Air Quality EIAP Guide Volume I*.

**Figure 4-1, Air Quality EIAP Process**



### 4.3 Level II, Air Quality Quantitative Assessment

Level II requires a formal quantitative assessment of air impacts be performed. A quantitative estimate of the annual net change in total direct and indirect emissions of pollutants of concern associated with a proposed action must be calculated. Only estimating methodologies, algorithms, and emission factors from the current *USAF General Conformity Guide*, the *USAF Mobile Source Guide* and the *USAF Stationary Source Guide* are to be used. Currently the Air Conformity Applicability Model (ACAM) must be used throughout the USAF to perform this estimate. ACAM provides simplified emission modeling that is adequate for a General Conformity Applicability Assessment and/or a cursory NEPA air quality impact assessment. If the findings of the ACAM assessment indicate an insignificant impact to air quality, this indicated the action is insignificant and no further assessment is required. The assessment findings are documented through the ACAM automated reports for inclusion in the overall EIAP document (e.g., AF Form 813, EA, or EIS). Details on Level II assessments are addressed in the *Air Force Air Quality EIAP Guide Volume I*.

#### 4.4 Level III, Advance Air Quality Assessment

At Level III, the air quality impact assessment becomes more in-depth and is part science and part art. Both quantitative and qualitative assessments are utilized to evaluate the potential air quality impact associated with a proposed action. The results and findings of the assessment are documented and usually integrated into an overall formal EA or EIS. Level III advanced assessments are addressed in this document, *Air Force Air Quality EIAP Guide Volume II*.

NOTE: ***While Level III assessments are required if the Level II assessment indicates there is a potential for a significant air quality impact, it does NOT automatically drive an EA or EIS for NEPA.*** For General Conformity, a Conformity Determination requires major air quality impacts be negated or nullified through mitigation or offsets before the action can be implemented. Therefore, whether or not an EIS will be required depends on the potential for significant impacts on the environment as a whole, not just air quality.

##### 4.4.1 Quantitative Analysis

In a quantitative analysis of air quality impact, the proposed action is assessed based on a firm quantity or reasonable estimated value being compared to a defined limit (i.e., a threshold or an indicator value). The action's worst-case year of quantified net change in annual emissions for each pollutant of concern are compared against defined insignificant thresholds or indicators:

- Thresholds are regulatory annual emission levels that, if exceeded, would trigger a regulatory requirement.
- Indicators are regulatory annual emission thresholds that are partially applied or applied out of context to their intended use; however, they provide an indication of potential impacts.
- Therefore, indicators do not trigger a regulatory requirement; however, they provide a warning that the action is potentially approaching a threshold which would trigger regulatory requirement. It is important to note that while thresholds provide a definitive impact determination, indicators only provide a clue to the potential impacts to air quality.

NOTE: ***Under EIAP, the air pollutant/s of concern include all criteria pollutant, greenhouse gases, and total Hazardous Air Pollutants (HAPs); while under General Conformity the air pollutant/s of concern only include those criteria pollutants and their precursors for which the area is designated nonattainment or maintenance.***

***Additionally, any pollutant emissions from permitted sources are not included as pollutant/s of concern for General Conformity analysis.***

##### 4.4.2 Qualitative Analysis

In a qualitative analysis of air quality impacts, the proposed action is assessed based on attribute/s or characteristic/s, rather than on a firm quantity or measured value. Inferences are drawn from professional judgment on potential impacts from the available quantified data and



other scientifically related data. Air quality impact inferences should, at a minimum, assess if the projected estimated emission would cause or contribute to a new violation of any NAAQS.

Air quality impact inferences should take into account the NAAQs, the air quality thresholds or indicators, the amalgamation of the action's worst-case and steady-state years of quantified annual emissions for each pollutant of concern, and the current ambient air quality data.

#### **4.5 Air Quality EIAP Summary**

EIAP outlines the USAF's systematic procedures for the analysis of environmental impacts on installations to ensure USAF compliance with NEPA and the CEQ regulations. The EIAP provides a methodical interdisciplinary approach to environmental planning and the evaluation of proposed actions that may affect the environment. Additionally, the EIAP regulation outlines a detailed process for preparing EISs and EAs. This process assists USAF officials in decision-making based on an understanding of the potential environmental consequences and to take actions that protect, restore, and enhance the environment. The USAF has expanded on the EIAP process to address specific air quality concerns. The Air Quality EIAP guidance outlines the steps for the analysis of air quality related environmental impacts on installations in the U.S. and abroad. The guidance and procedures set forth in the guide are designed to ensure USAF compliance with NEPA and the CEQ regulations as they relate to air quality.

## 5 INSIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

For air quality impact assessments, significance is defined by the degree to which the effects of a proposed action could potentially affect public health or safety. The EPA developed Primary NAAQS to provide public health protection, including protecting the health of "sensitive" populations such as asthmatics, children, and the elderly. Specifically, the EPA set Primary NAAQSs for six principal pollutants (known as criteria pollutants): carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), particulate matter (PM), sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), and lead (Pb). As a result, Air quality impact significance is defined by an action's potential to cause or contribute to a new violation of one or more of these NAAQSs. In other words:

- *Insignificant = Action does not cause or contribute to exceeding one or more NAAQSs*
- *Significant = Action does cause or contribute to exceeding one or more NAAQSs*

**Under NEPA, establishing significance (or insignificance) requires consideration of both context and intensity (40 CFR 1508.27);** therefore, air quality impact significance must be established by considering both context and intensity.

- **Context** is the surroundings, circumstances, environment, and background of an action which provides the setting for evaluating the intensity of the impact significance. The context of an action is the local area's ambient air quality relative to meeting the NAAQSs as attainment, nonattainment, or maintenance areas (this designation is considered the attainment status). See section 5.1 below for an in-depth overview and discussion of the context of an action's significance.
- **Intensity** is the quantified magnitude of impact severity. Air quality impact intensity is the calculated magnitude of impact severity to which the long- and short-term effects of a proposed action could potentially affect public health or safety. The degree of impact severity is measured by quantifying the projected annual net change in criteria pollutant emission against established significance criteria. See section 5.2 below for an in-depth overview and discussion of the intensity of an action's significance.

The USAF Cross-Media Technical Review Team, led by the USAF's Air Quality Subject Matter Expert, formally established technically sound air quality impact insignificance criteria. The framework (i.e., context) for selecting and utilizing the proper insignificance criteria is based on the current attainment status. The area's attainment status (clearly attainment, near attainment, nonattainment, or maintenance) provides the context for properly using the established air quality impact insignificance criteria in an Air Quality EIAP Level II, Quantitative Assessment. (AFCEC 2020)

### 5.1 Significance Context Discussion

Air quality, in the context of the current ambient air quality, is defined relative to established health standards. Under the Clean Air Act (CAA), the EPA set primary NAAQSs (40 CFR 50)

for six criteria pollutants (CO, NO<sub>2</sub>, O<sub>3</sub>, PM, SO<sub>2</sub>, and Pb) considered harmful to public health and the environment. The primary NAAQSs, as a health standard, set the baseline context for assessing which air quality impacts pose a potential significant impact.

**Table 5-1, Current NAAQSs**

(EPA 2020)

Criteria Pollutant		Averaging Time	Primary NAAQS
Carbon Monoxide (CO)		8 hours	9 ppm
		1 hour	35 ppm
Lead (Pb)		Rolling 3 month average	0.15 µg/m <sup>3</sup>
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO <sub>2</sub> )		1 hour	100 ppb
		1 year	53 ppb
Ozone (O <sub>3</sub> )		8 hours	0.070 ppm
Particle Pollution (PM)*	PM <sub>2.5</sub>	1 year	12.0 µg/m <sup>3</sup>
		24 hours	35 µg/m <sup>3</sup>
	PM <sub>10</sub>	24 hours	150 µg/m <sup>3</sup>
Sulfur Dioxide (SO <sub>2</sub> )		1 hour	75 ppb

\* PM<sub>10</sub> = particles ≤ 10 micrometers, PM<sub>2.5</sub> = particles ≤ 2.5 micrometers

Periodically, the NAAQSs are reviewed by the EPA and may be revised if deemed inadequate to protect human health and the environment. The current NAAQSs are listed in the table below (see *Table 5-1, Current NAAQSs*). Units of measure for the NAAQSs are parts per million (ppm) by volume, parts per billion (ppb) by volume, and micrograms per cubic meter of air (µg/m<sup>3</sup>). Any ambient (i.e., local outdoors) air concentration at or above any of these NAAQSs is considered harmful to public health and the environment.

Ambient air quality is monitored by the EPA in terms of criteria pollutant concentrations and their temporal and spatial distribution. Based on the monitoring data for these criteria pollutants, the local area’s ambient air quality is classified in the context with meeting the NAAQSs as attainment, nonattainment, or maintenance areas (this designation is considered the attainment status). These classifications define the baseline context of a localized area:

- **Attainment:** Defines geographic areas (e.g., county, municipal area) where the ambient air quality meets all NAAQSs are classified as attainment areas. However, the EPA believes that an air quality design value below 85% of any NAAQS could be considered significantly below the standard because the air quality is not likely to deteriorate to a level that would violate the NAAQS. For evaluating significance, attainment areas must be further be subdivided into two contexts:

- **Definitely Attainment:** According to the EPA, ambient air quality below 85% of a NAAQS could be considered significantly (or definitively) below the standard.
- **Questionably Attainment:** Applying EPA’s logic inversely, it makes sense that ambient air quality within 15% of a NAAQS could be considered questionably below the standard.
- **Nonattainment:** Defines geographic areas where the ambient air quality clearly does not meet one or more NAAQSs are classified as nonattainment areas. Nonattainment areas are further classified based on their severity or the degree of exceeding a NAAQS.
- **Maintenance:** Defines geographic areas that were once nonattainment, but recently achieved attainment for one or more NAAQS and have an EPA approved maintenance plan are classified as maintenance areas. Therefore, maintenance areas are attainment areas that are in effect questionable attainment areas (near nonattainment).

Therefore, for EIAP assessment, **air quality impact is evaluated in the context of the local area’s current ambient air quality as defined by the area’s attainment status:**

- **Clearly Attainment** (definitively in attainment, less than 85% of any NAAQS).
- **Questionably Attainment** (within 15% of any NAAQS).
- **Nonattainment, including severity** (does not meet one or more NAAQSs).
- **Maintenance** (previous nonattainment area which recently met NAAQSs; therefore, are generally near nonattainment).

## 5.2 Significance Intensity Discussion

Air quality impact intensity is the quantified magnitude of impact severity or the degree to which the long- and short-term effects of proposed action potentially could affect public health or safety.

### 5.2.1 Nonattainment or Maintenance Area Context

All actions that will occur within a nonattainment or maintenance area must meet the requirements of the General Conformity Rule before the action can take place. The General Conformity Rule was established to ensure that federal actions conform to the State’s air quality plans for an area to attain and maintain the NAAQSs. A General Conformity Assessment is a progressive two phased assessment:

- **Applicability Analysis:** A quantified net-change in emissions analysis (i.e., measure of intensity) to determine if an action is insignificant or potentially significant

- **Determination:** An in-depth assessment (only performed if identified as potentially significant in the Applicability Analysis) to definitively verify a significant impact.

**Table 5-2, General Conformity De Minimis Values**

Criteria Pollutant	Area Classification (attainment Status)	Pollutant of Interest	Ozone Transport Region	Gen. Conformity De Minimis Level (tons/yr)
<b>Ozone</b>	Extreme nonattainment	VOC or oxides of nitrogen (NOx)	NA	10
	Severe nonattainment	VOC or NOx	NA	25
	Serious nonattainment	VOC or NOx	NA	50
	Other nonattainment	VOC or NOx	Outside	100
	Other nonattainment	VOC	Inside	50
	Other nonattainment	NOx	Inside	100
	Maintenance	NOx	NA	100
	Maintenance	VOC	Inside	50
	Maintenance	VOC	Outside	100
<b>CO, SO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>2</sub></b>	Nonattainment	CO, SO <sub>2</sub> , NO <sub>2</sub>	NA	100
	Maintenance	CO, SO <sub>2</sub> , NO <sub>2</sub>	NA	100
<b>PM<sub>10</sub></b>	Serious nonattainment	PM <sub>10</sub>	NA	70
	Moderate nonattainment	PM <sub>10</sub>	NA	100
	Maintenance or within 10% of nonattainment	PM <sub>10</sub>	NA	100
<b>PM<sub>2.5</sub></b>	Nonattainment or maintenance	PM <sub>2.5</sub> Direct emissions	NA	100
	Nonattainment or maintenance	SO <sub>2</sub>	NA	100
	Nonattainment or maintenance	NO <sub>x</sub> <sup>(c)</sup>	NA	100
	Nonattainment or maintenance	VOC or Ammonia (NH <sub>3</sub> ) <sup>(d)</sup>	NA	100
<b>Pb</b>	Nonattainment	Pb	NA	25
	Maintenance	Pb	NA	25

Source: 40 CFR 93.153(b)(1) and (2).



### 5.2.1.1 Applicability Analysis

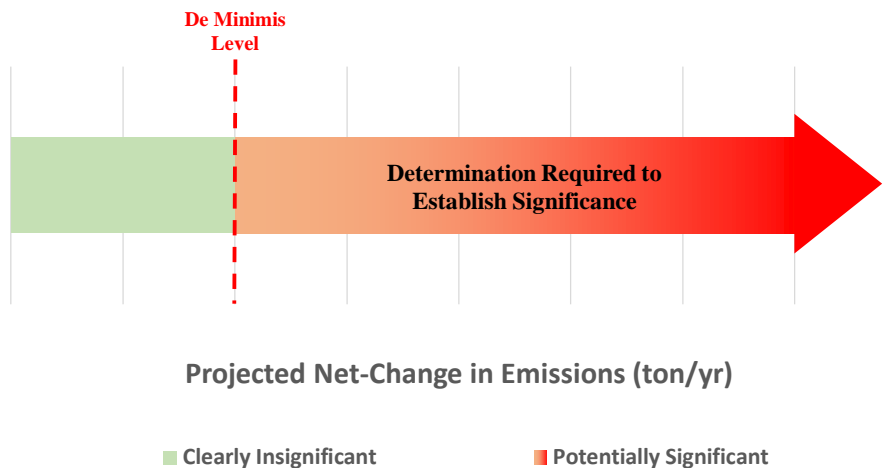
An Applicability Analysis is performed in an Air Quality EIAP Level II, Quantitative Assessment. An Applicability Analysis is a quantified net-change in emissions analysis (i.e., measure of intensity) to determine if an action is insignificant or potentially significant.

In promulgating the General Conformity Rule, the EPA recognized that the many federal agencies take thousands of actions every day, most of which do not result in significant increases in emissions. Therefore, EPA promulgated de minimis emissions levels for each of the NAAQS pollutants for which increases net emissions are too insignificant to affect public health or safety. If the total annual net change direct and indirect emissions from an action are below the de minimis levels, the action is considered insignificant (too trivial or minor) to merit consideration of adverse impacts to health or safety. Therefore, by EPA's definition, the General Conformity de minimis values (see *Table 5-2, General Conformity De Minimis Values*) are definitive insignificance indicators or thresholds of an action based on the annual net-change in emissions.

**The General Conformity de minimis values provide a definitive go/no-go first-level criterion for air quality impact significance for General Conformity Applicability Analyses:**

- Below De Minimis = Clearly (Definitively) Insignificant Impact and
- At or Above De Minimis = Potentially Significant Impact (enough to warrant a Determination).

**Figure 5-1, General Conformity Applicability Analyses Impact Significance**



For example: A Carbon monoxide (CO) maintenance area has a CO de minimis value of 100 ton/yr. Therefore, any action with an annual net change in CO less than 100 ton/yr would be considered clearly insignificant for the specified pollutant. However, any action with an annual net change in CO greater than or equal to 100 ton/yr would be considered potentially significant and would require a General Conformity Determination to establish the action's actual significance.

### 5.2.1.2 Determination

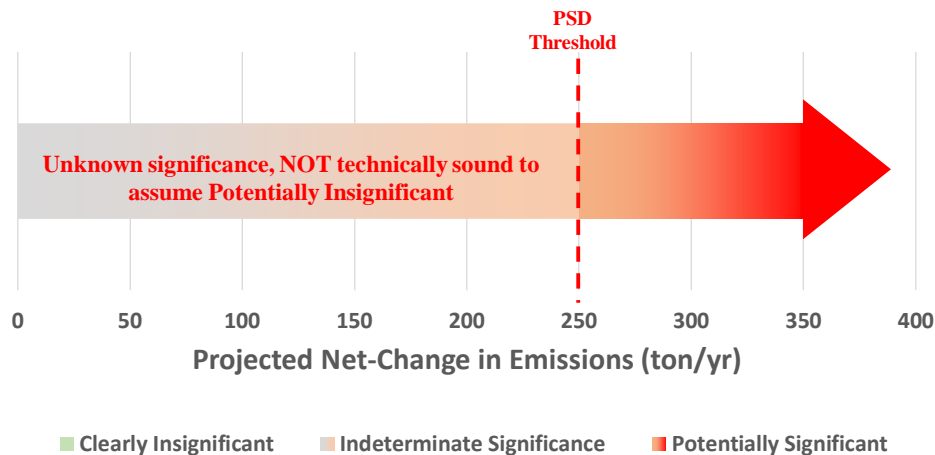
A Determination is performed in an Air Quality EIAP Level III, Advanced Assessment. A Determination is an in-depth assessment to definitively verify a significant impact that will affect public health or safety. A Determination is only performed if an action has been identified as “potentially significant” in an Applicability Analysis.

In promulgating the General Conformity Rule, the EPA defined significant as an action that does not conform to the applicable State or tribal plan to meet and sustain NAAQSs (i.e., SIP or TIP). By not conforming with the applicable SIP or TIP, the action may cause or contribute to new violations of a NAAQS.

### 5.2.2 *Attainment Area Context*

While there are established insignificance thresholds for use in General Conformity (nonattainment and maintenance areas), there are no established significance thresholds for attainment areas. However, according to the preamble to the original General Conformity Regulations (58 FR 1384, 12/30/1993), “the de minimis levels for conformity analyses in the final rule are based on the Act’s (Clean Air Act or CAA) major stationary source definitions” except for lead. Given the Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) 250 ton/yr threshold (directly emits or has the potential to emit) is one of the CAA’s major stationary source definitions (triggers) for a new major source or a source making a major modification in an attainment area, the 250 ton/yr PSD attainment area threshold would be an indicator of potentially significant air quality impacts for NEPA (i.e., within areas in attainment with all NAAQS).

**Figure 5-2, PSD 250 ton/yr Threshold as Significance Indicator**



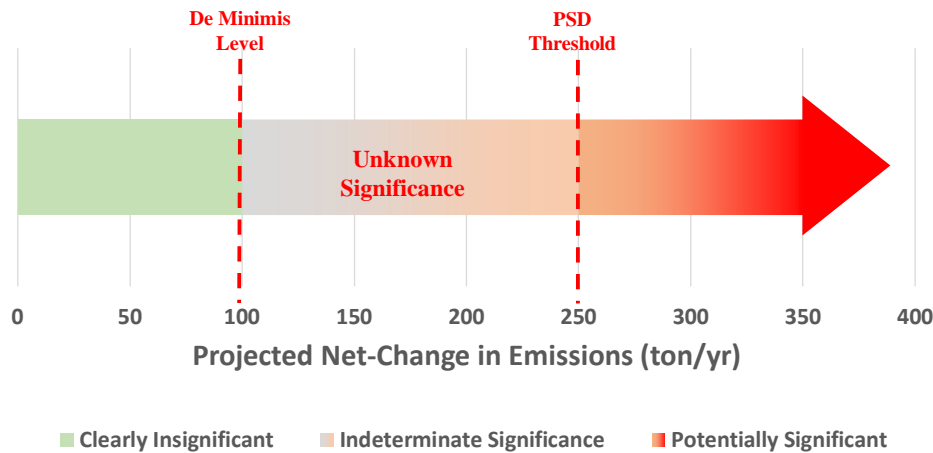
Actions that exceed the PSD 250 ton/yr threshold would potentially be significant; therefore, the PSD 250 ton/yr threshold provides an indicator for actions that are potentially significant. However, as shown in *Figure 5-2, PSD 250 ton/yr Threshold as Significance Indicator*, upon technical review of available scientific data and EPA guidance, it was concluded that the use of the 250 ton/yr threshold as an indicator of insignificance could result in exacerbating air-related

health issues and may cause or contribute to new violations of a NAAQS for areas that are near nonattainment. **Therefore, the use of the PSD threshold as an insignificance indicator in near nonattainment areas is NOT TECHNICALLY SOUND because it could result in exacerbating air-related health issues and may cause or contribute to a new violation of a NAAQS.**

This situation is alleviated to some degree with also applying the General Conformity maintenance area de minimis levels (25 ton/yr for lead and 100 ton/yr for all other criteria pollutants), which were established for nonattainment and maintenance areas, as insignificance indicators for actions that will occur within nonattainment and maintenance areas (see *Figure 5-3, De Minimis and PSD 250 ton/yr Threshold as Significance Indicator*). In this case, if an action's annual net change in emissions is:

- **Potentially Significant** - greater than or equal to the PSD threshold,
- **Clearly Insignificant** - less than the de minimis threshold, or
- **Indeterminant Significant** (unknown significance) - greater than or equal to the de minimis threshold and less than the PSD threshold.

**Figure 5-3, De Minimis and PSD 250 ton/yr Threshold as Significance Indicator**



As can be seen from *Figure 5-3, De Minimis and PSD 250 ton/yr Threshold as Significance Indicator*, the significance (and insignificance) of an action's annual net change in emissions falling between the de minimis and PSD values is still unknown without further evaluation of the context (i.e., attainment status) of a specific action. However, it is intuitive that actions occurring within areas that are near nonattainment would be more likely to have an impact on air quality than areas that are not near nonattainment.

Given maintenance areas are previous nonattainment areas that have recently met NAAQS (within the past twenty years), they are actually areas that are also near nonattainment. Therefore, the maintenance area (near nonattainment area by another name) de minimis levels (100 ton/yr for all other criteria pollutants excluding lead) can conservatively be used as



insignificant criteria for near nonattainment areas. Therefore, the 100 ton/yr maintenance area de minimis value provides an indicator of insignificance for near nonattainment areas.

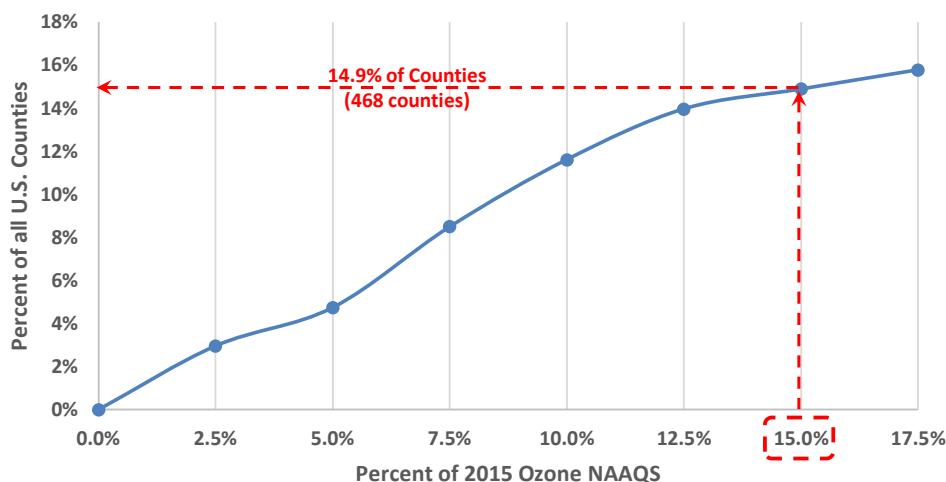
### What is “Near Nonattainment”?

The EPA believes that an air quality design value below 85% of any NAAQS could be considered significantly below the standard because the air quality is not likely to deteriorate to a level that would violate the NAAQS. The EPA has used this “85% of NAAQS” rule to define maintenance areas with low risk of exceeding a NAAQS (low risk maintenance areas) to allow Limited Maintenance Plans in these areas to alleviate requirements of a standard Maintenance Plan. (EPA 2018, 2001, 1995, and 1994b)

This EPA “85% of NAAQS” rule of thumb for low-risk maintenance areas is inversely applied to indicate higher risk maintenance areas where continued attainment is questionable. Maintenance areas with ambient air quality within 15% of a NAAQS (design value) is considered questionably below the standard (i.e., questionably attainment).

Based on the 2018 design values for all NAAQSs (AFCEC 2020, *Attachment 1*), about 17% of all U.S. counties are within 15% of any NAAQS and about 14.9% of all U.S. counties are within 15% of the 2015 Ozone NAAQS. Therefore, these counties would be considered questionably attainment based on the EPA’s 85% of any NAAQS rule. Analysis of the EPA’s 2018 ozone design values indicates that ozone accounts for 88% of all questionably attainment counties (i.e., within 15% of the 2015 Ozone NAAQS); see *Figure 5-4, Percent of U.S. Counties within 15% of the 2015 Ozone NAAQS*.

**Figure 5-4, Percent of U.S. Counties within 15% of the 2015 Ozone NAAQS**



With 18% of all U.S. counties considered questionably attainment for any NAAQS (14.9% for ozone alone), it seems excessive and disproportionate to use the EPA’s 85% of any NAAQS (questionably attainment) rule to define “near nonattainment”.

To assess the appropriateness of the EPA’s 85% of NAAQS (questionably attainment) rule to define “near nonattainment”, a simple trend analyses of the 2008 Ozone NAAQS’s maintenance areas was performed. The 2008 Ozone NAAQS maintenance areas data (AFCEC 2020, *Attachment 2*) was used because:

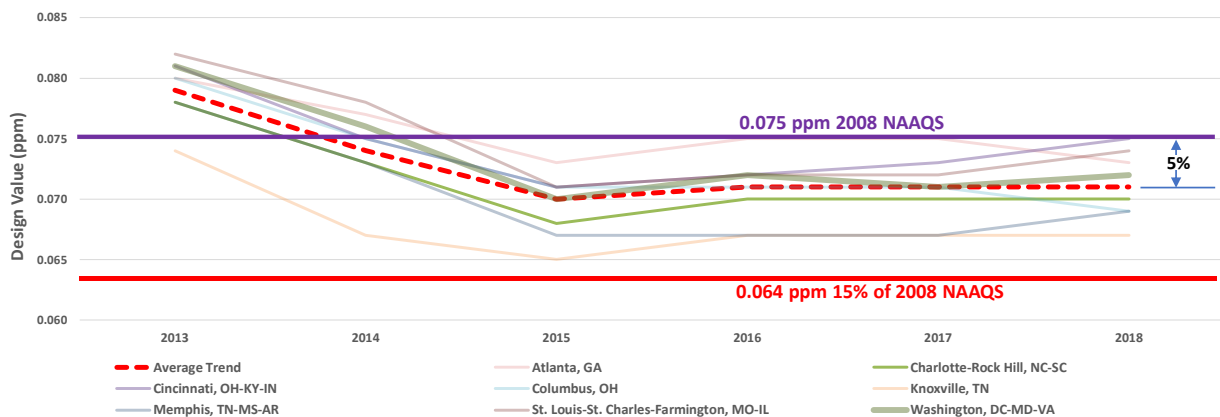
- Currently ozone makes up 88% of all questionably attainment counties (within 15% of any NAAQS).
- Maintenance areas are localized areas that have recently achieved attainment; therefore, maintenance areas are attainment areas that are in effect truly near nonattainment areas.
- Ozone design value data has been collected since 2009.

The analysis is summarized in *Figure 5-5, 2008 Ozone NAAQS Maintenance Area Trends*, which shows:

- Applying the EPA 85% of NAAQS (questionably attainment) rule would define near nonattainment as at or below 0.064 ppm (15% of 2008 Ozone 0.070 ppm NAAQS), and
- An average trend holds steady at 5% of the NAAQS with average 5% fluctuations above and below the average trend line.

Based on the trend analysis of the maintenance areas for the 2008 Ozone NAAQS, it is apparent that using the EPA’s 85% of NAAQS (questionably attainment) rule is too conservative and disproportionate to define “near nonattainment”. The trend analysis also suggests a more representative definition for “near nonattainment” would be “within 5% of the NAAQS.”

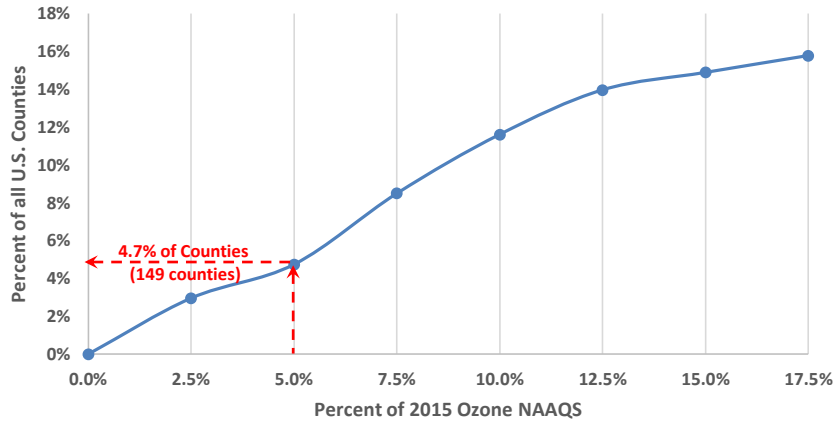
**Figure 5-5, 2008 Ozone NAAQS Maintenance Area Trends**



Defining “near nonattainment” as within 5% of the NAAQS as the trend analysis suggests is graphically depicted in

Figure 5-6, **Percent of U.S. Counties with 5% of the 2015 Ozone NAAQS**. The figure shows that defining “near nonattainment” as within 5% of the NAAQS only includes 149 counties (4.7% of the total counties).

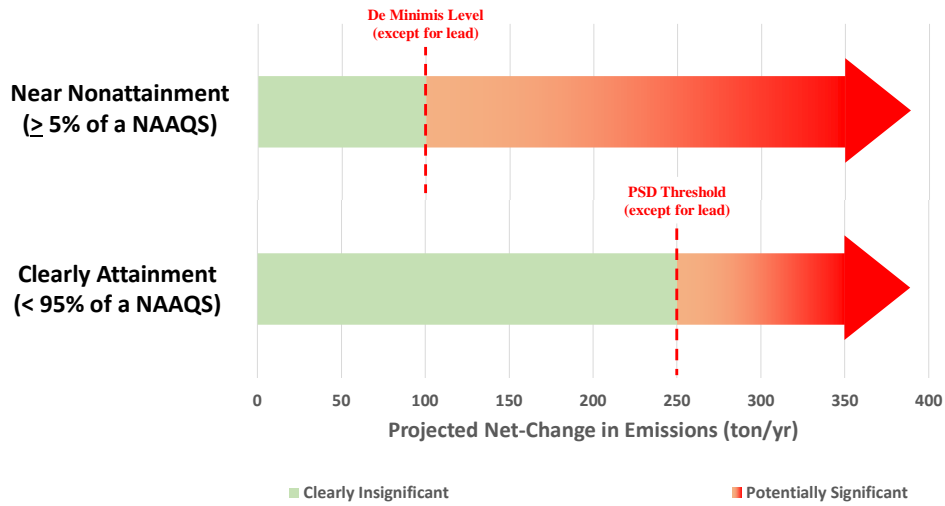
**Figure 5-6, Percent of U.S. Counties with 5% of the 2015 Ozone NAAQS**



Both *Figure 5-5, 2008 Ozone NAAQS Maintenance Area Trends*, and *Figure 5-6, Percent of U.S. Counties with 5% of the 2015 Ozone NAAQS*, demonstrate that defining “near nonattainment” as within 5% of the NAAQS is technically sound and not too conservative or disproportionate. Therefore, **“near nonattainment” is defined as ambient air quality design value within 5% of any NAAQS.**

By applying the new near nonattainment definition (within 5% of the NAAQS), the insignificance of action’s annual net change in emissions falling between the de minimis and PSD values can now be established. The 100 ton/yr maintenance area de minimis value provides an indicator of insignificance for near nonattainment areas and the 250 ton/yr PSD threshold provides an indicator of insignificance for clearly attainment areas (see *Figure 5-7, Insignificance Criteria for Attainment Areas*).

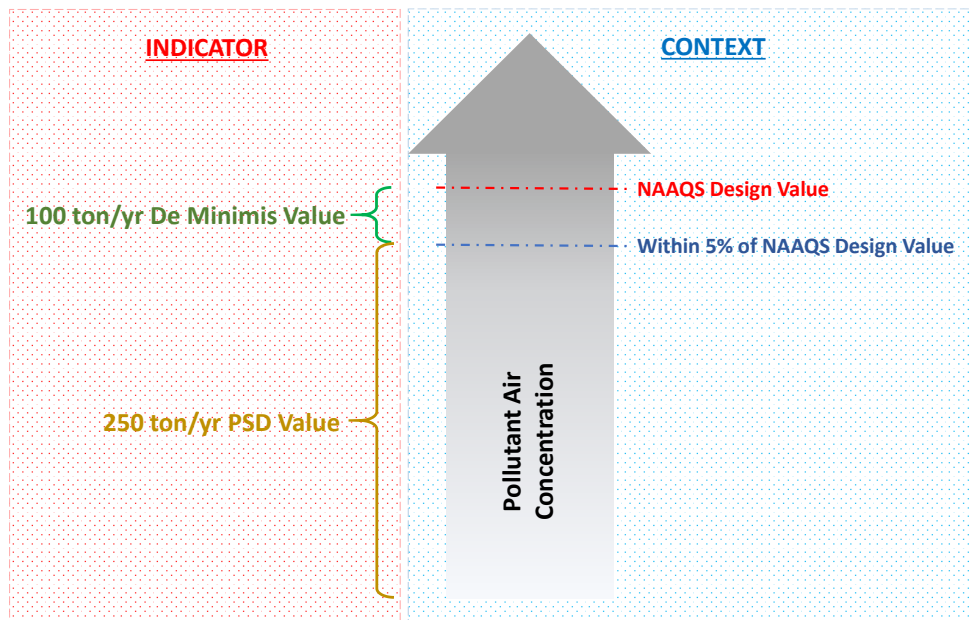
**Figure 5-7, Insignificance Criteria for Attainment Areas**



Therefore, **near nonattainment areas should** (see *Figure 5-8, Attainment Area Insignificance Indicators*):

- **Always use the maintenance area de minimis values (25 ton/yr for lead and 100 ton/yr for all other criteria pollutants) as insignificance criteria as an indicator of insignificance and potential significance.**
- **Never use the 250 ton/yr PSD value as a significance criterion to indicate insignificance.**

**Figure 5-8, Attainment Area Insignificance Indicators**



### 5.3 Insignificance Criteria Usage

In Air Quality EIAP there are three progressive levels triggered by exceeding insignificance criteria (thresholds/indicators). The specific insignificance criteria (thresholds/indicators) used for air quality EIAP are discussed below

**Level I, Exempt Action Screening:** In Level I assessments there are three insignificance criteria used: NAAQS, CATEXs, and General Conformity Exemptions.

- The NAAQS are used to determine the attainment status of the location of the proposed action. Areas where ambient air quality exceeds the NAAQS are designated by the EPA as *nonattainment areas* and areas where ambient air quality recently achieved the NAAQS thresholds are designated as *maintenance areas*. If a proposed action will occur within an attainment area for all criteria pollutants, General Conformity does not apply and air quality impacts for NEPA are not as consequential as would be in a nonattainment or maintenance area.
- CATEXs are used to eliminate any proposed actions from further NEPA assessment for actions that have already been demonstrated to not have a significant effect on the human environment. If the proposed action is on the official CATEX list and also falls within an attainment area for all criteria pollutants, document the applicable CATEX and no further air quality assessment is required. If the proposed action is not on the official CATEX list, a Level II assessment is required.

**CATEXs are NOT applicable to General Conformity Assessments; therefore, if the proposed action is on the official CATEX list and also falls within a nonattainment or maintenance area for any criteria pollutants, General Conformity applicability must be assessed.**

- General Conformity Exemptions are list in 40 CFR 93.153 or applicable SIP (40 CFR 51.851) and are generally routine and recurring in nature. Any action that will occur within an attainment area is automatically exempt from General Conformity. If a proposed action is NOT exempt and will occur within a nonattainment/ maintenance area (or within 10 percent of any NAAQS), a Level II, Air Quality Quantitative Assessment, is be required.

**Level II, Air Quality Quantitative Assessment:** In Level II assessments the General Conformity thresholds are compared directly to the estimated annual net change in total direct and indirect emissions from the proposed action (or alternatives). The General Conformity thresholds can provide a definitive significance determination for General Conformity and an indicator of significance for NEPA as described below:

- **Applicability Analysis (Use as a Threshold):** In an Applicability Analysis (for nonattainment and maintenance areas only), General Conformity thresholds are de minimis values used to compare against the action's worst-case estimated annual

emissions for each pollutant of concern. If the Level II worst-case annual emissions estimate for any of the pollutants of concern is above the corresponding de minimis threshold values, a Conformity Determination and Level III assessment is required.

- **NEPA Assessment (Use as an Indicator):** Given the General Conformity de minimis threshold values are the maximum net change an action can acceptably emit in nonattainment and maintenance areas, these threshold values would also be a conservative indicator if an action's emissions within an attainment area would also be acceptable. In other words, if the threshold is acceptable in nonattainment areas, it must be more than acceptable in an attainment area. If the Level II worst-case annual emissions estimate for any pollutant of concern is above the corresponding de minimis threshold values, this indicates further evaluation is needed and a Level III assessment is required.

**Level III, Advance Air Quality Assessment:** The Level III assessment is part science and part art; both quantitative and qualitative assessments are utilized to evaluate the significance of potential air quality impact associated with a proposed action.

- **Quantitative Analysis:** In a quantitative analysis of air quality impact, the proposed action is assessed based on comparing the action's worst-case quantified annual emissions for each pollutant of concern against defined EPA thresholds or indicators (i.e., de minimis levels or daily insignificance thresholds). If the refined Level III worst-case annual emissions estimate for any pollutant of concern is above the corresponding de minimis or daily insignificance thresholds, this indicates that mitigation or offsets are likely needed.
- **Qualitative Analysis:** In a qualitative analysis of air quality impacts, the proposed action is further assessed based on quality or characteristics, rather than on a firm quantity or measured value. An inference on the significance is drawn from professional judgment based on the available quantified data and other scientifically related data. When appropriate, an air quality impact insignificance inference can be derived from comparing the NAAQS against an amalgamation of the quantified data and modeling of the worst-case annual emissions for each pollutant of concern superimposed on the current ambient air quality data.
- **Daily Significance Thresholds/Indicators:** These thresholds/indicators are an extrapolation of General Conformity annual de minimis values to daily thresholds/indicators to compare against daily estimated emissions. If the daily emissions estimate for any pollutant of concern is above the corresponding Daily Significance Thresholds/Indicator, this indicates a **likely significant impact** and a more comprehensive EIAP Level III assessment is required.
- **NAAQS:** The NAAQS as thresholds/indicators only applies to nonattainment and maintenance areas and is used only when applying fate/transport modeling (e.g., dispersion modeling) as a strategy for General Conformity Determination. The NAAQS as thresholds/indicators are compared against episodes of exceedance demonstrated

through fate/transport modeling. If the fate/transport modeling indicates potential for the proposed action to increase the frequency or severity of any existing violation of any NAAQS standard in any area, this indicates a **significant impact** and a need for a more comprehensive EIAP Level III assessment which includes a Conformity Determination through modeling.

The Level III assessment requires a formal evaluation of estimated air impacts (from Level II) based on potential emissions offsets and/or air quality modeling analysis of the quantitative net change (emission inventory of the annual net total direct and indirect emissions) of pollutants of concern. In Level III, the estimates of each annual net change (i.e., total direct and indirect emissions associated with a proposed action), as estimated in Level II, is compared against regulatory thresholds/indicators for offsets and/or the NAAQS for modeling analysis.

#### **5.4 California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Thresholds**

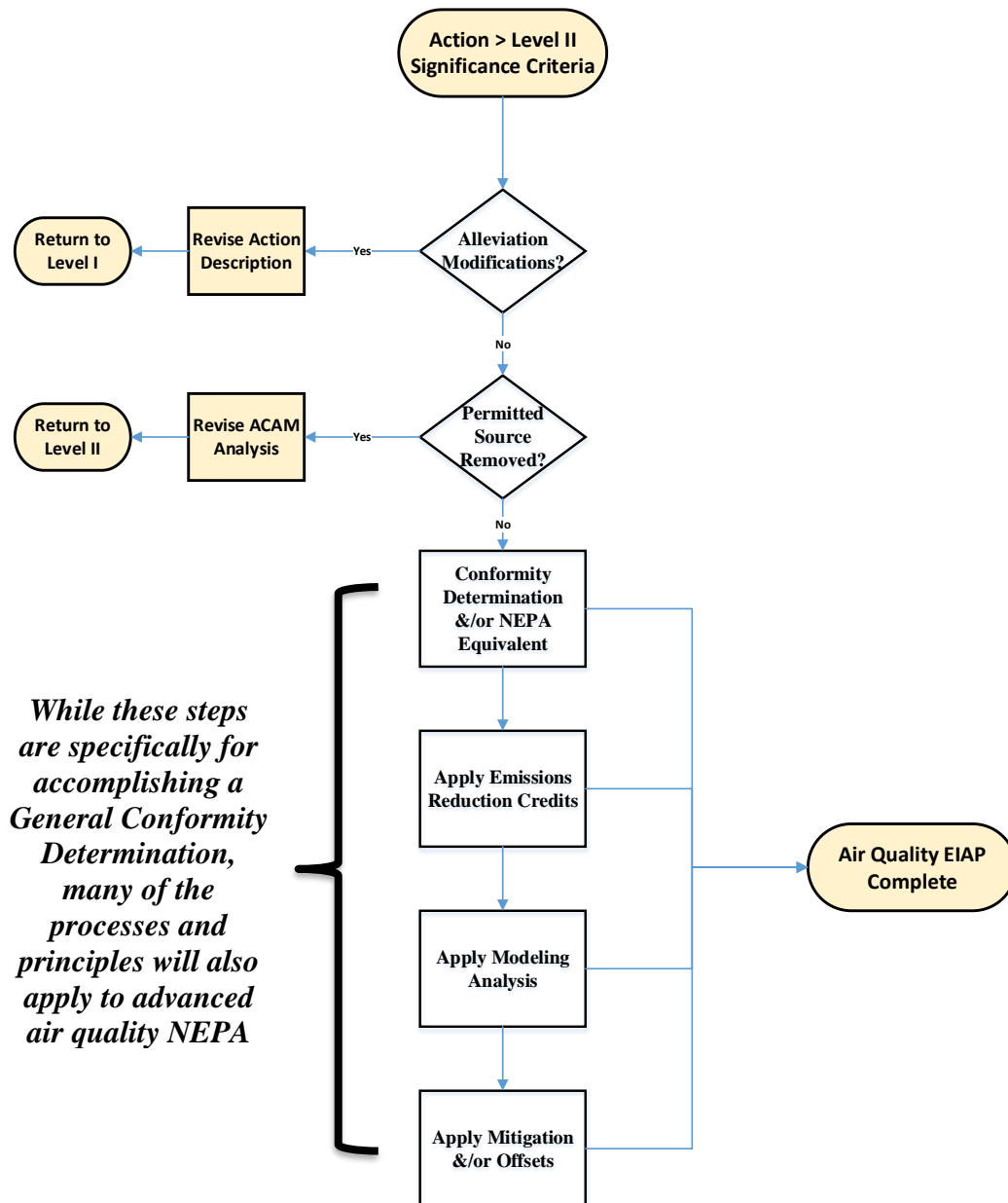
The CEQA establishes daily significance thresholds for VOCs and NO<sub>x</sub> by expanding the annual General Conformity thresholds. These daily threshold were derived by simply dividing the annual threshold by 365 days. This guide expands on this concept for all criteria pollutants and precursors to establish firm significance thresholds/indicators. **However, CEQA clearly does not apply to Federal Actions, CEQA only applies to projects of all California state, regional or local agencies.** (CEQA 2014)

Additionally, not only are CEQA thresholds not applicable to NEPA or General Conformity for Federal Actions, their use would for impact assessments clearly are not be reasonably foreseeable and lack scientific integrity (40 CFR 1502 and EPA Factsheet). The estimation of future impacts is essential to air quality impact analysis; however, the focus must be on reasonably foreseeable activities. Reasonably foreseeable activities are those that are likely to occur or probable, rather than those that are merely possible. Given the methods, algorithms, emission factors and models used for air impact assessment only provided a rough order of magnitude estimate (per AP-42, Compilation of Air Pollutant Emissions Factors), prediction of daily emissions is well beyond the fidelity afforded by the data quality. Also, prediction of any proposed action (a hypothetical future scenario) down to a daily level is impossible to any degree of credibility. Therefore, the use of CEQA daily thresholds for NEPA or General Conformity assessments lacks Scientific Integrity per 40 CFR 1502.

## 6 LEVEL III, ADVANCE AIR QUALITY ASSESSMENT

The Level III assessment is a continuation of the Level II, Air Quality Quantitative Assessment, and are complex evaluations that are part science and part art, and requires both a quantitative (i.e., the science part) and a qualitative assessment (i.e., the art part) of the potential air quality impact associated with a proposed action. Generally speaking, the results and findings of the Level III assessment are usually associated with the requirement for a General Conformity Determination or a very large/complex action and are often integrated into an overall formal EA or EIS.

Figure 6-1, Level III Process Diagram





## 6.1 Step #1, Alleviation Modifications

The first step in any Level III assessment is to back up to the last step of the Level II assessment and review the proposed action for potential “alleviation modifications.” which would result in lessening air emissions or adverse impacts of air emissions (e.g., relocation of action, reduce size/time of action, low-emission construction materials/activities, etc.).

Alleviation modifications are simply documented clarifications to the action’s description in terms of air quality impact which illuminate measures that are part of the action that result in lessening air emissions. They are actual proactive refinements and changes to the action’s scope/definition that actually clarify and replace the original proposed action and are developed early on in the EIAP process with the intent of being environmentally friendly.

Because alleviation modifications replace the original scope/definition of the proposed action, the new defined action must be reevaluated starting at a Level I assessment. Therefore, alleviation modifications should be developed as early on (no later than the first step of a Level III assessment) in the EIAP process as possible with the objective of minimizing adverse impacts on the environment. Should any alleviation modifications be developed beyond a Level I assessment, a new Level I assessment must be made based on the revised scope/definition of the action.

Alleviation modifications differ from “emission offsets” and “mitigation measures” in that alleviation modifications are proactively applied scope/definition changes to the action, while emission offsets and mitigation are reactive reduction measures applied after an action is fully defined and are applied solely as a measure to reduce or offset air emissions to conform with the applicable SIP.

***If alleviation modifications can be applied and the proposed action is therefore modified, a new or reassessment of the Air Quality EIAP Level I assessment is required.*** However, if alleviation modifications cannot be applied to modify the proposed action, a Level III, Advanced Air Quality Assessment must be performed. The Level III assessment must include both extensive quantitative and qualitative analysis and often require emissions mitigation or offset at least 110% of the worst-case annual emission projected for the proposed action. Therefore, the proponent and other decision makers should always be provided with the option for alleviation modifications (i.e., legally enforceable action scope/definition amendments).

***NOTE: Any proposed “alleviation modification” that does not specifically appear in the scope of the definition of the proposed action, is NOT actually an “alleviation modification” and will be considered an offset or mitigation.***

## 6.2 Step #2, Permitting

The next step is to evaluate for any portions (i.e., sources) of the proposed action that will be covered under a permit. Permitting requirements (whether or no an emission source must be permitted) are not officially part of the NEPA assessment because a NEPA assessment is about evaluating the impact of a proposed action on the environment, and not an assessment of the potential regulatory impacts on the proponent for implementing the action. However, for General Conformity Evaluations (and extrapolating to NEPA assessments), permitting may play

an important role and it is good planning practice to evaluate air permitting requirements during an EIAP assessment.

For General Conformity, 40 CFR 93.153 (c-d) provides a regulatory exemption for portions of an action that are or will be permitted. Generally, the permitting requirements will address any adverse impacts for all sources covered under a permit; therefore, further evaluation generally isn't required under General Conformity and permitted emission sources shall not be included in a General Conformity analysis. Given General Conformity only applies when a proposed action will occur within a nonattainment or maintenance area for any given NAAQS, any regulatory exemption from General Conformity is effectively a worst-case exemption for air quality NEPA. Consequently, the exemption for portions of an action that are or will be permitted can also be applied to NEPA assessments.

Upon evaluating all portions of an action for permit requirements and permitted (or will be permitted) sources are removed from the air quality EIAP assessment, the proposed action must be reassessed in ACAM with all permitted (or will be permitted) sources removed from the analysis. ***If the ACAM reevaluation shows the proposed action is below applicable significance criteria, no further assessment is needed.***

However, should the permitting exemption be applied during an EIAP assessment, the specific permitting and affected sources that are or will be permitted MUST be documented as part of the air quality EIAP assessment.

### **6.2.1 Preconstruction New Source Review (NSR)**

Congress established the NSR permitting program as part of the 1977 Clean Air Act Amendments. NSR is a preconstruction permitting program that serves two important purposes:

- First, it ensures that air quality is not significantly degraded from the addition of new and modified factories, industrial boilers and power plants. In areas with unhealthy air, NSR assures that new emissions do not slow progress toward cleaner air. In areas with clean air, especially pristine areas like national parks, NSR assures that new emissions do not significantly worsen air quality.
- Second, the NSR program assures people that any large new or modified industrial source in their neighborhoods will be as clean as possible, and that advances in pollution control occur concurrently with industrial expansion.

NSR permits are legal documents that the facility owners/operators must abide by. The permit specifies what construction is allowed, what emission limits must be met, and often how the emissions source must be operated.

Permitting concerns under an air quality EIAP assessment includes any major or minor, new or modified stationary sources requiring a permit under the CAA NSR or Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) programs. In accordance with 40 CFR 51 Subpart I, any new major stationary sources of air pollution and/or major modifications to existing major stationary sources are required to obtain a permit before commencing construction.

In the planning phase for any construction (i.e., construction, renovation, or major equipment addition/modification) project, the proponent of a proposed action shall consult with the Installation/Base Civil Engineer Environmental Function on any NSR requirements. The Installation/Base Civil Engineer Environmental Function will evaluate the proposed action based on the potential to emit (PTE) in accordance with the requirements of 40 CFR 51 Subpart I, Review of New Sources and Modifications. There are three types of permits that can be issued under NSR for either new or modified sources:

### ***6.2.2 Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) Permits***

PSD applies to new major sources or major modifications at existing sources for pollutants where the area the source is located is in attainment or unclassifiable with the NAAQS. PSD requires the following:

- **Installation of the Best Available Control Technology (BACT)**
  - BACT is an emission limitation based on the maximum degree of emission reduction (considering energy, environmental, and economic impacts) achievable through application of production processes and available methods, systems, and techniques.
  - BACT is a case-by-case decision that considers energy, environmental, and economic impact. BACT can include add-on control equipment or modification of the production processes or methods. This includes fuel cleaning or treatment and innovative fuel combustion techniques. BACT may be a design, equipment, work practice, or operational standard if imposition of an emissions standard is infeasible.
- **An Air Quality Analysis**
  - This air quality analysis assesses existing air quality and predicts through modeling the ambient concentrations that will result from the proposed project and future growth associated with the project.
- **Additional Impacts Analysis**
  - This is an additional analysis that assesses the impacts of air, ground, and water pollution on soils, vegetation and visibility caused by any increase in emissions of any regulated pollutant from the source or modification under review.
- **Public Involvement**
  - Public involvement opportunities include public comment period, hearings, appeals, etc. during the permit issuance process.

### ***6.2.3 Nonattainment Area NSR Permits***

Nonattainment NSR applies to new major sources or major modifications at existing sources for pollutants where the area the source is located is not in attainment with the NAAQS. Nonattainment NSR requirements are customized for the nonattainment area. The program requirements include:

- **Installation of the Lowest Achievable Emission Rate (LAER)**
  - LAER are the rate of emissions that reflects:
    - (1) the most stringent emission limitation included in the implementation plan of any state for a similar source (same class or category of source) unless the facility owner or operator demonstrates such limitations are not achievable; or
    - (2) the most stringent emissions limitation achieved in practice by such class or category of source.
- **Emission Offsets**
  - Emission offsets are used to avoid increases in emissions, proposed emission increases from new or modified facilities are balanced by equivalent or greater reductions from existing sources.
- **Public Involvement**
  - Public involvement opportunities include public comment period, hearings, appeals, etc. during the permit issuance process.

LAER is the most stringent emission limitation derived from either of the following the most stringent emission limitation contained in the implementation plan of any State for such class or category of source; or the most stringent emission limitation achieved in practice by such class or category of source.

Offsets are emission reductions, generally obtained from existing sources located in the vicinity of a proposed source which must:

- (1) offset the emissions increase from the new source or modification, and
- (2) provide a net air quality benefit.

The obvious purpose for requiring offsetting emissions decreases is to allow an area to move towards attainment of the NAAQS while still allowing some industrial growth.

#### **6.2.4 Minor NSR Permits**

Minor NSR is for pollutants from stationary sources that do not require PSD or nonattainment NSR permits. The purpose of minor NSR permits is to prevent the construction of sources that would interfere with attainment or maintenance of NAAQS or violate the control strategy in nonattainment areas. Also, minor NSR permits often contain permit conditions to limit the sources emissions to avoid PSD or nonattainment NSR.

States are able to customize the requirements of the minor NSR program as long as their program meets minimum requirements. The permit agency's minor NSR program is part of the SIP.

The Minor NSR Permit program requirements include:

- New sources or modifications at existing sources must comply with any emission control measures required by the state.

- The program must not interfere with attainment or maintenance of the NAAQS or the control strategies of a SIP or Tribal Implementation Plan (TIP).
- An implementation plan is a set of programs and regulations developed by the appropriate regulatory agency in order to assure that the NAAQS are attained and maintained.

### 6.3 Step #3, Conformity Determination or NEPA Equivalent

*This step is specifically written for accomplishing a General Conformity Determination; however, many of the processes and principles outlined in this step are also applicable to advanced air quality NEPA assessments for location within attainment areas.*

In nonattainment and maintenance areas, if the ACAM run determines that the emissions from an action are above the de minimis levels and the action is not otherwise exempt, then the USAF must demonstrate that the action will conform with the applicable SIP. The USAF must demonstrate that the action will meet (conform with) SIP requirements and milestones including reasonable further emission reduction requirements. Such a demonstration can be made by comparing the net emissions from the action to the inventory of emissions in the SIP, and by working with the state or local agency responsible for air quality control in the area. There are six basic methods for demonstrating conformity:

- 1) Document that the emissions from the action are identified and accounted for in the SIP;
- 2) Obtain a statement from the applicable state, tribal, or local air quality agency that the emissions from the action along with all other emissions in the area do not exceed the budget for those emissions in the SIP;
- 3) Have the local Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) provide a statement that the emissions are included in transportation plan modeling;
- 4) Have the State or Tribe agree to include the emissions in the SIP;
- 5) Conduct air quality fate/transport modeling to demonstrate that the emissions will not cause or contribute to a violation of the NAAQS; ***this modeling option is not available for O<sub>3</sub>, NO<sub>2</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> areas; or***
- 6) Mitigate or offset the increase in emissions.

In addition, EPA has developed two alternative approaches for demonstrating conformity:

- 1) The emission reduction credits approach; and
- 2) The facility emission budget approach.

An action required to have a Conformity Determination for a specific pollutant will be determined to conform to the applicable SIP if, for each pollutant that exceeds the de minimis

thresholds (or otherwise requires a Conformity Determination), the action meets the applicable requirements of 40 CFR 93.158(a).

### **6.3.1 Overview of Statutory Conformity Requirements**

Section 176(c)(1) of the CAA states that “[n]o department, agency or instrumentality of the Federal Government shall engage in, support in any way or provide financial assistance for, license or permit, or approve, any activity which does not conform to an implementation plan” for achieving and maintaining ambient air quality standards. This Section goes on to state that the “assurance of conformity to such an implementation plan shall be an affirmative responsibility of the head of such department, agency, or instrumentality.”

As defined by Section 176(c)(1) of the CAA, conformity [of a Federal action] to an implementation plan means:

(A) Conformity to an implementation plan's purpose of eliminating or reducing the severity and number of violations of the national ambient air quality standards and achieving expeditious attainment of such standards; and

(B) That such activities will not:

- Cause or contribute to any new violation of any standard in any area;
- Increase the frequency or severity of any existing violation of any standard in any area; or
- Delay timely attainment of any standard or any required interim emission reductions or other milestones in any area.

Section 176(c)(4) of the CAA directed the EPA to issue criteria and procedures for determining conformity. This Section is the statutory basis for the general conformity regulations at 40 CFR 93 Subpart B.

### **6.3.2 USAF Strategy for Conformity Determination**

The USAF’s strategy for approaching General Conformity Determinations is based on the concept of data quality objectives to reach defensible decisions or to make credible estimates with the least impact on scarce resources. Under data quality objectives, the goal is efficiency in achieving the objective at the simplest level and minimal work effort and cost. The objective drives and limits the effort and data needs; and inversely, the available data constrains the objective alternatives. In other words, only generate the minimal effort/data needed to meet the objective and the available data should restrict the objective alternatives. Most importantly, new data or extra work efforts should only be sought if the objective cannot be met with the available data.

In this case, the objective is to make a General Conformity Determination in accordance with 40 CFR 93.158(a). ***The strategy is to make a defensible and credible Conformity***

***Determination (i.e., the objective) with the least impact on scarce USAF resources (i.e., work effort and cost).***

Clearly, the simplest way of demonstrating conformity is for the project emissions to be included in the SIP demonstration or the emissions budget. However, these may not be options in the nonattainment area where the Federal action is occurring. In such situations, it is incumbent on the USAF to determine other means of demonstrating conformity. It is advised that the USAF consult with the State and local air officials early in the conformity decision-making process to determine the appropriate criteria to use.

The following section summarizes the applicable conformity determination alternatives of 40 CFR 93.158(a) and provides the USAF's recommended strategy (in order of alternative priority and efficiency) for each criteria pollutant. The sequence of the strategy alternatives are derived to optimize the data quality objectives (i.e., reach credible and defensible General Conformity Determination with the least impact on the USAF's scarce resources); therefore, **the alternatives should be followed and implemented in the priority sequence as shown**.

### ***6.3.3 Determination Criteria form 40 CFR 93.158***

The applicable requirements of 40 CFR 93.158(a) are summarized below for each criteria pollutant:

**§93.158(a)(1) For any criteria pollutant or precursor**, the total of direct and indirect emissions from the action are specifically identified and accounted for in the applicable SIP's attainment or maintenance demonstration or reasonable further progress milestone or in a facility-wide emission budget included in a SIP in accordance with §93.161;

**NOTE: 40 CFR 93.158(a)(1) applies to criteria pollutant actually emitted by a source and precursors.** Particulate matter (PM) precursors apply to all PM<sub>2.5</sub> nonattainment/maintenance areas; however, PM precursors **ONLY** apply to PM<sub>10</sub> nonattainment areas (not maintenance areas), and only if, and for specific PM precursors explicitly identified in an applicable SIP as a significant contributor/s to the PM<sub>10</sub> levels.

**§93.158(a)(2) For precursors of ozone, nitrogen dioxide, or particulate matter**, the total of direct and indirect emissions from the action are fully offset within the same nonattainment or maintenance area (or nearby area of equal or higher classification provided the emissions from that area contribute to the violations, or have contributed to violations in the past, in the area with the Federal action) through a revision to the applicable SIP or a similarly enforceable measure that effects emissions reductions so that there is no net increase in emissions of that pollutant;

**NOTE: §93.158(a)(2) applies to precursors only.** According to the definition of "precursors of a criteria pollutant" in 40 CFR 93.152, precursors of PM (i.e., sulfur dioxide [SO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, VOCs, and ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>)] are implied to be considered as particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter equal to or less than 2.5 microns (PM<sub>2.5</sub>). Specific precursors of PM (i.e., SO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, VOCs, or NH<sub>3</sub>) are only to be considered as part of PM<sub>10</sub> (particulate matter

with an aerodynamic diameter equal to or less than 10 microns) for PM10 nonattainment areas only (not maintenance areas) and ONLY for specific PM precursors explicitly identified in an applicable SIP as a significant contributor/s to the PM10 levels.

**§93.158(a)(3) For any directly-emitted (i.e., emissions wholly released as criteria pollutant and are not indirectly created through precursors) criteria pollutant**, the total of direct and indirect emissions from the action meets the requirements:

(i) Specified in paragraph (b) of this section, based on area-wide air quality fate/transport modeling analysis and local air quality fate/transport modeling analysis; or

(ii) Meet the requirements of paragraph (a)(5) of this section and, for local air quality fate/transport modeling analysis, the requirement of paragraph (b) of this section;

**NOTE: §93.158(a)(3) applies to criteria pollutant actually emitted by a source (does not include precursors).** The CFR is poorly written in that it does not define “directly-emitted criteria pollutant” and is easily confused with “direct emissions.” However, per the Preamble (March 2010), §93.158(a)(3) was specifically revised to address the “directly emitted” PM only and does not include precursors which are addressed in 93.158(a)(2). Therefore, “directly-emitted criteria pollutant” is interpreted to mean only criteria pollutant actually emitted by a source (not secondary precursors).

**§93.158(a)(4) For CO or directly emitted PM (i.e., PM emissions wholly released as PM and are not indirectly created through precursors):**

(i) Where the State agency primarily responsible for the applicable SIP determines that an area-wide air quality fate/transport modeling analysis is not needed, the total of direct and indirect emissions from the action meet the requirements specified in paragraph (b) of this section, based on local air quality fate/transport modeling analysis; or

(ii) Where the State agency primarily responsible for the applicable SIP determines that an area-wide air quality fate/transport modeling analysis is appropriate and that a local air quality fate/transport modeling analysis is not needed, the total of direct and indirect emissions from the action meet the requirements specified in paragraph (b) of this section, based on area-wide fate/transport modeling, or meet the requirements of paragraph (a)(5) of this section.

**NOTE: §93.158(a)(4) applies to CO and PM actually emitted by a source (does not include PM precursors).** The CFR does not define “directly-emitted PM.” However, based on the Preamble (March 2010), §93.158(a)(4) was specifically revised to address the “directly emitted PM” only and not include precursors [which are addressed in 93.158(a)(2)]. Therefore, “directly-emitted PM” is interpreted to mean only PM that is actually emitted by a source and does not include secondary precursors.

**§93.158(a)(5) For ozone or nitrogen dioxide, and for purposes of paragraphs (a)(3)(ii) and (a)(4)(ii) of this section**, each portion of the action or the action as a whole meets any of the following requirements:



(i) Where EPA has approved a revision to the applicable implementation plan after the area was designated as nonattainment and the State or Tribe makes a determination as provided in paragraph (a)(5)(i)(A) of this section or where the State or Tribe makes a commitment as provided in paragraph (a)(5)(i)(B) of this section:

(A) The total of direct and indirect emissions from the action (or portion thereof) is determined and documented by the State agency primarily responsible for the applicable SIP to result in a level of emissions which, together with all other emissions in the nonattainment (or maintenance) area, would not exceed the emissions budgets specified in the applicable SIP;

(B) The total of direct and indirect emissions from the action (or portion thereof) is determined by the State agency responsible for the applicable SIP to result in a level of emissions which, together with all other emissions in the nonattainment (or maintenance) area, would exceed an emissions budget specified in the applicable SIP and the State Governor or the Governor's designee for SIP actions makes a written commitment to EPA which includes the following:

(1) A specific schedule for adoption and submittal of a revision to the SIP which would achieve the needed emission reductions prior to the time emissions from the Federal action would occur;

(2) Identification of specific measures for incorporation into the SIP which would result in a level of emissions which, together with all other emissions in the nonattainment or maintenance area, would not exceed any emissions budget specified in the applicable SIP;

(3) A demonstration that all existing applicable SIP requirements are being implemented in the area for the pollutants affected by the Federal action, and that local authority to implement additional requirements has been fully pursued;

(4) A determination that the responsible federal agencies have required all reasonable mitigation measures associated with their action; and

(5) Written documentation including all air quality analyses supporting the conformity determination;

(C) Where a Federal agency made a conformity determination based on a State's or Tribe's commitment under paragraph (a)(5)(i)(B) of this section and the State has submitted a SIP or a Tribal Implementation Plan (TIP) to EPA covering the time period during which the emissions will occur or is scheduled to submit such a SIP or TIP within 18 months of the conformity determination, the State commitment is automatically deemed a call for a SIP or TIP revision by EPA under section 110(k)(5) of the Act, effective on the date of the Federal conformity determination and requiring response within 18 months or any shorter time within which the State or Tribe commits to revise the applicable SIP;

(D) Where a Federal agency made a conformity determination based on a State or Tribal commitment under paragraph (a)(5)(i)(B) of this section and the State or Tribe has not submitted a SIP covering the time period when the emissions will occur or is not scheduled to submit such a SIP within 18 months of the conformity determination, the State or Tribe must, within 18 months, submit to EPA a revision to the existing SIP committing to include the emissions in the future SIP revision.

(ii) The action (or portion thereof), as determined by the MPO, is specifically included in a current transportation plan and transportation improvement program which have been found to conform to the applicable SIP under 40 CFR Part 51 Subpart T, or 40 CFR Part 93 Subpart A;

(iii) The action (or portion thereof) fully offsets its emissions within the same nonattainment or maintenance area (or nearby area of equal or higher classification provided the emissions from that area contribute to the violations, or have contributed to violation in the past, in the area with the Federal action) through a revision to the applicable SIP or an equally enforceable measure that effects emissions reductions equal to or greater than the total of direct and indirect emissions from the action so that there is no net increase in emissions of that pollutant;

(iv) Where EPA has not approved a revision to the relevant SIP since the area was designated or reclassified, the total of direct and indirect emissions from the action for the future years (described in §93.159(d)) do not increase emissions with respect to the baseline emissions:

(A) The baseline emissions reflect the historical activity levels that occurred in the geographic area affected by the proposed Federal action during:

(1) The most current calendar year with a complete emission inventory available before an area is designated unless EPA sets another year; or

(2) The emission budget in the applicable SIP;

(3) The year of the baseline inventory in the PM10 applicable SIP;

(B) The baseline emissions are the total of direct and indirect emissions calculated for the future years (described in §93.159(d)) using the historic activity levels (described in paragraph (a)(5)(iv)(A) of this section) and appropriate emission factors for the future years; or

(v) Where the action involves regional water and/or wastewater projects, such projects are sized to meet only the needs of population projections that are in the applicable SIP.

**NOTE: §93.158(a)(5) applies to ozone precursors, nitrogen dioxide, or any other criteria pollutant actually directly emitted by a source (does not include precursors) under §93.158(a)(3)(ii) or §93.158(a)(3)(ii).**

**Table 6-1, General Conformity Determination Criteria Applicability Summary**

General Conformity Determination Criteria	Applicability to Criteria Pollutant or Precursors						
	Ozone (O <sub>3</sub> )	Nitrogen Dioxide (NO <sub>2</sub> )	Particulate Matter (PM)		Carbon Monoxide (CO)	Sulfur Dioxide (SO <sub>2</sub> )	Lead (Pb)
			Direct PM10/2.5	PM Precursors*			
<p><b>§93.158(a)(1) For any criteria pollutant or precursor</b>, the total of direct and indirect emissions from the action are <u>specifically identified and accounted for in the applicable SIP's attainment or maintenance demonstration or reasonable further progress milestone or in a facility-wide emission budget included in a SIP in accordance with §93.161.</u></p>	O <sub>3</sub> precursors	Directly-emitted NO <sub>2</sub> & precursor	Directly-emitted PM	PM precursors	CO	SO <sub>2</sub>	Pb
<p><b>§93.158(a)(2) For precursors of ozone, nitrogen dioxide, or PM</b>, the total of direct and indirect emissions from the action are <u>fully offset</u> within the same nonattainment or maintenance area (or nearby area of equal or higher classification provided the emissions from that area contribute to the violations, or have contributed to violations in the past, in the area with the Federal action) <u>through a revision to the applicable SIP or a similarly enforceable measure</u> that effects emissions reductions so that there is no net increase in emissions of that pollutant.</p>	O <sub>3</sub> precursors	NO <sub>2</sub> precursors	N/A	PM precursors	N/A	N/A	N/A
<p><b>§93.158(a)(3) For any directly-emitted criteria pollutant</b>, the total of direct and indirect emissions from the action meets the requirements:</p> <p>(i) Specified in paragraph (b) of this section, <u>based on area-wide air quality modeling analysis and local air quality modeling analysis</u>; or</p> <p>(ii) Meet the requirements of <u>paragraph (a)(5) of this section and, for local air quality modeling analysis</u>, the requirement of paragraph (b) of this section</p>	N/A Per 58 FR 13845 (Preamble), it is not appropriate to use modelling to determine the impact on/of O <sub>3</sub>	N/A Per 58 FR 13845 (Preamble), it is not appropriate to use modelling to determine the impact on/of NO <sub>2</sub>	Directly-emitted PM	N/A Per 58 FR 13845 (Preamble), it is not appropriate to use modelling to determine the impact on/of PM precursors	CO	SO <sub>2</sub>	Pb
<p><b>§93.158(a)(4) For CO or directly emitted PM:</b></p> <p>(i) Where the State agency primarily responsible for the applicable SIP determines that an <u>area-wide air quality modeling analysis is NOT needed</u>, the total of direct and indirect emissions from the action <u>meet the requirements</u> specified in paragraph (b) of this section, <u>based on local air quality modeling analysis</u>; or</p> <p>(ii) Where the State agency primarily responsible for the applicable SIP determines that an <u>area-wide air quality modeling analysis IS appropriate and that a local air quality modeling analysis is NOT needed</u>, the total of direct and indirect emissions from the action <u>meet the requirements</u> specified in paragraph (b) of this section, <u>based on area-wide modeling</u>, <b>OR</b> meet the requirements of <u>paragraph (a)(5) of this section</u></p>	N/A Per 58 FR 13845 (Preamble), it is not appropriate to use modelling to determine the impact on/of O <sub>3</sub>	N/A Per 58 FR 13845 (Preamble), it is not appropriate to use modelling to determine the impact on/of NO <sub>2</sub>	Directly-emitted PM	N/A Per 58 FR 13845 (Preamble), it is not appropriate to use modelling to determine the impact on/of PM precursors	CO	N/A	N/A

**Table 6-1, General Conformity Determination Criteria Applicability Summary (continued)**

General Conformity Determination Criteria	Applicability to Criteria Pollutant or Precursors						
	Ozone (O <sub>3</sub> )	Nitrogen Dioxide (NO <sub>2</sub> )	Particulate Matter (PM)		Carbon Monoxide (CO)	Sulfur Dioxide (SO <sub>2</sub> )	Lead (Pb)
			Direct PM10/2.5	PM Precursors*			
<p><b>§93.158(a)(5) For ozone or nitrogen dioxide, and for purposes of paragraphs (a)(3)(ii) and (a)(4)(ii) of this section, each portion of the action or the action as a whole meets any of the following requirements:</b></p> <p>(i) Where EPA has approved a revision to the applicable implementation plan after the area was designated as nonattainment and the State or Tribe makes a determination as provided in paragraph (a)(5)(i)(A) of this section or where the State or Tribe makes a commitment as provided in paragraph (a)(5)(i)(B) of this section;</p> <p>(ii) The action (or portion thereof), as determined by the MPO, is specifically included in a current transportation plan and transportation improvement program which have been found to conform to the applicable SIP under 40 CFR part 51, subpart T, or 40 CFR part 93, subpart A;</p> <p>(iii) The action (or portion thereof) fully offsets its emissions within the same nonattainment or maintenance area (or nearby area of equal or higher classification provided the emissions from that area contribute to the violations, or have contributed to violation in the past, in the area with the Federal action) through a revision to the applicable SIP or an equally enforceable measure that effects emissions reductions equal to or greater than the total of direct and indirect emissions from the action so that there is no net increase in emissions of that pollutant;</p> <p>(iv) Where EPA has not approved a revision to the relevant SIP since the area was designated or reclassified, the total of direct and indirect emissions from the action for the future years (described in §93.159(d)) do not increase emissions with respect to the baseline emissions; or</p> <p>(v) Where the action involves regional water and/or wastewater projects, such projects are sized to meet only the needs of population projections that are in the applicable SIP.</p>	O <sub>3</sub> precursors	Directly-emitted NO <sub>2</sub>	Directly-emitted PM for purposes of paragraphs (a)(3)(ii) and (a)(4)(ii)	N/A Per 58 FR 13845 (Preamble), it is not appropriate to use modelling to determine the impact on/of PM precursors	CO for purposes of paragraphs (a)(3)(ii) and (a)(4)(ii)	SO <sub>2</sub> for purposes of paragraphs (a)(3)(ii)	Pb for purposes of paragraphs (a)(3)(ii)
<p>* For PM-10 nonattainment areas only (does not apply to maintenance areas) and only for specific PM precursors explicitly identified in an applicable SIP as a significant contributor/s to the PM-10 levels</p>							

#### 6.4 Step #4, Emissions Reduction Credits (ERCs)

*This step is specifically written for accomplishing a General Conformity Determination and does NOT apply to advanced air quality NEPA assessments for locations within attainment areas.*

If the emissions budget and the SIP attainment demonstration options do not account for the project emissions, then any available emission reduction credits should be used. ERCs created in accordance with 40 CFR 93.165 can be used, subject to the following limitations, to reduce the emissions increase from a Federal action at the facility for the conformity evaluation.

- If the technique used to create the ERCs is implemented at the same facility as the proposed action and could have occurred in conjunction with the action, then the ERCs can be ***used to reduce the total direct and indirect emissions used to determine the General Conformity Applicability and as offsets or mitigation measures.***
- If the technique used to create the ERCs is not implemented at the same facility as the proposed action or could not have occurred in conjunction with the action, then the credits ***CANNOT be used to reduce the total direct and indirect emissions to determine the General Conformity Applicability, but CAN be used to offset or mitigate the emissions.***
- ***ERCs must be used in the same year in which they are generated.***
- The USAF must notify the State or Tribal air quality agency responsible for the implementation of the SIP or TIP and EPA Regional Office when ERCs are being used.

#### 6.5 Step #5, Air Quality Modeling Analysis (Directly-Emitted Pollutants Only)

*This step is specifically written for accomplishing a General Conformity Determination; however, many of the processes and principles outlined in this step are also applicable to advanced air quality NEPA assessments for locations within attainment areas.*

If the emissions budget and the SIP attainment demonstration options do not account for the project emissions and no ERCs are available, then next consider using air quality fate/transport modeling to demonstrate air impacts or conformity for CO, PM-10, SO<sub>2</sub> and Pb. ***Fate/transport modeling is currently ONLY applicable to directly-emitted emissions (emissions wholly released as criteria pollutant and are not indirectly created through precursors).*** The appropriate model will depend on the type of pollutant and specific situation. The local and State air agencies should be consulted when selecting applicable air quality models. See Section 6.1, *Fate/Transport Model Limitations and Usability*, for details on appropriateness of air quality fate/transport modeling.

In general terms, dispersion modeling is the process through which the dispersal of atmospheric pollutants is simulated and assessed under the effects of meteorological, terrain, and other influencing factors. Computer models such as the American Meteorological Society/EPA Regulatory Model (AERMOD) have been developed and are used for this purpose. The results

of this modeling allow for the prediction of pollutant concentrations at or near an emission source(s) and enable the comparison of these results to the NAAQS.

The EPA's principal guidance of conducting dispersion modeling and assessing the air quality impacts is in 40 CFR 51 Appendix W, Guideline on Air Quality Models. This guidance contains recommendations and supporting information on the selection and applications of air quality models, determining background concentrations and the use of meteorological data. This guidance also specifies dispersion models required to be used for SIP revisions and for NSR and PSD programs.

Atmospheric fate/transport and dispersion is a complex nonlinear physical and chemical process with numerous uncertainties in model parameters, inputs, source parameters, initial and boundary conditions. The propagation (iteratively increasing) of these uncertainties through the dispersion models can be (and often are) substantial, and therefore modeling often does not provide a reliable prediction of the probability distribution of emissions and assessment of risk. Therefore, the following guidelines are provided:

1. ***Modeling of non-direct emitted pollutants (i.e., O<sub>3</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, and precursors of PM) is NOT allowed.***
2. Modeling is ***only appropriate for direct emissions*** of CO, Pb, and PM<sub>10</sub> emissions.
3. Due to inherent uncertainties and error propagation, ***atmospheric transport and dispersion models should be a last resort and must be discussed and approved by the USAF Air Quality Subject Matter Expert (AFCEC/CZTQ).***
4. When using emission rates derived with the AP-42 empirical model using emission factors, only use the following (in order of preference) sources:
  - a. Actual source sampling results;
  - b. Manufacturer certified emission rates; or
  - c. "A" Rated AP-42 emission factors (***Note: potential error of +/-100 percent***)

***NOTE: While there are recent efforts to improve air quality modeling for non-direct emitted pollutants, modeling of these non-direct emitted pollutants (i.e., O<sub>3</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, and precursors of PM) is NOT currently allowed for General Conformity Determinations or PSD/NSR assessments.***

## **6.6 Step #6, Mitigation and Offsets**

***This step is specifically written for accomplishing a General Conformity Determination; however, many of the processes and principles outlined in this step are also applicable to advanced air quality NEPA assessments for location within attainment areas.***

Mitigation and/or offset measures should only be considered as a last resort to demonstrate General Conformity and/or reduction of environmental impacts to acceptable levels. Unlike alleviation modifications which are proactive (preemptively applied definition clarification/amendments), emissions reducing efforts, emission offsets and mitigation are reactive reduction measures. These measures are applied after an action is fully defined and are applied solely as a measure to reduce or offset air emissions to conform with the applicable SIP or to bring the action into acceptable environmental impacts. Additionally, mitigation and/or offset measures are generally not a one-for-one tradeoff.

### **6.6.1 Mitigation Measures**

Mitigation is any method of reducing emissions (of the pollutant or its precursor) directly associated with an action to reduce air emissions to conform wholly or partly with the applicable SIP. Mitigation measures are employed after a final assessment or conformity determination is made and taken at the location of the Federal action. The mitigation measures are then used to reduce the impact of the emissions of that pollutant caused by the action. Mitigation measures must be enforceable at both the State and Federal levels; normally this is through the applicable SIP or a permit.

Mitigation measures, as defined in 40 CFR 1508.20, includes: (1) avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action or finding a new site; (2) minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation; (3) rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment; (4) reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action; and (5) compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

Mitigation differs from “emissions offsets” in that emissions offsets are secured from other facilities, while a mitigation measure is any method of reducing emissions taken at the location of the Federal action and used to reduce the impact of the emissions of that pollutant caused by the action in the same nonattainment/maintenance area.

In accordance with 40 CFR 93 Subpart B, for mitigation of air quality impacts:

- Any measures that are intended to mitigate air quality impacts must be identified and the process for implementation and enforcement of such measures must be described, including an implementation schedule containing explicit timelines for implementation.
- Prior to determining that an action is in conformity, the USAF must obtain written commitments from the appropriate persons or agencies to implement any mitigation measures which are identified as conditions for making conformity determinations.
- Persons or agencies voluntarily committing to mitigation measures to facilitate positive conformity determinations must comply with the obligations of such commitments.
- In instances where the USAF is licensing, permitting, or otherwise approving the action of another governmental or private entity, approval by the USAF must be conditioned on

the other entity meeting the mitigation measures set forth in the conformity determination.

- When necessary because of changed circumstances, mitigation measures may be modified so long as the new mitigation measures continue to support the conformity determination. Any proposed change in the mitigation measures is subject to the reporting requirements and the public participation requirements.
- Written commitments to mitigation measures must be obtained prior to a positive conformity determination and such commitments must be fulfilled.
- After a State revises its SIP and EPA approves that SIP revision, any agreements, including mitigation measures, necessary for a conformity determination will be both State or Tribal and federally enforceable. Enforceability through the applicable SIP will apply to all persons who agree to mitigate direct and indirect emissions associated with an action for a conformity determination.

**Note:** According to 40 CFR 93.150 (a), any mitigation measure (including voluntary) “that are intended to mitigate air quality impacts must be identified and the process for implementation and enforcement of such measures must be described, including an implementation schedule containing explicit timelines for implementation.” **This means you are legally bound to implement all mitigation measures identified in the EIAP document (e.g., EA, EIS, etc.).**

### **6.6.2 Emissions Offsets**

Offsets are emissions reductions efforts/measures NOT associated with the action under evaluation, but employed to compensate (reimburse so that there is no net increase in emissions of that pollutant) for the action’s emissions to conform with the applicable SIP. Emission offsets are quantifiable, consistent with the applicable SIP attainment and reasonable further progress demonstrations, surplus to reductions required by, and credited to, other applicable SIP provisions, enforceable at both the State and Federal levels, and permanent within the timeframe specified by the program.

Utilizing emission offsets requires a revision to the applicable SIP or a similarly enforceable measure (e.g., permit). Some States (e.g., Texas) require offsets to be monitored and enforced in a manner equivalent to that under the EPA’s NSR requirements.

Emissions offsets quantities are always emissions reductions equal to (occurring within the same year as action) or greater than (occurring in years after the action at a ratio of 1:1 to 1:5 dependent on severity of nonattainment status) the total direct and indirect emissions of the action. Emissions offsets can only be used within the same nonattainment or maintenance area or a nearby area of equal or higher classification (provided the emissions from that area contribute to the violations, or have contributed to violations in the past, in the area with the Federal action).

Emissions offsets differ from “Alleviation Modifications”. Emissions offsets are legally enforceable indirect emissions tradeoffs (not associated with the action) reactively applied (i.e.,



after an action is fully defined and a final assessment or conformity determination is made) solely as a compensation measure to more than offset the air emissions associated with an action. While “Alleviation Modifications” are proactive (i.e., occurring prior to a final assessment or conformity determination) refinement/s that actually replaces the original action, with the intent of being environmentally friendly.

### 6.6.3 Timing of Offsets and Mitigation Measures

Generally, the emissions reductions from an offset or mitigation measure used to demonstrate conformity must occur during the same calendar year as the emission increases from the action. However, the State may approve emissions reductions in other years provided:

- The reductions are greater than the emission increases by the following ratios: 1.5:1 for extreme nonattainment areas, 1.3:1 for severe nonattainment areas, 1.2:1 for serious nonattainment areas, 1.15:1 for moderate nonattainment area, and 1.1:1 for all other nonattainment areas.
- The time period for completing the emissions reductions must not exceed twice the period of the emissions.

The applicability and use of an offset or mitigation measures are summarized in Table 6-2, *Summary of Emission Reducing Measures*. The table also compares offset or mitigation measure against Action Alleviation Modification to demonstrate the simplicity and avoidance that can be gained through simply clarifying/modifying the action’s definition to integrally include measure that reduce emissions.

**Table 6-2, Summary of Emission Reducing Measures**

Measure	Description	When Applied (AQ EIAP Level)	Enforceability Requirement	Reductions Ratio Requirement
Action Alleviation Modifications	Action definition clarifications/modifications	Level I or II	N/A	1:1
Mitigations	Measures directly associated with the action to reduce emissions	Level III, before offsets	SIP or equally enforceable measure (e.g., permit)	Same year as action: 1:1  Other years: 1.5:1 for extreme nonattainment 1.3:1 for severe nonattainment 1.2:1 for serious nonattainment 1.15:1 for moderate nonattainment 1.1:1 for all other nonattainment
Offsets	Measures NOT associated with the action used to compensate for action emissions	Level III, after mitigations		

## 7 SPECIAL ISSUES

This section covers special concerns related to advanced air quality EIAP, NEPA and General Conformity assessments.

### 7.1 Fate/Transport Model Limitations and Usability

Atmospheric fate/transport and dispersion is a complex nonlinear physical and chemical process with numerous uncertainties in model parameters, inputs, source parameters, initial and boundary conditions. The propagation (iteratively increasing) of these uncertainties through the dispersion models can be (and often are) substantial and therefore modeling often does not provide a reliable prediction of the probability distribution of emissions and assessment of risk.

While there have been recent fate/transport simulation improvements in dispersion models, they still **can only be used for modeling directly-emitted** (i.e., *emissions wholly released as criteria pollutant and are not indirectly created through precursors*) **criteria pollutants**. While these recent model improvements greatly improve fate/transport simulation algorithms for the complex nonlinear physical and chemical process, they still are not considered adequate representations by the EPA. Additionally, these model improvements do nothing to account for the inherent inaccuracies, uncertainties, and error propagation associated with input parameters.

***Modeling of these non-direct emitted pollutants (i.e., O<sub>3</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, and precursors of PM) is NOT allowed for General Conformity Determinations and PSD/NSR.***

***Modeling is only appropriate for direct emissions of CO, Pb, and direct PM<sub>10</sub> emissions.***

#### 7.1.1 Uncertainties and Error Propagation in Modeling

Atmospheric transport and dispersion models are mathematical illustrations relating emission of pollutants from sources or actions into atmosphere to downwind ambient concentration of the pollutant. The main aim of the modeling process is to estimate the concentration of a pollutant at a particular down-wind location by mathematical calculation from the basic information about the source of pollutant and meteorological conditions. The predicted concentration of an air pollutant at a given location is a function of a number of variables, such as rate of emission, distance of the receptor from the source, and atmospheric conditions. The accuracy (correctness) and precision (number of significant figures) of transport and dispersion models are always limited by the accuracy (correctness) and precision (resolution defined by the number of significant figures) of input variable/parameters. Inherent uncertainty of these input parameters is one of the main causes of uncertainty in atmospheric transport and dispersion model output.

##### 7.1.1.1 Accuracy (Correctness)

No measurement made is ever exact. The accuracy (correctness) of a measurement used as input parameters (e.g., emission factors and atmospheric conditions) are always limited by the degree of refinement of the measuring apparatus used, by the skill of the observer, by the basic physics in the measuring methodology, and by the statistical representativeness of the data set.

Uncertainty is a measure of the range of measurements from the average (also called *deviation* or *error*) and is usually defined by the absolute error ( $\Delta x = \text{range of deviation from average } x$ ).

Uncertainties can also be defined by the relative error ( $\Delta x/x$ ), which is usually written as a percentage. In statistics, propagation of uncertainty (or propagation of error) is the effect of variable uncertainties (or errors) on the uncertainty of a function based on them. When the variables are the values of experimental measurements (e.g., emission factors), they have uncertainties due to measurement limitations (e.g., instrument precision) which propagate to the combination of variables in the function.

The very basis of all atmospheric transport and dispersion modeling start with emission rates which are often established with the AP-42 empirical model which uses emission factors. Average emissions for a specific source differ significantly from test source to test source used to establish emission factors and; therefore, emission factors frequently may not provide adequate estimates of the average emissions for a specific source. The extent of between-source variability that exists, even among similar individual sources, can be large depending on process, control system, and pollutant. Although the causes of this variability are considered in emission factor development, this type of information is seldom included in emission test reports used to develop AP-42 factors. As a result, some emission factors are derived from tests that may vary (i.e., uncertainty) ***by an order of magnitude or more*** (AP-42 Fifth Edition). Even when the major process variables are accounted for, the emission factors developed may be the result of averaging source tests that differ by factors of five or more.

Given an emission factor can differ by one order of magnitude, by definition of a “magnitude” it may vary by as much as plus or minus ten times in quantity of the recorded emission factor (absolute error +/- 1,000 percent). If the very origin or the starting basis of atmospheric transport and dispersion modeling is emission factors that can differ by one order of magnitude, then no matter how accurate the rest of the parameters in the model are, the results of the modeling will also potentially differ by one order of magnitude. While not all emission factors will vary by plus or minus ten times in quantity, most emission factors are not of excellent quality and will vary greatly (in the range of hundreds of percent). Therefore, even using the best of models with the most accurate input parameters possible, all atmospheric transport and dispersion modeling (with emission factors for establishing emission rates), propagate (iteratively increase) error and inaccuracy of the emissions factors which results in highly inaccurate results.

#### **7.1.1.2 Precision (Number of Significant Figures)**

As stated earlier, no measurement made is ever exact. Precision is the measure of the agreement of experimental measurements with each other and the resolution the agreement of the measurements is defined by the number of significant figures. Therefore, the precision of a measurement is always limited by the degree of refinement of the measuring apparatus used and by the skill of the observer. To capture the precision of a measurement, any measurement should record all digits of the measurement that are certain plus one estimated uncertain digit. These certain plus one digits used to capture the precision of the measurement are known as *significant figures*. Significant figures are used to remove the propagation of error due to lack of precision when performing mathematical operations (e.g., addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, etc.). ***Unfortunately, significant figures are ignored (not defined) in most emission factors and most input variables/parameters in atmospheric transport and dispersion models.*** Therefore, atmospheric transport and dispersion models inherently and repeatedly propagate significant precision error.

When doing calculations, the following rules of significant numbers (Table 7-1) must be followed to minimize the propagation of errors associated with precision:

**Table 7-1, Significant Number Rules**

Rule	Example	# of Significant Figures
All digits other than zeros are significant	25 g	2
	5.471g	4
Zeros between nonzero digits are significant	309 g	3
	40.06 g	4
Final zeros to the right of the decimal point are significant	6.00 mL	3
	2.350 mL	4
In multiplication and division, a product or quotient has the same number of significant figures of the smallest quantity in the variables	4.29 cm x 3.2 cm = 14 cm	2
	4.29 cm x 3.24 cm = 13.9cm	3
In addition, and subtraction, the sum or difference has to be rounded to the same number of significant figures of the smallest quantity in the variables	3.56 g + 2.6 g + 6.12g = 12.3 g	3

**Example of Propagation of Error Associated with Precision:** Below is an example of why precision (number of significant figures) is an issue in modeling: CO emissions from an F-15D under intermediate power setting [two F100-PW-220 engines, Fuel Flow Rate = 5,770 lb/hr, Time-In-Mode (TIM) = 0.8 min, Emission Factor (EF) = 0.86 CO lb/1,000 lb fuel].

Without accounting for significant figures:

$$2 \text{ eng.} \times 5.770 \times 10^3 \frac{\text{lb fuel}}{\text{hr}} \times 0.8 \frac{\text{min}}{\text{LTO}} \times \frac{\text{hr}}{60 \text{ min}} \times 0.86 \frac{\text{lb CO}}{10^3 \text{ lb fuel}}$$

$$= 0.13232533 \dots \frac{\text{lb CO}}{\text{LTO}}$$

Accounting for significant figures:

$$2 \text{ eng.} \times 5.770 \times 10^3 \frac{\text{lb fuel}}{\text{hr}} \times 0.8 \frac{\text{min}}{\text{LTO}} \times \frac{\text{hr}}{60 \text{ min}} \times 0.86 \frac{\text{lb CO}}{10^3 \text{ lb fuel}} = 0.1 \frac{\text{lb CO}}{\text{LTO}}$$

$$\text{Relative Error} = \frac{\Delta x}{x} = \frac{(0.1323533 - 0.10)}{0.1} = 0.323 \text{ or } 32.3\%$$

Given that the 0.1 lb CO/LTO result which accounts for significant figures is the more precise value; not accounting for significant figures **created a relative error of 32.3 percent**. Therefore, most atmospheric transport and dispersion models results for F-15D emission under intermediate power setting are starting at an error of 32 percent over estimating which is further propagated (iteratively increased) through the iterative processes inherent in these models.

### **7.1.2 General Fate/Transport Model Guidelines**

To minimize the costly and unwarranted use of fate/transport and dispersion models and to reduce the inherent errors associate with these models, the following guidelines should be followed:

- Modeling of **non-direct emitted pollutants** (i.e., O<sub>3</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, and precursors of PM) **is NOT allowed**.
- Modeling is **only appropriate for direct emissions** of CO, Pb, and direct PM<sub>10</sub> emissions.
- Due to inherent uncertainties and error propagation, atmospheric transport and dispersion models should be a last resort and must be discussed and approved by AFCEC/CZTQ.
- When using emission rates derived with the AP-42 empirical model using emission factors, only use the following (in order of preference) sources:
  - a. Actual source sampling results;
  - b. manufacturer certified emission rates; or
  - c. “A” Rated AP-42 emission factors (**Note: potential error of +/-100 percent**)

## **7.2 Restricted or Confidential Information**

The draft and final air quality EIAP documents and Conformity Determination shall exclude any restricted or confidential information. The disclosure of restricted information and confidential information shall be controlled by the applicable laws, regulations, security manuals, or EOs concerning the use, access, and release of such materials. Subject to applicable procedures to protect restricted information from public disclosure, any information or materials excluded may be made available in a restricted information annex to the EIAP documents and Conformity Determination for review by Federal and State representatives who have received appropriate clearances to review the information.

## **7.3 Reporting Requirements**

If a Conformity Determination is not required for the action at the time NEPA analysis is completed, the date of the FONSI for an EA, a ROD for an EIS, or a categorical exclusion determination can be used for documentation/reporting.

Generally, air quality EIAP documents are incorporated into the overall EIAP document (i.e., EIS or EA) and therefore have no other special reporting other than those addressed under

NEPA. However, if the General Conformity Applicability Analysis identifies the action must be supported by a Conformity Determination there are specific General Conformity reporting requirements that must be met in addition to the NEPA requirements.

The draft and final Conformity Determination must provide to the appropriate regulatory authorities. These regulatory authorities may include appropriate EPA Regional Office(s), State and local air quality agencies, any federally-recognized Indian Tribal Government in the nonattainment or maintenance area, and, where applicable, affected Federal land managers, the agency designated under section 174 of the CAA and the MPO.

In accordance with 40 CFR 93.155, Federal agency making a Conformity Determination must provide to the appropriate regulatory authorities a 30-day notice which describes the proposed action and the Federal agency's draft conformity determination on the action and must notify the appropriate regulatory authorities within 30 days after making a final Conformity Determination.

#### **7.4 Public Participation**

Except for the requirements for public notification and consideration and response to public comments, public participation is not required during the conformity evaluation. However, during the conformity determination process, USAF policy seeks to involve the public as a partner rather than as an adversary, in addition to meeting the regulatory requirements. Thus, the Public Affairs Office and the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate should be brought into the conformity determination process as early as possible to help ensure that the partnering relationship is fostered and established.

Planning is crucial to the success of any community relations effort. Installations must keep complete and up-to-date administrative records of the determination process. All written and verbal comments from the public and official reviewers and the associated responses should be documented as required by the regulations. Failure to document comments and responses properly may result in an installation being unable to sustain a legal defense of its determination.

Planning should include scheduling of the required public participation and time for comment acceptance and comment response. Installation and contractor personnel involved in public meetings should be able to communicate effectively about technical and legal issues. If a contractor is required for community relations activities, its Statement of Work needs to address these requirements.

Maintenance of open communications and good public relations cannot be overemphasized. It is important to establish an atmosphere of partnership that enables installation personnel to discover and remedy public misconceptions.

Specific public participation requirements for General Conformity are stipulated in 40 CFR 93.156:

- Upon request by any person regarding a specific action, the USAF must make available for review its draft conformity determination with supporting materials which describe

the analytical methods and conclusions relied upon in making an Applicability Analysis and draft Conformity Determination.

- The USAF must make public its draft conformity determination by placing a notice by prominent advertisement in a daily newspaper of general circulation in the area affected by the action and by providing 30 days for written public comment prior to taking any formal action on the draft determination. The comment period may be concurrent with any other public involvement; such as occurs in the NEPA process.
- The USAF must document its response to all the comments received on draft Conformity Determinations and make the comments and responses available upon request by any person within 30 days of the final Conformity Determination.
- The USAF must make public its final Conformity Determinations by placing a notice by prominent advertisement in a daily newspaper of general circulation in the area affected by the action within 30 days of the final Conformity Determination.

### **7.5 Reevaluation of EIAP/Conformity**

EIAP, Conformity Applicability Analysis, or Conformity Determinations for a specific action are valid for a period of five (5) years provided the circumstance, timing, and/or conditions of the action have not changed.

Once an EIAP, Conformity Applicability Analysis, or Conformity Determination is completed by the USAF, that assessment/analysis is not required to be re-evaluated if the agency has maintained a continuous program to implement the action; the assessment/analysis documentation has not lapsed past five (5) years since the assessment/analysis was made; or any modification to the action does not result in an increase in emissions above the General Conformity de minimis levels.

**NOTE:** If a Conformity Applicability Analysis indicate a Conformity Determination is not required for the action at the time of an EIAP/NEPA analysis is completed, the date of the FONSI for an EA, a ROD for an EIS, or a categorical exclusion determination can be used as the Applicability Analysis completion date.

The conformity status and the air quality EIAP assessment/analysis of an action automatically lapses five years from the final date, unless the action has been completed or a continuous program to implement the action has commenced. Ongoing activities at a given site showing continuous progress are not new actions and do not require periodic reanalysis or redeterminations so long as such activities are within the scope of the final EIAP, Conformity Applicability, or Conformity Determination reported.

**NOTE:** If the USAF originally determined through an Applicability Analysis that a Conformity Determination was not necessary because the emissions for the action were below the de minimis levels and changes to the action would result in the total emissions from the action being above the de minimis levels, then the USAF must make a Conformity Determination.

## **7.6 Creation of Emission Reduction Credits**

USAF facilities and installations subject to Federal oversight can, with the approval of the State agency responsible for the SIP in that area, create an early Emission Reduction Credit (ERC) program. The USAF can create ERCs in accordance with the following requirement:

- Emissions reductions must be quantifiable through the use of standard emission factors or measurement techniques. If non-standard factors or techniques to quantify the emissions reductions are used, the USAF must receive approval from the State agency responsible for the implementation of the SIP and from EPA's Regional Office. The ERCs do not have to be quantified before the reduction strategy is implemented, but must be quantified before the credits are used in the General Conformity evaluation.
- The emission reduction methods must be consistent with the applicable SIP attainment and reasonable further progress demonstrations.
- The emissions reductions cannot be required by or credited to other applicable SIP provisions.
- Both the State and Federal air quality agencies must be able to take legal action to ensure continued implementation of the emission reduction strategy. In addition, private citizens must also be able to initiate action to ensure compliance with the control requirement.
- The emissions reductions must be permanent or the timeframe for the reductions must be specified.
- The USAF must document the emissions reductions and provide a copy of the document to the State air quality agency and the EPA regional office for review. The documentation must include a detailed description of the emission reduction strategy and a discussion of how it meets the above.

### **7.6.1 Air Emission Reduction Credits**

The CAA allows the EPA and the states to develop economic incentive programs to control and reduce air emissions. Such programs allow sources to “generate”, “buy”, “sell”, “bank”, or “trade” ERCs. ERCs are authorized and created by appropriate state or local authorities, and will vary from location to location pursuant to applicable EPA rules. ERC programs need to be approved by EPA in a SIP to become effective. Credits earned by any source that permanently reduces emissions beyond its reduction requirements can be traded to another source that could use such credits, in lieu of on-site reductions, to meet its reduction obligations. ERCs may also be banked for future use as offsets for nonattainment area NSR or General Conformity determinations. ERCs are treated as federal personal property and disposed of according to the appropriate federal property disposal regulations. Flying operations shall not be reduced for the sole purpose of obtaining ERCs; however, installations should ensure that emissions from aircraft flying operations are accounted for in comprehensive emissions inventories and memorialized in any applicable SIP emissions budget for the installation.



### ***7.6.2 Emission Reduction Credit Identification***

ERCs can be created as a result of operational changes or installation closure. They can be obtained by removing pollutant-emitting equipment from service or reducing emissions from equipment, if the applicable air quality district allows. Planning for ERC utilization should include a determination of the applicable requirements for generation as soon as possible to avoid inadvertent loss of ERCs due to missed requirements. For example, some local rules require submission of an application for ERCs along with supporting documentation prior to any shutdown of the emissions source. While other local rules require submission of the application within 90 days of permanent shutdown. In addition, some states may have laws that expressly apply to various aspects of ERC generation and disposition involving military base closures and realignments, such as the Cannella Bill in California, AB 3204 (1994), codified at Health and Safety Code Section 40709.7.

### ***7.6.3 Emission Reduction Credit Inventory and Classification***

Within one year, or as early as possible, prior to the departure of the active mission from a currently announced installation closure or realignment (immediately at installations where the active mission has departed or equipment emitting air emissions are discontinued, or within six months of an installation closure announcement for future closures), the base environmental function will complete an inventory of all existing/potential sources of ERCs. Additionally, associated emissions and a legal review must be prepared summarizing the applicable air quality district regulations on ERCs. Copies of the applicable ERC regulation will be included when facility ERCs are identified and any limitations on the disposition of the ERCs will be noted in the legal review. Such limitations may include prohibitions on the use of ERCs at closing facilities and if there are any restrictions on the leasing of ERCs. Forward the inventory, legal review, and appropriate regulations governing the use of these ERCs to the appropriate AFCEC Regulatory/Legislative Support Branch. The ERCs will be initially classified as “related personal property ERCs”, “operational needs requirement ERCs”, or “personal property ERCs” on the inventory. AFCEC/CZ will circulate the inventory to other MAJCOMs and installations in the same air quality district that will identify ERCs they might need. AFCEC/CZ will then validate the list and forward it with comments back to the appropriate MAJCOM and AFCEC/CZ. AFCEC/CZ, in concert with the appropriate MAJCOM, will review/validate the ERCs/categories, coordinate with HQ USAF/A4C, and submit to SAF/IEE for final approval.

### ***7.6.4 Emission Reduction Credit Application***

The CAA allows sources in nonattainment areas with EPA-approved ERC programs to “trade” ERCs. Installations must follow regulatory agency procedures to apply for and obtain ERCs if interested in obtaining ERCs and if they have adequate funds for the associated fees. Installation realignment and closure funds may be used to conduct the emission reduction credit inventory and to pay for application fees for installations slated for closure. MAJCOMs must submit their requirements to the AFCEC Installations Directorate (AFCEC/CI) IAW AFCEC programming procedures. MAJCOMs receiving ERCs from closure installations will reimburse the installation realignment and closure account for its proportionate share of the costs of the inventory and application fees. Reimbursement is not required if the receiving installation is an installation realignment and closure site.

### **7.6.5 Emission Reduction Credit Disposition**

Once an air quality district issues ERCs, and SAF/IEE has approved their use, ERCs can be disposed in the following manner:

- “Operational needs requirement ERCs” can be banked for the requirements of the originating installation or can be transferred to another USAF organization that would need to buy the credits.
- “Related personal property ERCs” will be disposed of in the same manner as the real property on the inventory to which they are “related.”
- “Personal property ERCs” will be screened with other DoD and other federal agencies. Thereafter, the installation will transfer any remaining ERCs as surplus property to the General Services Administration (GSA) for disposal under GSA regulations.
- SAF/IEE will resolve any disputes over disposition of ERCs.

### **7.6.6 Emission Reduction Credit Use**

ERCs can only be used in the same air quality control district/region in which they are generated, except where state or local laws and regulations provide otherwise. For example, the Discrete Emission Reduction Credit (DERC) regulations in Texas allow stationary and mobile DERCs generated within the state, with certain limitations, to be used anywhere within the state. In addition, and under certain circumstances, DERCs created outside the state may also be used within the state. In California, Section 40709.6 of the Health and Safety Code permits the inter-basin transfer of emission offsets or ERCs from upwind to downwind sources, even though they may be in different air quality control areas.

## 8 OVERSEAS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS PROCESS

NEPA does not directly apply overseas; however, EO 12114, *Environmental Effects Abroad of Major Federal Actions*, requires abroad (i.e., overseas) Federal agencies to consider the environmental impacts of proposed actions and effectively implements EIAP assessments for Federal actions outside the jurisdiction of the EPA. Proposed actions under EO 12114 include, actions that significantly affecting the environment. EO 12114 is implemented and supplemented through 32 CFR 187, *Environmental Effects Abroad of Major DoD Actions*, and AFI 32-7091, *Environmental Management Outside the United States*. This chapter supplements AFI 32-7091's Chapter 5 by providing specifics for performing overseas Air Quality EIAP.

***Overseas EIAP is only applicable to “major action overseas”.*** A “major Action overseas” is an overseas action of considerable importance involving substantial expenditures of time, money and resources that affects the environment on a large geographic scale or has substantial environmental effects on a more limited geographical area, and that is substantially different or a significant departure from other actions, previously analyzed with respect to environmental considerations and approved, with which the action under consideration may be associated. See 32 CFR 187.

**NOTE:** For the purpose of this guide, the term “overseas” is synonymous with “abroad” and defined as a geographic area located outside the jurisdiction of the United States, which includes land and associated territorial sea, contiguous zones, and exclusive economic zones of the United States; an area outside the United States (e.g., a foreign country).

### 8.1 USAF Policy on Overseas EIAP

As a general rule, USAF actions (Federal actions) will not be implemented until the potential environmental effects are assessed in accordance with AFI 32-7091 Chapter 5 and 32 CFR 187.

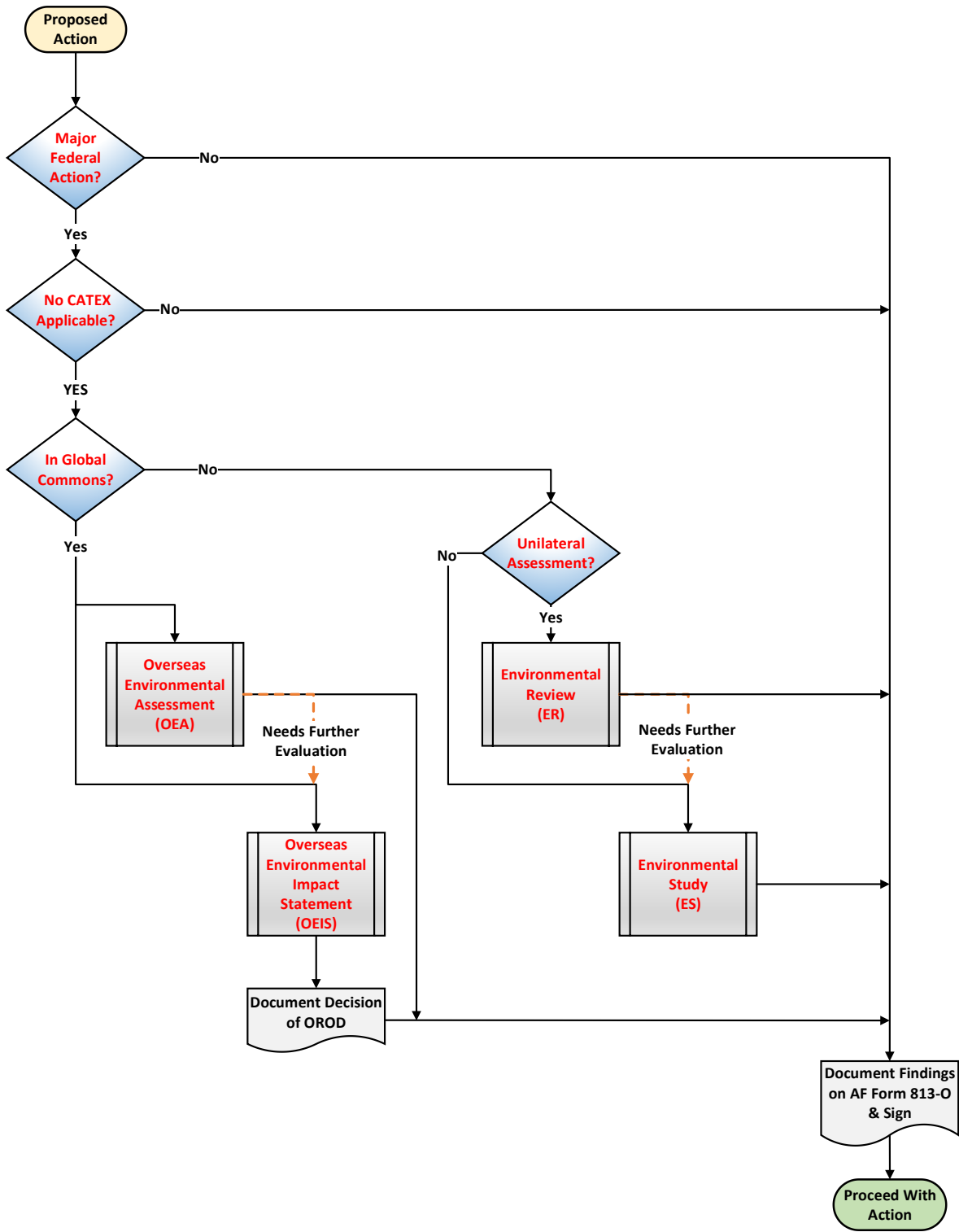
### 8.2 Overseas EIAP Assessment

Overseas EIAP Assessments are not performed and documented as traditional NEPA EAs or EISs, instead Overseas EIAP Assessments are not performed and documented as four distinct environmental effects documents (documentation of environmental impact assessment). However, like traditional USAF NEPA assessment the process starts with an AF Form 813 to record a request for an Overseas EIAP assessment. Which for the four environmental effects documents will be used depends first on location (i.e., foreign nation or global commons) and then the severity of impact on the environment (i.e., no significant or significant harm to the environment of a foreign country or to a protected global resource). See *Figure 8-1, Overseas EIAP Assessments Process*, for a pictorial summary of the Overseas EIAP Assessment.

#### 8.2.1 Overseas Categorical Exclusion (OCATEX)

As with traditional NEPA assessment, overseas action may fall under an Overseas Categorical exclusion (CATEX). A CATEX is define as a category of actions that do not individually or cumulatively have potential for significant effect on the environment and do not, therefore, require further environmental analysis.

Figure 8-1, Overseas EIAP Assessments Process



Per 32 CFR187, DoD may approve categorical exclusions for actions that normally do not, individually or cumulatively, do significant harm to the environment. According to AFI 32-7091, to date, there are no formally approved Air Force OCATEXs; however, in accordance with 32 CFR 989.13(c) the USAF CATEXs listed in 32 CFR 989 Appendix B “apply to actions in the United States and abroad.”

### ***8.2.2 Global Commons EIAP Documentation***

Global Commons encompasses the geographical areas that are outside the jurisdiction of any nation and include the oceans outside territorial limits and Antarctica. Global commons do not include contiguous zones (a maritime zone extending three-twelve nautical miles from the coastline) and fishery zones (an area where fishing for some or all species is prohibited to protect critical habitats, rebuild fish stocks, ensure against overfishing, or enhance fishery yield) of foreign nations.

When a USAF action is determined to be a “major action overseas” that significantly harms the environment of the global commons, an environmental impact statement, as described below, will be prepared to enable the responsible decision-making official to be informed of pertinent environmental considerations. The statement may be a specific statement for the particular action, a generic statement covering the entire class of similar actions, or a program statement

#### **8.2.2.1 Overseas Environmental Assessment (OEA)**

The OEA is prepared when the USAF is unilaterally performing the environmental impact assessment. A brief and concise statement that provides sufficient information to enable Air Force leadership to decide whether or not the proposed action is a major action, is a Federal action, and will significantly harm the environment of the global commons. An OEA may identify the need for a more in-depth assessment, triggering an Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (OEIS).

#### **8.2.2.2 Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (OEIS)**

A statement of the environmental effects of the proposed action on the global commons and the reasonable alternatives. The OEIS is a concise document prepared by the Air Force unilaterally or jointly with one or more foreign nations (bilaterally or multilaterally) and is no longer than necessary to permit appropriate Air Force leadership informed consideration of the environmental impacts of the proposed action and reasonable alternatives. The OEIS will enable the appropriate decisionmaker to be informed of pertinent environmental considerations prior to issuing their formal Overseas Record of Decision (OROD).

An OROD is a document that states the EIAP decision made, describes the environmental factors considered, the preferred plan, and the alternatives considered in the overseas environmental impact statement.

### ***8.2.3 Foreign Nation & Protective Global Resources EIAP Documentation***

A “foreign nation” is any geographic area (land, water, and airspace) that is under the jurisdiction of one or more foreign governments, any area under military occupation by the United States alone or jointly with any other foreign government, and any area that is the

responsibility of an international organization of governments. “Foreign nation” includes contiguous zones and fishery zones of foreign nations. “Foreign government” in this context includes governments regardless of whether recognized by the United States, political factions, and organizations that exercise governmental power outside the United States.

A “protected global resource” is a natural or ecological resource of global importance designated for protection by President or, if the resource is protected by an International Agreement that is binding on the United States designated for protection by the Secretary of State.

When a USAF action is determined to be a “major action overseas” that significantly harm to the environment of a foreign nation or to a protected global resource, an environmental impact statement, as described below, will be prepared to enable the responsible decision-making official to be informed of pertinent environmental considerations. The statement may be a specific statement for the particular action, a generic statement covering the entire class of similar actions, or a program statement

#### **8.2.3.1 Environmental Review (ER)**

A concise survey of the important environmental issues associated with a major Federal action overseas that is to be considered by appropriate Air Force leadership during the decision-making process. An ER is prepared by the Air Force either unilaterally or in conjunction with another US Government agency. An ER may identify the need for a more in-depth multilateral assessment, triggering an Environmental Study (ES).

#### **8.2.3.2 Environmental Study (ES)**

An analysis of the likely environmental consequences of the action that is to be considered by appropriate Air Force leadership during the decision-making process. An ES is a cooperative action, not a unilateral action, taken by the Air Force. It is prepared by the Air Force in coordination with one or more foreign nations, or by an international body or organization of which the United States is a member or participant.

### **8.3 Overseas Air Quality EIAP**

#### **8.3.1 *Air Quality EIAP Approach***

The USAF’s air quality EIAP approach is based on CEQ’s regulations and guidance for assessing impact using the “rule of reason” and the “concept of proportionality”, which are inherent in NEPA and the CEQ Regulations.

**Rule of Reason:** Under the rule of reason, agencies evaluate the positive features of an action against its negative effects in order to decide whether or not the action should be prohibited. The rule of reason allows agencies to determine, based on their expertise and experience, how to consider an environmental effect and prepare an analysis based on the available information.

**Concept of Proportionality:** Under the concept of proportionality, agencies are guided by the principle that the extent of the analysis should commensurate with the quantity of

projected emissions. In other words, if there are little to no emissions associated with an action, then there should be little to no analysis associated with the action.

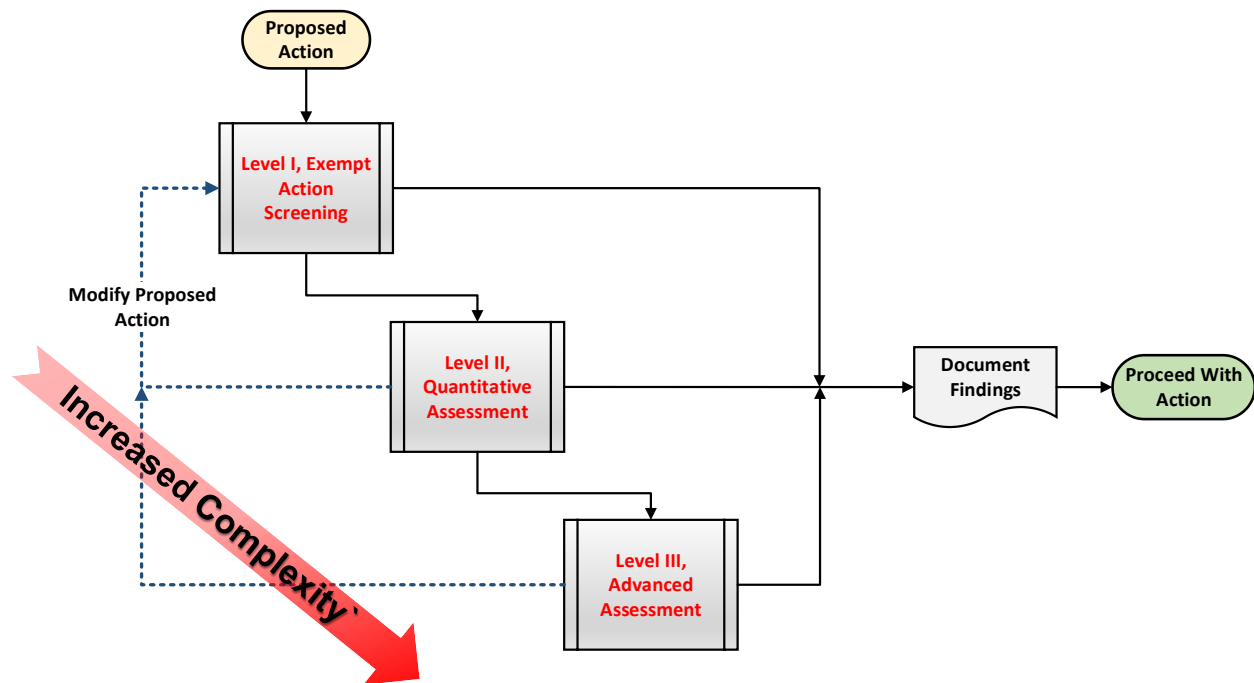
**Rule of Reason + Concept of Proportionality = Keep it Simple**

**Low Emissions = Short Analysis**

### 8.3.2 Overseas Air Quality EIAP Process

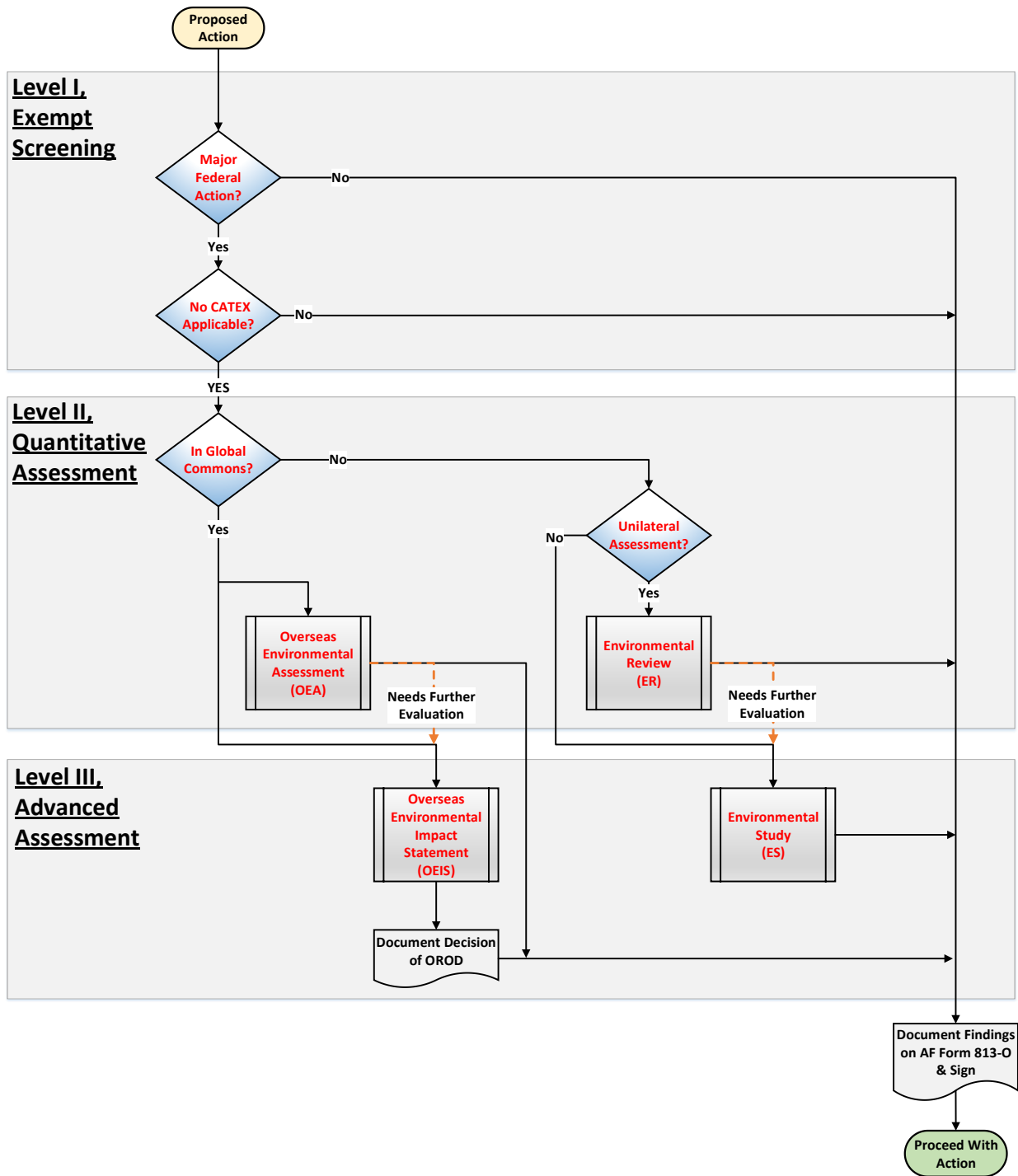
Generally speaking, Overseas Air Quality EIAP is performed in the same manner as a traditional EIAP. The EIAP process usually starts with the Proponent organization (the office, unit, single manager, or activity at any level that initiates Air Force Actions) formally initiating a proposed action by submitting an AF Form 813-O, *Request for Environmental Impact Analysis for Action Outside the U.S.* The Air Quality EIAP process then proceeds through up to three progressive levels of assessment (see Figure 8-2, *Air Quality EIAP Process*) based on significance thresholds. See *Air Force Air Quality EIAP Guide Volume I* for detailed guidance and procedures for air quality EIAP Level I and/or Level II assessment.

Figure 8-2, Air Quality EIAP Process



The Overseas Air Quality EIAP process follows the traditional Air Quality EIAP process as shown in Figure 8-3, *Overseas Air Quality EIAP Assessments Process*.

**Figure 8-3, Overseas Air Quality EIAP Assessments Process**



**8.3.2.1 Level I, Exempt Action Screening**

Under this level, the proposed action is assessed to determine if a formal Air Quality Assessment is required. If no air emissions will occur or the proposed action is exempt (i.e., specifically exempt or CATEXed from NEPA), no further action is required.



**Not a Major Action:**

Overseas EIAP is only applicable to “major actions overseas.” A “major Action overseas” overseas action of considerable importance involving substantial expenditures of time, money and resources that affects the environment on a large geographic scale or has substantial environmental effects on a more limited geographical area, and that is substantially different or a significant departure from other actions, previously analyzed with respect to environmental considerations and approved, with which the action under consideration may be associated.

**Specific Exemptions:**

EO 12114 and 32 CFR 187 specify several general exemptions that apply to proposed actions that will do significant harm to the environment of a foreign country or to a protected global resource. They include:

- Actions that the Air Force has already determined do not do significant harm to the environment overseas or to a designated global resource
- Actions taken pursuant to the direction of the President or Secretary of Defense in the course of armed conflict or when national security or national interests are involved
- Disaster and emergency relief actions
- Case-by-case exemptions other than those specified above that are required because of emergencies, national security considerations, exceptional foreign policy requirements, or other special circumstances preclude or are inconsistent with the preparation of EIAP documentation
- Class exemption for a “group” of related actions where it is more appropriate than a specific exemption. See 32 CFR 187 for more information regarding class exemptions.

**Overseas Categorical Exclusion (OCATEX):**

Per 32 CFR187, DoD may approve categorical exclusions for actions that normally do not, individually or cumulatively, do significant harm to the environment. According to AFI 32-7091, to date, there are no formally approved Air Force OCATEXs; however, in accordance with 32 CFR 989.13(c) the USAF CATEXs listed in 32 CFR 989 Appendix B “apply to actions in the United States and abroad.” Given, AFIs are only USAF policy/guidance and CFRs have the legal enforcement of law, it can be deduced that the USAF CATEXs listed in 32 CFR 989 Appendix B may be applied overseas.

**8.3.2.2 Level II, Quantitative Assessment**

Level II requires a formal assessment of air impacts be performed. A quantitative estimate of the annual net total direct and indirect emissions of pollutants of concern must be calculated. Only estimating methodologies, algorithms, and emission factors from the current AF General Conformity Guide, the AF Mobile Source Guide, and the AF Stationary Source

Guide are to be used. Currently the Air Conformity Applicability Model (ACAM) must be used throughout the USAF to perform this estimate. ACAM provides simplified emission modeling that is adequate for a General Conformity Applicability Assessment and cursory NEPA Assessment for air quality. See *Air Force Air Quality EIAP Guide Volume I* for detailed guidance and procedures for air quality EIAP Level II assessments and the use of ACAM.

If the findings of the assessment indicate no significant impact to air quality, the findings are documented through the ACAM automated reports for inclusion in the overall EIAP document. The following points are important in performing a quantitative estimate of the annual net emissions:

**Worst Case Emissions:**

The greatest annual (calendar year) emissions for each pollutant of concern form the basis of the analysis. Emissions must be calculated from the start of the action annually until the direct and indirect emissions have been shown to have reached steady state (i.e., no increase or decrease from the previous year).

Steady state is the state or condition at which the emissions do not change (or only negligibly) in time. For air impacts assessments, steady state is reached when the action is fully implemented and there no net increase or decrease in emissions attributed to the action from the previous year.

**Net Emissions:**

The emissions are “net,” that is, emissions added by the action increase the total emissions, while emissions removed by the action reduce the total.

**Action Phases & Schedule:**

Emissions must be calculated on an annual basis. Schedules should clearly indicate the years in which a particular part or aspect of the action take place. These timing considerations can also be important if it is necessary to adjust the schedule of an action to keep annual emissions below conformity threshold values. For EIAP purposes, the scope, schedule, timing, and location of all portions of the action must be clearly laid out.

**ACAM must be used for all Level II assessments throughout the USAF.** ACAM may be requested through completing a DD Form 2875, *System Authorization Access Request (SAAR)*, and submitting the completed form to Air Quality Subject Matter Expert (HQ AFCEC/CZTQ) for approval.

- A SAAR form that is already partially filled out with pertinent data can be obtained at <http://www.aqhelp.com/>. Click on the "Air Quality Tools" button at the top of screen and then click on the blue "Air Conformity Applicability Model (ACAM)" text. At this point the ACAM - System Authorization Access Request (SAAR) and ACAM - SAAR Help File can be downloaded.
- Upon approval, a download link for the ACAM install file and instructions will be emailed (usually within a day or two).

**Should the ACAM analysis conclude the proposed action potentially poses a significant impact on air quality, a *Level III, Advanced Air Quality Assessment*, is required.**

### **8.3.2.3 Level III, Advanced Air Quality Assessment**

At this level, the assessment is part science and part art, both quantitative and qualitative assessments are utilized to evaluate the potential air quality impact associated with a proposed action. The results and findings of the assessment are documented and usually integrated in an overall formal ES or OEIS. The following points are important in performing a Level III Assessment:

#### **Alleviation Modifications:**

The first step in a Level III assessment is to review the proposed act for potential Alleviation Modifications. Alleviation modifications are amendments and revised adaptations of the original proposed action which would result in lessening air emissions or adverse impacts or air emissions (e.g., relocation of action, reduce size/time of action, low-emission construction materials/activities, etc.). Alleviation modifications differ from “emission offsets” and “mitigation measures” in that alleviation modifications are proactively applied changes to the action, while emission offsets and mitigation measures are reactive actions applied after an action is fully defined and directly applied solely as a measure to reduce air emissions. Alleviation modifications are actual proactive refinements and changes that actually replace the original proposed action and are developed early on (no later than the first steps a Level III assessment) in the EIAP process with the intent of being environmentally friendly. Alleviation Modifications are proactive adjustments to an action that minimize adverse air impacts and occurring prior to a final assessment or determination; while emission offsets and mitigation measures are reactive actions applied as an afterthought to alleviate adverse air impacts after a final assessment or determination is made.

#### **Quantitative Analysis:**

In a quantitative analysis of air quality impacts, the proposed action is assessed based on a firm quantity or measured value as compared to a defined limit (i.e., a threshold or an indicator). The action’s worst-case quantified annual emissions for each pollutant of concern are compared against defined EPA thresholds or indicators.

- Thresholds are annual emission levels that, if exceeded, would trigger a regulatory requirement.
- Indicators are EPA thresholds that are partially applied or applied out of context to their intended use.
- Therefore, indicators do not trigger a regulatory requirement; however, they provide a warning that the action is potentially approaching a threshold which would trigger a regulatory requirement. It is important to note that while thresholds provide a definitive impact determination, indicators only provide a clue to the potential impacts to air quality.

**Qualitative Analysis:**

In a qualitative analysis of air quality impacts, the proposed action is assessed based on quality or characteristic(s), rather than on a firm quantity or measured value. Inferences are drawn from professional judgment on potential impacts from the available quantified data and other scientifically related data. Air quality impact inferences should be derived from comparing the NAAQS against an amalgamation of the quantified worst-case annual emissions for each pollutant of concern and the current ambient air quality data.

## 9 REFERENCES

This section provides a list of documents, models, and sources referenced in the guide. The reference list also identifies how to obtain or contact the reference (e.g., a publication number). Following the reference list is an annotated reference list, which includes a brief summary of each reference.

- 32 CFR 989 “Code of Federal Regulations, Title 32: National Defense, Environmental Impact Analysis Process (EIAP),” U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Air Force
- 40 CFR 51 “Code of Federal Regulations, Title 40-Protection of Environment, Part 51, Appendix W, Guideline on Air Quality Models (Revised),” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, EPA Publication No. EPA-450/2-78-027R
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# Appendix A - GLOSSARY

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This section discusses basic terms and definitions used in assessing the air quality impacts from United States Air Force (USAF) actions. It also includes some key conversion factors, which are used in analyzing aviation data.

## **AF Form 813**

Official form the Air Force uses to substantiate the need for environmental analysis for proposed actions.

## **Affected Environment**

The section of an environmental document (e.g. Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Environmental Assessment (EA)) which describes the resource categories (e.g. air, water, flora, fauna, historic sites, etc.) that are affected or potentially affected by the proposed action and any alternative.

## **Air Quality**

Ambient pollutant concentrations and their temporal and spatial distribution.

## **Air Quality Control Region (AQCR)**

An EPA designated interstate or intrastate geographic region that has significant air pollution or the potential for significant air pollution and, due to topography, meteorology, etc., needs a common air quality control strategy. The region includes all the counties that are affected by or have sources that contribute directly to the air quality of that region.

## **Air Quality Model**

An algorithmic relationship between pollutant emissions and pollutant concentrations used in the prediction of a project's pollutant impact.

## **Air Quality Standard**

A legal requirement for air quality, usually expressed in terms of maximum allowable pollutant concentration, averaged over a specified interval.

## **Alleviation Modifications**

The first step in a Level III assessment is to review the proposed act for potential Alleviation Modifications. Alleviation modifications are amendments and revised adaptations of the original proposed action which would result in lessening air emissions or adverse impacts or air emissions (e.g., relocation of action, reduce size/time of action, low-emission construction materials/activities, etc.). Alleviation modifications differ from "emission offsets" and "mitigation measures" in that alleviation modifications are proactively applied changes to the action, while emission offsets and mitigation measures are reactive actions applied after an action is fully defined and directly applied solely as a measure to reduce air emissions. Alleviation modifications are actual proactive refinements and changes that actually replace the



original proposed action and are developed early on (no later than the first steps a Level III assessment) in the EIAP process with the intent of being environmentally friendly. Alleviation Modifications are proactive adjustments to an action that minimize adverse air impacts and occurring prior to a final assessment or determination; while emission offsets and mitigation measures are reactive actions applied as an afterthought to alleviate adverse air impacts after a final assessment or determination is made.

### **Ambient Concentrations**

Initial concentration sensed/measured at a monitoring/sampling site.

### **Applicability Analysis**

The process of determining if your Federal action must be supported by a General Conformity Determination. This is generally performed in an Air Quality EIAP Level II, Air Quality Quantitative Assessment, using the Air Conformity Applicability Model (ACAM) to determine if the actions/reasonably foreseeable direct and indirect emission will exceed the General Conformity threshold values.

### **Applicable Implementation Plan or Applicable SIP**

The portion (or portions) of the State Implementation Plan (SIP) or most recent revision thereof, which has been approved under section 110(k) of the Act, a Federal implementation plan promulgated under section 110(c) of the Act, or a plan promulgated or approved pursuant to section 301 (d) of the Act (Tribal implementation plan (TIP)) and which implements the relevant requirements of the Act.

### **Area of Potential Effects**

Under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, area in which undertaking may affect any historic or cultural resources.

### **Area Source**

The agglomeration of many sources that have low emission rates spread over a large area that are too numerous to treat individually. An example of this type of source would be a parking lot.

### **Area-Wide Air Quality Modeling Analysis**

Means an assessment on a scale that includes the entire nonattainment or maintenance area using an air quality dispersion model or photochemical grid model to determine the effects of emissions on air quality, for example, an assessment using EPA's community multi-scale air quality (CMAQ) modeling system. Currently no allowed for directly-emitted emissions (emissions not indirect created through precursors).

### **Attainment Area**

An area that meets NAAQS for a particular pollutant.

### **Carbon Monoxide (CO)**

A colorless, odorless, toxic gas produced by the incomplete combustion of organic materials used as fuels. CO is emitted as a byproduct of essentially all combustion. Idling and low speed mobile source operations, such as aircraft taxiing are the most prevalent CO emission sources commonly found at airports.

**Categorical Exclusion (CATEX)**

A category of actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on human environment based on agency experience. CATEX's have been found to have no such effect in procedures adopted by a Federal agency in implementation of these regulations (40 CFR 1507.3) and do not require preparation of an environmental assessment (EA), a FONSI, or an EIS.

**Cause or Contribute to a New Violation**

Means a Federal action that causes or contributes to a new violation of a NAAQS:

- (1) Causes a new violation of a NAAQS at a location in a nonattainment or maintenance area which would otherwise not be in violation of the standard during the future period in question if the Federal action were not taken; or
- (2) Contributes, in conjunction with other reasonably foreseeable actions, to a new violation of a NAAQS at a location in a nonattainment or maintenance area in a manner that would increase the frequency or severity of the new violation.

**Caused By**

As used in the terms "direct emissions" and "indirect emissions," means emissions that would not otherwise occur in the absence of the Federal action.

**CFRs**

Code of Federal Regulations.

**Clean Air Act (CAA)**

The Federal law regulating air quality. The first Clean Air Act (CAA), passed in 1967, required that air quality criteria necessary to protect the public health and welfare be developed. Since 1967, there have been several revisions to the CAA. The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 represent the fifth major effort to address clean air legislation.

**Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990**

The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 represent the fifth major effort to address clean air legislation. Revisions include significant strengthening of the Clean Air Act, especially by adding detailed requirements for Federal actions to conform to State Implementation Plans (SIP), expanding the list of hazardous air pollutants from eight to 189, and strengthening the operating permit program.

**Confidential Information**

Information that has been determined by a Federal agency, in accordance with its applicable regulations, to be a trade secret, or commercial or financial information obtained from a person and privileged or confidential and is exempt from required disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552(b)(4)).

**Conformity**

The act of meeting Section 176(c)(1) of the CAA that requires Federal actions to conform to the SIP for air quality. The action may not increase the severity of an existing violation nor can it delay attainment of any standards.

**Conformity Determination**

An evaluation made, if a General Conformity Applicability Analysis concludes a determination is required, to demonstrate that a Federal action conforms to the applicable implementation plan and meets the requirements of this subpart.

**Conformity Evaluation**

Is the entire General Conformity Rule process from the Applicability Analysis through the Conformity Determination that is used to demonstrate that the Federal action conforms to the requirements of this subpart.

**Connected Actions**

Actions that are closely related and therefore should be discussed in the same environmental document. Actions are connected if they automatically trigger other actions which may require an EIS; if they cannot or will not proceed unless other actions are taken previously or simultaneously; and if they are interdependent parts of a larger action and depend on the larger action for their justification.

**Continuing Program Responsibility**

Means a Federal agency has responsibility for emissions caused by:

- (1) Actions it takes itself; or
- (2) Actions of non-Federal entities that the Federal agency, in exercising its normal programs and authorities, approves, funds, licenses or permits, provided the agency can impose conditions on any portion of the action that could affect the emissions.

**Continuous Program to Implement**

Means that the Federal agency has started the action identified in the plan and does not stop the actions for more than an 18-month period, unless it can demonstrate that such a stoppage was included in the original plan.

**Control**

The ability to regulate, in some way, the emissions from a Federal action. The ability to regulate can be demonstrated directly through the use of emissions control equipment on a boiler or indirectly through the implementation of regulation or conditions in the nature of activity that must be established in permits of approvals or by design of the action. An example of indirect control is limiting vehicle emissions by controlling the size of a parking facility.

**Cooperating Agency**

A cooperating agency may be any Federal agency that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any potential environment impact involved in a proposal for legislation or Federal action that significantly affects the quality of the human environment. A cooperating agency may also be a state or local agency of similar qualifications or, when the effects influence a reservation, an Indian Tribe. By agreement with the lead agency, an Indian Tribe may become a cooperating agency.

**Criteria Pollutants**

The six pollutants listed in the CAA that are regulated by the EPA through the NAAQS because of their health and/or environmental effects (i.e., any pollutant for which there is established a NAAQS at 40 CFR part 50). They are: nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), carbon monoxide (CO), ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), particulate matter (PM-10 & PM2.5), and lead (Pb).

**Cumulative Impact**

Impacts on the environment which result from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present and reasonable foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor, but collectively significant, actions taking place over a period of time.

**De Minimis**

So small as to be negligible or insignificant. If an action has de minimis emissions (Conformity Rule, 40 CFR Part 93.153c), then a conformity determination pursuant to the CAA of 1990 is not required.

**Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives (DOPAA)**

The first USAF document required by the proponent of an action to initiate the EIAP. The DOPAA is documented with AF Form 813 and is the basis for all follow-on environmental analyses.

**Direct Effect**

An effect that is caused by the implementation and/or operation of an action that occurs at the same time and place. These type of effects are also often referred to as primary effects.

**Direct Emissions**

Emissions of a criteria pollutant or its precursors that are caused or initiated by the Federal action and originate in a nonattainment or maintenance area and occur at the same time and place as the action and are reasonably foreseeable. NOTE: Direct emission are not the same as directly-emitted emission which are emissions wholly released as criteria pollutant and are not indirectly created through precursors.

**Directly-Emitted**

Emissions wholly released as criteria pollutant and are not indirectly created through precursors.

**DoD**

Department of Defense.

**Emergency**

A situation where extremely quick action on the part of the federal agencies involved is needed and where the timing of such Federal activities makes it impractical to meet the requirements of this subpart, such as natural disasters like hurricanes or earthquakes, civil disturbances such as terrorist acts and military mobilizations.

**Emissions Budgets**

Are those portions of the applicable SIP's projected emission inventories that describe the levels of emissions (mobile, stationary, area, etc.) that provide for meeting reasonable further progress milestones, attainment, and/or maintenance for any criteria pollutant or its precursors.

**Emission Factor**

The rate at which pollutants are emitted into the atmosphere by one source or a combination of sources.

**Emission Inventory**

A complete list of sources and rates of pollutant emissions within a specific area and time interval.

**Emissions Offsets (for purposes of §93.158)**

Are emissions reductions which are quantifiable, consistent with the applicable SIP attainment and reasonable further progress demonstrations, surplus to reductions required by, and credited to, other applicable SIP provisions, enforceable at both the State and Federal levels, and permanent within the timeframe specified by the program.

**Environmental Assessment (EA)**

A concise public document that provides sufficient data, evidence, and analysis to determine if Federal agency should prepare an EIS for an action or issue a FONSI. An EA is not necessary in cases where the Federal agency has decided to prepare an EIS. An EA can be prepared at any time to aid agency decision making.

**Environmental Impact Analysis Process (EIAP)**

The USAF process for complying with NEPA and CEQ regulations.

**Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)**

A detailed, concise public document required for major Federal actions likely to have significant effects on the human environment. The document may be directly prepared, without first doing an EA, if the action will have significant environmental impacts. An EIS provides the public and decision makers with clear, written documentation of potential significant environmental effects of the proposed action, and reasonable alternatives including the no action alternative.

**Environmental Planning Function (EPF)**

The Air Force organization at the base, major command or field operating agency that manages the EIAP including evaluation and completion of Air Force environmental forms, identifies

environmental quality standards that relate to the action being evaluated, and prepares environmental documents and related logistical information.

### **Environmental Review (ER)**

A concise survey of the important environmental issues associated with a major Federal action overseas that is to be considered by appropriate Air Force leadership during the decision-making process. An ER is prepared by the Air Force either unilaterally or in conjunction with another US Government agency.

### **Environmental Study (ES)**

An analysis of the likely environmental consequences of the action that is to be considered by appropriate Air Force leadership during the decision-making process. An ES is a cooperative action, not a unilateral action, taken by the Air Force. It is prepared by the Air Force in conjunction with one or more foreign nations, or by an international body or organization of which the United States is a member or participant.

### **EPA**

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

### **Federal Action**

*Federal action* means any activity engaged in by a department, agency, or instrumentality of the Federal government, or any activity that a department, agency or instrumentality of the Federal government supports in any way, provides financial assistance for, licenses, permits, or approves, other than activities related to transportation plans, programs, and projects developed, funded, or approved under title 23 U.S.C. or the Federal Transit Act (49 U.S.C. 1601 *et seq.*). Where the Federal action is a permit, license, or other approval for some aspect of a non-Federal undertaking, the relevant activity is the part, portion, or phase of the non-Federal undertaking that requires the Federal permit, license, or approval.

### **Federal Action Overseas**

Actions that are implemented or funded directly by the US Government. Federal actions do not include actions in which the US Government (to include the Air Force and Air Force subdivisions, e.g., organizations, units, commands) participates in an advisory, information-gathering, representational, or diplomatic capacity but does not implement or fund the action; actions taken by a foreign government or in a foreign country in which the US Government is a beneficiary of the action, but does not implement or fund the actions; and actions in which foreign governments use funds derived indirectly from US Government funding. See 32 CFR 187.

### **Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)**

A document which briefly presents evidence of why a Federal agency has determined that a proposed action, not otherwise categorically excluded, will not have a significant impact on the environment. The FONSI justifies why the preparation of an EIS is unnecessary. The FONSI must include the EA or be attached to the EA, or a summary of it, and reference any other associated environmental documents. The FONSI should state all mitigation that will be undertaken, if any.

**Foreign Nation**

Any geographic area (land, water, and airspace) that is under the jurisdiction of one or more foreign governments; any area under military occupation by the United States alone or jointly with any other foreign government; and any area that is the responsibility of an international organization of governments. “Foreign nation” includes contiguous zones and fishery zones of foreign nations. “Foreign government” in this context includes governments regardless of whether recognized by the United States, political factions, and organizations that exercise governmental power outside the United States. See 32 CFR 187.

**Global Commons**

Geographical areas that are outside the jurisdiction of any nation and include the oceans outside territorial limits and Antarctica. Global commons do not include contiguous zones (a maritime zone extending 3-12 nautical miles from the coastline) and fishery zones (an area where fishing for some or all species is prohibited to protect critical habitats, rebuild fish stocks, ensure against overfishing, or enhance fishery yield) of foreign nations. See 32 CFR 187.

**Hydrocarbons (HC)**

Total hydrocarbons excluding methane and ethane. These gases represent unburned and wasted fuel. They come from incomplete combustion of gasoline and from evaporation of petroleum fuels.

**Increase the Frequency or Severity of any Existing Violation of Any Standard in Any Area**

Means to cause a nonattainment area to exceed a standard more often or to cause a violation at a greater concentration than previously existed and/or would otherwise exist during the future period in question, if the project were not implemented.

**Indirect Control**

Control of air quality by altering activities that influence the rate and distribution of emissions (e.g., traffic patterns, land use). Indirect control contrasts with direct control at the source of emissions (e.g. devices on automobiles or smoke stack).

**Indirect Effect**

Effects that are caused by the implementation and/or operation of an action, that occur later in time or are further removed by distance from the action, but which are still reasonable foreseeable. Often referred to as secondary effects

**Indirect Emissions**

Indirect emissions are those caused by the implementation and/or operation of an action, are reasonably foreseeable, but which occur later in time and/or are farther removed in distance from the action itself. Under General Conformity, indirect emissions are further limited to those indirect emissions that the responsible Federal agency can “practicably control and will maintain control over due to a continuing program responsibility of the Federal agency.” Indirect emissions mean those emissions of a criteria pollutant or its precursors:

- (1) That are caused or initiated by the Federal action and originate in the same nonattainment or maintenance area but occur at a different time or place as the action;

- (2) That are reasonably foreseeable;
- (3) That the agency can practically control; and
- (4) For which the agency has continuing program responsibility.

**Indirect Source**

Any structure or installation which attracts an activity which creates emission of pollutants; for example, a shopping center, an airport, or a stadium.

**Lead (Pb)**

A heavy metal that, when ingested or inhaled, affects the blood forming organs, kidneys and the nervous system. The chief source of this pollutant at airports is the combustion of leaded aviation gasoline in piston-engine aircraft.

**Lead Agency**

The agency preparing or having taken primary responsibility for preparing the EIS.

**Local Air Quality Modeling Analysis**

Means an assessment of localized impacts on a scale smaller than the entire nonattainment or maintenance area, including, for example, congested roadways on a Federal facility, which uses an air quality dispersion model (e.g., Industrial Source Complex Model or Emission and Dispersion Model System) to determine the effects of emissions on air quality.

**LTO**

An aircraft's landing and takeoff (LTO) cycle. One aircraft LTO is equivalent to two aircraft operations (one landing and one takeoff). The standard LTO cycle begins when the aircraft crosses into the mixing zone as it approaches the airport on its descent from cruising altitude, lands and taxis to the gate. The cycle continues as the aircraft taxis back out to the runway for takeoff and climbout as its heads out of the mixing zone and back up to cruising altitude. The five specific operating modes in a standard LTO are: approach, taxi/idle-in, taxi/idle-out, takeoff, and climbout. Most aircraft go through this sequence during a complete standard operating cycle.

**Maintenance Area (MA)**

Any geographic area of the United States and territories previously designated nonattainment pursuant the CAA Amendments of 1990 and subsequently re-designated in 40 CFR Part 81 to attainment, meeting the provisions of section 107(d)(3)(E) of the Act and has a maintenance plan approved under section 175A of the Act.

**Maintenance Plan**

A revision to the applicable SIP, meeting the requirements of section 175A of the Act.

**Major Action (Overseas Only)**

An overseas action of considerable importance involving substantial expenditures of



time, money and resources that affects the environment on a large geographic scale or has substantial environmental effects on a more limited geographical area, and that is substantially different or a significant departure from other actions, previously analyzed with respect to environmental considerations and approved, with which the action under consideration may be associated. See 32 CFR187.

### **Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)**

The policy board of an organization created as a result of the designation process in 23 U.S.C. 134(d).

### **Mitigation**

Any method of reducing emissions of the pollutant or its precursor taken after a final assessment or conformity determination is made at the location of the Federal action and used to reduce the impact of the emissions of that pollutant caused by the action. Mitigation Measures differ from “Alleviation Modifications” in that a mitigation measure are reactively applied (i.e., after an action is fully defined and a final assessment or conformity determination is made) plied solely as a measure to reduce air emissions, while “Alleviation Modifications” are proactive (i.e., occurring prior to a final assessment or conformity determination) refinement/s that actually replaces the original action, with the intent of being environmentally friendly. This term is defined in 40 CFR 1508.20. It includes: (1) avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action or finding a new site; (2) minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation; (3) rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment; (4) reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action; and (5) compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

### **Mobile Source**

A moving vehicle that emits pollutants. Such sources include airplanes, automobiles, trucks, and ground support equipment.

### **Modal Emissions Factors**

Vehicular emissions factors for individual modes of operation. For aircraft, these modes are takeoff, climbout, approach, and taxi.

### **Model**

A quantitative or mathematical representation or simulation which attempts to describe the characteristics or relationships of physical events.

### **National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS)**

Air Quality standards established by the EPA to protect human health (primary standards) and to protect property and aesthetics (secondary standards).

### **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**

An Act established to declare a national policy that will encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between society and the environment; to promote efforts that will prevent or

eliminate damage to the environment and the biosphere and stimulate the health and welfare of man; and to enrich the understanding of the ecological systems and natural resources important to the nation. Signed into law on January 1, 1970, NEPA establishes national environmental policy and goals for the protection, maintenance, and enhancement of the environment and provides a process for implementing these goals within US federal agencies. The Act also establishes the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ).

### **Near Nonattainment**

Any geographic area of the United States or its territories that is currently designated in attainment with one or more NAAQS, but the ambient air quality design value within 5% of any NAAQS.

### **Nitrogen Oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>)**

A poisonous and highly reactive gas produced when fuel is burned at high temperatures causing some of the abundant nitrogen in the air to burn also. At air bases this pollutant is emitted by automobiles, aircraft engines, electric power plants, and other combustion equipment. Takeoff and climbout are the significant NO<sub>x</sub> producing modes of aircraft operation.

### **Nonattainment Area (NAA)**

Any geographic area of the United States or its territories that is in violation of any NAAQS and therefore has been designated as nonattainment under the CAA (i.e., an area designated as nonattainment under section 107 of the Act and described in 40 CFR part 81).

### **Notice of Availability (NOA)**

A notice printed in the *Federal Register* announcing that an EIS is available for public comment.

### **Notice of Intent (NOI)**

A brief notice placed in the *Federal Register* by the Federal agency noting that the agency will prepare an EIS. The NOI describes the proposed action and possible alternatives, details the proposed scoping process (i.e., location and time of meetings), and provides the name and address of a point of contact within the Federal agency to answer questions about the proposed action and the EIS.

### **Overseas**

A geographic area located outside the jurisdiction of the United States, which includes land and associated territorial sea, contiguous zones, and exclusive economic zones of the United States; an area outside the United States (e.g., a foreign country).

### **Overseas Categorical Exclusion (OCATEX)**

Per 32 C.F.R. § 187, DoD may approve categorical exclusions for actions that normally do not, individually or cumulatively, do significant harm to the environment. According to AFI 32-7091, to date, there are no formally approved Air Force OCATEXs; however, in accordance with 32 CFR 989.13(c) the USAF CATEXs listed in 32 CFR 989 Appendix B “apply to actions in the United States and abroad.”

**Overseas Environmental Assessment (OEA)**

A brief and concise statement that provides sufficient information to enable Air Force leadership to decide whether the proposed action is a major action, is a Federal action, and will significantly harm the environment of the global commons. The OEA is prepared by the Air Force unilaterally.

**Overseas Environmental Baseline Guidance Document (OEBGD)**

A set of objective criteria and management practices designed to protect human health and the environment. It reflects generally accepted federal environmental standards that apply to DoD installations, facilities, and actions in the United States. It also incorporates requirements of US law that have extraterritorial application (i.e., apply overseas). DoD developed and maintains the OEBGD. See DoDI 4715.05.

**Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (OEIS)**

A statement of the environmental effects of the proposed action on the global commons and the reasonable alternatives. The OEIS is a concise document prepared by the Air Force unilaterally and is no longer than necessary to permit appropriate Air Force leadership informed consideration of the environmental impacts of the proposed action and reasonable alternatives. The OEIS will enable the appropriate decisionmaker to be informed of pertinent environmental considerations prior to issuing their formal Overseas Record of Decision (OROD).

**Overseas Record of Decision (OROD)**

A document that states the EIAP decision made, describes the environmental factors considered, the preferred plan, and the alternatives considered in the overseas environmental impact statement.

**Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>)**

A colorless, toxic gas formed by the photochemical reactions in the atmosphere of VOCs with the oxides of nitrogen. Ozone commonly is referred as “Smog”. Ozone is not emitted directly by any base source.

**Point Source**

A pollutant source that is fixed to the ground and that releases pollutants through a relatively small area. Common stationary sources at air bases include boilers, heaters, incinerators, and fuel storage tanks.

**Pollutant/s of Concern**

Under EIAP, the air pollutant/s of concern include all criteria pollutant, greenhouse gases, and total hazardous air pollutants (HAPs). Under General Conformity the air pollutant/s of concern include only those criteria pollutants and their precursors for which the area is designated nonattainment or maintenance.

**PM10**

PM10, a criteria pollutant, are fine particles less than 10 micrometers in diameter. PM10 includes solid and liquid material suspended in the atmosphere formed as a result of incomplete combustion. Aircraft are the primary source of PM10 emissions at USAF facilities.

**PPM**

Parts per million ( $10^6$ ) by volume.

**Precursor**

A chemical compound that leads to the formation of a pollutant. HC and NO<sub>x</sub> are precursors of photochemical oxidants.

- (1) For ozone, nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>), unless an area is exempted from NO<sub>x</sub> requirements under section 182(f) of the Act, and volatile organic compounds (VOC)
- (2) For PM<sub>10</sub>, those pollutants described in the PM<sub>10</sub> nonattainment area applicable SIP as significant contributors to the PM<sub>10</sub> levels.
- (3) For PM<sub>2.5</sub>:
  - (i) Sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) in all PM<sub>2.5</sub> nonattainment and maintenance areas,
  - (ii) Nitrogen oxides in all PM<sub>2.5</sub> nonattainment and maintenance areas unless both the State and EPA determine that it is not a significant precursor, and
  - (iii) Volatile organic compounds (VOC) and ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) only in PM<sub>2.5</sub> nonattainment or maintenance areas where either the State or EPA determines that they are significant precursors.

**Preferred Model**

A refined model that is recommended for a specific type of regulatory application.

**Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) Area**

A geographic area that contains air which is relatively clean and not in violation of NAAQS. The emissions in these areas are regulated to prevent degradation of its air quality.

**Primary Pollutant**

Chemical contaminants which are released directly to the atmosphere by a source.

**Primary Standard**

A NAAQS set to protect human health.

**Proponent**

Any office, unit, or activity at any level of command that initiates Air Force actions. This responsibility can be assigned to an installation or major command by an appropriate higher authority. See 32 CFR 989.3(d).

**Protected Global Resource**

A natural or ecological resource of global importance designated for protection by President or, if the resource is protected by an IA that is binding on the United States designated for protection by the Secretary of State. See 32 CFR 187.

**Reasonably Foreseeable Emissions**

Projected future direct and indirect emissions that are identified at the time the conformity determination is made; the location of such emissions is known, and the emissions are quantifiable as described and documented by the Federal agency based on its own information and after reviewing any information presented to the Federal agency. Reasonably foreseeable activities are those that are likely to occur or probable, rather than those that are merely possible.

**Record of Decision (ROD)**

The decision document, prepared after the EIS, that states what the decision is, identifies all alternative considered by the lead agency in reaching its decision, and states whether all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm have been adopted, and if not, why not.

**Regionally Significant**

Previously defined under General Conformity Rule, as when a Federal action's direct and indirect emissions exceed 10 percent of the total emissions inventory for a particular criteria pollutant in a nonattainment or maintenance area. Now is subjective and open for interpretation based on the specific circumstances of the action.

**Scoping**

An early and open process (that invites the participation of affected Federal, state and local agencies, any affected Indian tribe, the proponent of the action and other interested persons) that determines the issues to be addressed in an environmental document and identifies relevant and/or significant issues related to a proposed action.

**Screening Technique**

A relatively simple analysis technique to determine if a given source is likely to pose a threat to air quality. Concentration estimates from screening techniques are conservative.

**Secondary Pollutant**

Atmospheric contaminants formed in the atmosphere as a result of such chemical reactions, as hydrolysis, oxidation, and photochemistry.

**Secondary Standard**

A NAAQS set to protect human welfare.

**Significance Criteria**

Quantifiable air quality impact severity gauges that are either thresholds or indicators. Thresholds are EPA-established emission related limits that, if exceeded, would trigger a regulatory requirement. Indicators are EPA-established thresholds that are partially applied or applied out of context to their intended use; however, can provide a direct gauge of potential impact.

**Similar Actions**

Actions, when viewed with other reasonably foreseeable or proposed actions, that have similarities that provide a basis for evaluating their environmental consequences altogether (in one document), such as common timing or geography.

**State Implementation Plan (SIP)**

The strategy to be used by a state to control air pollution in order that the NAAQS will be met. EPA regulations require that each state devise such a plan or the EPA will impose its own plan for that state.

**Stationary Source**

A source of pollutants which is immobile. Such sources include power plants, individual heater, incinerators, fuel tanks, facilities, and solvent degreasers, among others.

**Sulfur Dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>)**

This is a corrosive and poisonous gas produced mainly from the burning of sulfur containing fuel. Very little SO<sub>2</sub> is emitted from any aviation sources.

**Take or Start the Federal Action**

Means the date that the Federal agency signs or approves the permit, license, grant or contract or otherwise physically begins the Federal action that requires a conformity evaluation under this subpart.

**Tiering**

Already published environmental analyses (EAs and EISs) of broader scope that are incorporated by reference in support of a specific project assessment or statement as a method of reducing paperwork to the best advantage of the NEPA and EIAP process.

**Total of Direct and Indirect Emissions**

The sum of direct and indirect emissions increases and decreases caused by the Federal action; i.e., the “net” emissions considering all direct and indirect emissions. The portion of emissions which are exempt or presumed to conform under §93.153 (c), (d), (e), or (f) are not included in the “total of direct and indirect emissions.” The “total of direct and indirect emissions” includes emissions of criteria pollutants and emissions of precursors of criteria pollutants.

**Total Organic Gases (TOG)**

This term includes all hydrocarbon compounds in an emission sample. See also HC and VOC. These terms are not interchangeable.

**Total Suspended Particulate (TSP)**

These are solid or liquid particles small enough to remain suspended in air. They range widely in size from particles visible as soot or smoke to those too small to detect except with an electron microscope.

**Transportation Control Plan (TCP)**

A plan specifying measures to regulate the emission of pollutants from mobile sources.

**United States (or USA)**

The several States, District of Columbia, Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, Guam, Midway and Wake Islands, United States Virgin Islands, any other territory or possession of the United States, and associated navigable waters, contiguous zones, and ocean waters of which the natural resources are under the exclusive management authority of the United States. See DoDI 4715.05, DoDI 4715.08, and DoDD 3000.10.

**Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)**

The sum of distances traveled by all motor vehicles in a specified region. VMT is equal to the total number of vehicle trips multiplied by the trip distance (measured in miles). This sum is used in computing an emission inventory for motor vehicles.

**Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)**

VOCs are created when fuels or organic waste materials are burned. Most hydrocarbons are presumed to be VOCs in the regulatory context, unless otherwise specified by the EPA.

# Appendix B - ACRONYMS/BREVITY CODES

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ACAM	Air Conformity Applicability Model
AERMOD	American Meteorological Society/EPA Regulatory Model
AFCEC	Air Force Civil Engineer Center
BACT	Best Available Control Technology
CAA	Clean Air Act
CATEX	Categorical Exclusion
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CFC	Chlorofluorocarbons
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CO	Carbon Monoxide
DoD	Department of Defense
DoDD	Department of Defense Directive
DoDI	Department of Defense Instruction
DOPAA	Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIAP	Environmental Impact Analysis Process
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EO	Executive Order
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EPF	Environmental Planning Function
ER	Environmental Review
ES	Environmental Study
FONSH	Finding of No Significant Harm
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
FR	Federal Register
GCR	General Conformity Rule
HAP	Hazardous Air Pollutant
HC	Hydrocarbons
HCFC	Hydrochlorofluorocarbons
LAER	Lowest Achievable Emission Rate
LTO	Landing and Takeoff
MA	Maintenance Area
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
NAA	Nonattainment Area
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NO <sub>2</sub>	Nitrogen Dioxide



NOA	Notice of Availability
NOI	Notice of Intent
NO <sub>x</sub>	Nitrogen Oxides
NSR	New Source Review
OCATEX	Overseas Categorical Exclusion
OEA	Overseas Environmental Assessment
OEIS	Overseas Environmental Impact Statement
OROD	Overseas Record of Decision
O <sub>3</sub>	Ozone
Pb	Lead
PM	Particulate Matter
PPM	parts per million
PSD	Prevention of Significant Deterioration
ROD	Record of Decision
SIP	State Implementation Plan
SO <sub>2</sub>	Sulfur Dioxide
SO <sub>x</sub>	Sulfur Oxide
TCP	Transportation Control Plan
TIP	Tribal Implementation Plan
TOG	Total Organic Gases
TSP	Total Suspended Particulate
USAF	United States Air Force
VMT	Vehicle Miles Traveled
VOC	Volatile Organic Compound