

coverage under a group health plan during FMLA leave or declines coverage under a group health plan during FMLA leave, does this affect the determination of whether or when the employee has experienced a qualifying event?

A-3: No. Any lapse of coverage under a group health plan during FMLA leave is irrelevant in determining whether a set of circumstances constitutes a qualifying event under Q&A-1 of this section or when such a qualifying event occurs under Q&A-2 of this section.

Q-4: Is the application of the rules in Q&A-1 through Q&A-3 of this section affected by a requirement of state or local law to provide a period of coverage longer than that required under FMLA?

A-4: No. Any state or local law that requires coverage under a group health plan to be maintained during a leave of absence for a period longer than that required under FMLA (for example, for 16 weeks of leave rather than for the 12 weeks required under FMLA) is disregarded for purposes of determining when a qualifying event occurs under Q&A-1 through Q&A-3 of this section.

Q-5: May COBRA continuation coverage be conditioned upon reimbursement of the premiums paid by the employer for coverage under a group health plan during FMLA leave?

A-5: No. The U.S. Department of Labor has published rules describing the circumstances in which an employer may recover premiums it pays to maintain coverage, including family coverage, under a group health plan during FMLA leave from an employee who fails to return from leave. See 29 CFR 825.213. Even if recovery of premiums is permitted under 29 CFR 825.213, the right to COBRA continuation coverage cannot be conditioned upon the employee's reimbursement of the employer for premiums the employer paid to maintain coverage under a group health plan during FMLA leave.

**Robert E. Wenzel,**

*Deputy Commissioner of Internal Revenue.*

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## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

### 40 CFR PART 63

[FRL-6230-1]

#### Section 112(l) Approval of the State of Florida's Construction Permitting Program

**AGENCY:** Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

**ACTION:** Proposed rule: Clarification.

**SUMMARY:** On February 1, 1996 (61 FR 3572), the Environmental Protection Agency published in the **Federal Register** a direct final rule for State Implementation Plan (SIP) and section 112(l) approval of the State of Florida's minor source operating permit program so that Florida could begin to issue federally-enforceable operating permits on a source's potential emissions and thereby avoid major source applicability. Today's action is taken to clarify that EPA's section 112(l) approval of the Florida minor source operating permit program extended to the State's minor source preconstruction permitting program as well as the operating permit program to allow Florida to issue both Federally-enforceable construction permits and Federally-enforceable operating permits pursuant to section 112 of the Clean Air Act (CAA) as amended in 1990. In the Final Rules Section of this **Federal Register**, the EPA is clarifying that the section 112(l) approval of the Florida minor source operating permit program extended to the State's minor source preconstruction permitting program as well as the operating permit program as a direct final rule without prior proposal because the Agency views this as a noncontroversial action and anticipates no adverse comments. A detailed rationale for the approval is set forth in the direct final rule. If no adverse comments are received in response to this action, no further activity is contemplated. If EPA receives adverse comments, the direct final rule will be withdrawn and all public comments received will be addressed in a subsequent final rule based on this proposed rule. The EPA will not institute a second comment period on this document. Any parties interested in commenting on this document should do so at this time.

**DATES:** Written comments must be received on or before March 5, 1999.

**ADDRESSES:** All comments should be addressed to: Lee Page, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4, Air and Radiation Technology Branch, Atlanta Federal Center, 61 Forsyth Street, SW, Atlanta, Georgia 30303; page.lee@epamail.epa.gov. Copies of Florida's original submittal and accompanying documentation are available for public review during normal business hours, at the address listed above.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Lee Page, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4, Air and Radiation Technology Branch, Atlanta Federal

Center, 61 Forsyth Street SW, Atlanta, GA 30303, Phone: (404) 562-9131; page.lee@epamail.epa.gov.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** For additional information, see the direct final rule which is published in the Rules section of this **Federal Register**.

Dated: November 13, 1998.

**A. Stanley Meiburg,**

*Acting Regional Administrator, Region 4.*

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## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

### 40 CFR Parts 90 and 91

[FRL-6229-3]

#### Control of Air Pollution: Minor Amendments to Emission Requirements Applicable to Small Nonroad Spark Ignition Engines and Marine Spark Ignition Engines

**AGENCY:** Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

**ACTION:** Notice of proposed rulemaking.

**SUMMARY:** This document proposes to amend provisions of two existing rules applicable to nonroad engines. This document proposes amendments to regulations applicable to small spark-ignition (Small SI) engines under 19 kilowatts (kW) and proposes specifically to revise the applicability of that rule to certain engines used in recreational applications and to revise the applicability of the handheld emission standards to accommodate cleaner but heavier four stroke engines. This document also proposes to amend regulations applicable to marine spark ignition (Marine SI) engines to provide compliance flexibility for small volume engine manufacturers during the standards phase in period. Lastly, this proposal contains a minor revision to the existing replacement engine provisions for Small SI and Marine SI engines to address issues that may arise concerning the importation of such engines. No significant air quality impact is expected from these amendments.

**DATES:** Written comments on this NPRM must be submitted on or before April 5, 1999. EPA will hold a public hearing on March 5, 1999 starting at 10:00 am; requests to present oral testimony must be received on or before March 1, 1999. The Agency will cancel this hearing if no one requests to testify. Members of the public should call the contact person indicated below to notify EPA of their interest in testifying at the hearing.