

Technical Standards

Ontario protects air quality through a comprehensive air management framework that includes regulations, targeted programs and partnerships with other jurisdictions, to address sources of air pollution. This framework addresses emissions from the electricity sector (including coal-fired generation stations), vehicles, cross-border sources, as well as commercial and industrial facilities.

Ontario's local air quality regulation (O. Reg. 419/05: Air Pollution – Local Air Quality) works within the province's air management framework by regulating air contaminants released into communities by various sources including local industrial and commercial facilities. The regulation aims to limit exposure to substances released into air that can affect human health and the environment, while allowing industry to operate responsibly under a set of rules that are publicly transparent.

The regulation includes three compliance approaches for industry to demonstrate environmental performance and make improvements when required. Industry can:

- meet the general air standard
- request and meet a site-specific standard or
- register and meet the requirements under a sector-based technical standard (if available).

All three approaches are allowable under the regulation.

Provincial air standards are set based on science and therefore, may not be achievable by a facility or a sector due to unique technical or economic limitations. Instead of making the air standard less stringent, the regulation allows facilities or sectors to exceed the air standard as long as they are working to reduce their air emissions as much as possible with technology-based solutions and best practices. The Ministry of the Environment closely oversees their progress using a framework for managing risk that was developed in cooperation with public health units in Ontario and other stakeholders.

Some facilities may never meet the general air standard and instead will be regulated under one of the other compliance approaches.

What is a Technical Standard?

A technical standard is a technology-based solution designed for two or more facilities in a sector that may not be able to meet an air standard due to technical or economic limitations.

This approach can include technology, operation, monitoring and reporting requirements. Once established, any facility in the sector (that may or may not meet the air standard) may request to be registered under the technical standard.

Technical standards can be used to manage air emissions for multiple facilities within one or more sectors and can include a wide range of contaminants.

When the Ministry of the Environment develops a technical standard, representative facilities in the sector are compared to what other facilities around the world are required or capable of achieving to determine whether or not the same can be required of Ontario facilities.

Development of a technical standard includes a better understanding of the specific sources of contaminants for that sector, benchmarking technology to address the sources of contaminants, and consideration of economic issues that relate to the sector.

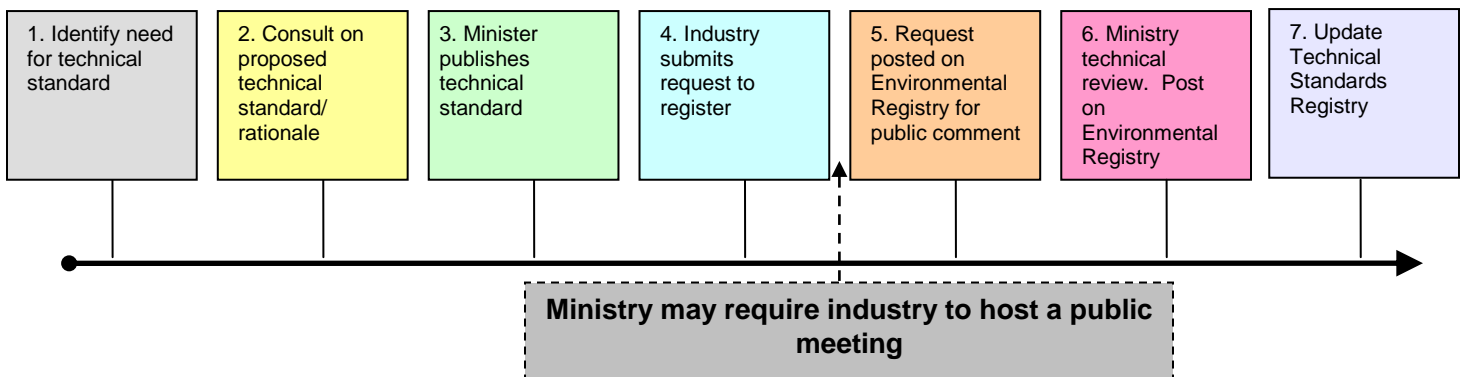
The goal is to have a more efficient tool to better manage air emissions and reduce overall exposure from various industrial and commercial facilities in a sector.

There are two types of technical standards:

- **Industry Standards** regulate all sources of a specified contaminant(s) within an industry sector.
- **Equipment Standards** address a source of contaminant but may apply to one or multiple industry sectors.

A facility that meets its obligations under a technical standard is in compliance with the regulation for the registered contaminants.

Technical Standard Process



How Is a Technical Standard Approved?

An industry sector may request the Ministry of the Environment develop a technical standard, or the ministry may identify certain sectors with emission sources that would be better controlled, monitored or managed by the technical standard compliance approach.

Once developed, a technical standard specifies the classes of facilities and the contaminants to which it applies, prescribes the steps to be taken to address the key sources of a contaminant and timeframes for implementation. A facility can also choose the contaminants for which it registers.

Operating under a Technical Standard

When a facility is registered to a technical standard, it must adhere to the technical and operational requirements that are published in the technical standard for managing emissions of the contaminant(s).

If all sources of a contaminant from a facility are addressed by one or more technical standards, and the facility is registered under these compliance approaches, then the facility is deemed to be in compliance with the regulation for those contaminants. If facilities emit contaminants from sources not considered under a technical standard, or if they are not registered for those contaminants, they must comply with the regulation either through the air standard or site-specific standard compliance approach.

Reporting requirements can also be included in the technical standard that is developed so facilities can demonstrate that they are maintaining an expected level of environmental performance.

Technical standards do not expire. The decision to update a technical standard may be based on the availability of newer technologies or updated science on a contaminant that suggests more controls are needed. Industry or community stakeholders may also request a review of a technical standard.

Community Consultation

Public transparency is an important element of the regulation.

Technical standards are developed with input from industry and the public. Each proposed technical standard is posted on the [Environmental Registry](#) for public comment. Where communities express an interest, the Ministry of the Environment will consider community consultation at key milestones.

Once developed, a facility can apply to register to the technical standard as their compliance approach for specified contaminants. All requests for registration are posted on the Environmental Registry for public comment.

Some facilities registering under a technical standard may be required by the Ministry of the Environment to host a local stakeholder meeting to inform and engage their local communities in their plans.

What is the outcome for this compliance approach?

Facilities in a sector that are operating under a technical standard may not meet one or more general air standards; however, the focus on best practices and lower emissions reduces risks to local communities. When we develop the technical standard, key sources of contaminants are identified and prescribed steps and timelines are established to address them. The steps taken may also reduce other contaminants. Some facilities may also choose to register under the technical standard for contaminants where they meet the general air standards. This allows them to be excluded from the modelling requirements and reduce regulatory burden.

In addition, the implementation of emissions controls in multiple facilities may contribute to regional air quality goals for criteria air contaminants and persistent pollutants. This approach also supports a transition to cleaner production in Ontario.

Where can I get more information?

For further information on technical standards and the registration process or [Ontario's Local Air Quality Regulation](#), please visit the Ministry of the Environment's web site at www.ontario.ca/ministry-environment or contact:

Public Information Centre
Ministry of the Environment
Tel: (416) 325-4000 or 1-800-565-4923
TTY Line (for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing):
416-326-9236 or 1-800-515-2759
Email: picemail.moe@ontario.ca

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