

equitable public participation and access to information, to involve the public when suggesting a location for the repository. The Director has the discretion to choose a more suitable location if he or she finds that the one chosen by the facility is unsuitable based on access, location, hours of availability, or other relevant criteria. The Director should exercise this authority sparingly; we are anticipating that, in the great majority of cases, the facility will choose a suitable location. EPA encourages facilities to establish repositories off-site (i.e., within the community where the facility is located) whenever an off-site repository is feasible and would be more readily accessible to the public. Today's rule does not, however, preclude the use of on-site repositories.

4. **Timing and Duration** (Proposed § 124.33(f)). The proposed rule required the facility to maintain and update the repository for a time period determined by the Director. The proposal also stated that the Director could require the repository at any time during the application process for a RCRA permit or during the active life of a facility.

Synopsis of the Major Comments on Proposed § 124.33(f). The commenters submitted a variety of comments concerning the timing and duration of the repository. Some commenters thought that permitting agencies need flexibility in applying the repository requirement. Others thought that EPA should require the repository to open and close at specific points during the permitting process. One group of commenters insisted that EPA include a provision in the rule to allow for automatic closure of the repository once the permit is issued, denied, or appealed.

EPA's Response to Commenters. In the final rule, EPA clarifies its intent that the Director have the discretion to apply the repository requirement at any time during the permitting process or the life of a facility. Given that it is within the Director's discretion whether to establish a repository at all, we believe that it would be inappropriate to prescribe specific timing and duration requirements that are triggered by the creation of a repository; rather, the Director should decide on questions of timing and duration on a case-by-case basis. The final rule continues the proposed rule's provision that the Director determine the duration of the repository. The final rule provides that the Director can close the repository, based on the same standards (found in paragraph (a)) that the Director uses when assessing the need for a repository.

#### *E. Trial Burn Notices*

1. **Notice of the Trial Burn for Permitted Combustion Facilities** (Proposed §§ 270.62(b)(6) and 270.66(d)(3)). Permits for new hazardous waste combustion facilities must include a plan, approved by the permitting agency as part of the permit, that describes how the facility will conduct the trial burn. However, because construction of a new facility may take a considerable period of time, the trial burn itself might not take place until several years after permit issuance. The proposed rule required the permitting agency to give public notice of the impending trial burn for permitted incinerators and BIFs. Under the proposed rule, the permitting agency would send a notice to the facility mailing list and appropriate units of State and local governments announcing the scheduled commencement and completion dates for the trial burn. The notice would also provide the public with contact information at the permitting agency and the facility and a location where members of the public could review the approved trial burn plan. The proposal required the permitting agency to mail the notice within a reasonable time period prior to the trial burn.

Synopsis of the Major Comments on Proposed §§ 270.62(b)(6) and 270.66(d)(3). We received both positive and negative comments on the proposed notice of trial burn for permitted combustion facilities. The supporters noted the importance of informing the public of the anticipated time period for conducting the burn, because a significant amount of time may elapse between issuing the permit and conducting the trial burn.

Those who opposed the trial burn notice asked what benefit would accrue from public notice of an impending, scheduled trial burn for a new (permitted) facility. One commenter asked EPA to discuss the purpose for requiring this notice from a new facility, considering that the schedule is set out in the permit and the trial burn plan is already open for public comment as part of the draft permit. Some commenters thought that the other permitting events already provide sufficient opportunity for public comment. Other commenters opposed the requirement that the permitting agency give the trial burn notice, claiming that delays would ensue when the agency could not publish the notice on time.

EPA's Response to Commenters. EPA has decided to finalize the trial burn notice provisions for permitted facilities as proposed. The Agency agrees with

the commenters who noted the importance of keeping the community up to date on permitting activities at the facility. Several years may pass between the approval of the trial burn plan and the actual date of the trial burn. During the intervening time, the public may not necessarily remain up to date on activities at the facility. The trial burn is a significant step in the process of a combustor moving toward full operation; experience has shown that the public is often interested in knowing when the burn will occur so that citizens can review the trial burn results. Thus, we remain committed to giving notice of the impending trial burn at permitted facilities.

The final rule requires the permitting agency to send the notice to the facility mailing list. While we do not specify a time period during which the permitting agency should send out the notice, we anticipate that permitting agencies will typically notify the public at least 30 days before the trial burn.

The final rule does not provide for a comment period after the permitting agency gives notice of the trial burn dates. A number of commenters asked EPA what the purpose of such a notice would be, if not to open a comment period. Other commenters asked the Agency to make clear whether or not the rule would require a comment period during the trial burn stage. EPA decided that a comment period during the trial burn phase would not be necessary or appropriate. The public has already had the opportunity to be involved with, and comment on, the trial burn plan during the draft permit stage. Our intent in providing for the notice at this stage is to make the public aware of an impending trial burn. The notice will serve as an update, rather than the opening of a comment period.

Finally, EPA has clarified in §§ 270.62(b)(6) and 270.66(d)(3) that a new hazardous waste combustion facility applying for a permit may not commence its trial burn until after the permitting agency has issued the required notice. It was clear from the proposal that we intended for the permitting agency to issue the notice before the trial burn. However, the proposed rule language did not explicitly state the obvious corollary, which was that the facility may not commence the trial burn until after the notice.

EPA does not believe that the notice requirement established by today's rule will delay trial burns. The notice requirement is straightforward and easy to implement; we do not anticipate that permitting agencies will fail to issue the required notices in a timely fashion.