

for causing the terminal to be in violation. Each party would have the right to present an affirmative defense to rebut this presumption.

The prohibition against causing non-complying diesel fuel to be in the distribution system would apply, for example, if a refiner transfers non-complying diesel fuel to a pipeline. This prohibition could encompass situations where evidence shows high sulfur diesel fuel was transferred from an upstream party in the distribution system, but EPA may not have test results to establish that parties downstream also violated a prohibited act with this fuel.

The Agency would expect to enforce the liability scheme of the NRLM diesel sulfur rule in the same manner that we have enforced the similar liability schemes in our prior fuels regulations. As in other fuels programs, we would attempt to identify the party most responsible for causing the violation, recognizing that party should primarily be liable for penalties for the violation.

2. What Are the Proposed Liability Provisions for Additive Manufacturers and Distributors, and Parties That Blend Additives Into Diesel Fuel?

a. General

The final highway diesel rule permits the blending of diesel additives with sulfur content in excess of 15 ppm into 15 ppm highway diesel fuel under limited circumstances. As more fully discussed earlier in this preamble, this proposed rule would permit downstream parties to blend fuel additives having a sulfur content exceeding 15 ppm into 15 ppm nonroad diesel, provided that: (1) The blending of the additive does not cause the diesel fuel's sulfur content to exceed the 15 ppm sulfur standard; (2) the additive is added in an amount no greater than one volume percent of the blended product; and (3) the downstream party obtained from its additive supplier a product transfer document ("PTD") with the additive's sulfur content and the recommended treatment rate, and that it complied with such treatment rate.

Since the proposed rule would permit the limited use in nonroad diesel fuel of additives with high sulfur content, the Agency believes it would be more likely that a diesel fuel sulfur violation could be caused by the use of high sulfur additives. This could result from the additive manufacturer's misrepresentation or inaccurate statement of the additive's sulfur content or recommended treat rate on the additive's PTD, or an additive distributor's contamination of low

sulfur additives with high sulfur additives during transportation. The increased probability that parties in the diesel additive distribution system could cause a violation of the sulfur standard warrants the imposition by the Agency of increased liability for such parties. Therefore, the proposed rule, like the final highway diesel rule, would explicitly make parties in the diesel additive distribution system liable for the sale of nonconforming diesel fuel additives, even if such additives have not yet been blended into diesel fuel. In addition, the proposed rule would impose presumptive liability on parties in the additive distribution system if diesel fuel into which the additive has been blended is determined to have a sulfur level in excess of its permitted concentration. This presumptive liability would differ depending on whether the blended additive was designated as meeting the 15 ppm sulfur standard (a "15 ppm additive") or designated as a greater than 15 ppm sulfur additive (a "high sulfur additive"), as discussed below.

b. Liability When the Additive Is Designated as Complying With the 15 ppm Sulfur Standard

Additives blended into diesel fuel downstream of the refinery would be required to have a sulfur content no greater than 15 ppm, and be accompanied by PTD(s) accurately identifying them as complying with the 15 ppm sulfur standard, with the sole exception of diesel additives blended into nonroad diesel fuel at a concentration no greater than one percent by volume of the blended fuel.

All parties in the fuel and additive distribution systems would be subject to presumptive liability if the blended fuel exceeds the sulfur standard. The two ppm downstream adjustment would apply when EPA tests the fuel subject to the 15 ppm sulfur standard. Low sulfur additives present a less significant threat to diesel fuel sulfur compliance than would occur with the use of additives designated as possibly exceeding 15 ppm sulfur. Thus, parties in the additive distribution system of the low sulfur additive could rebut the presumption of liability by showing the following: (1) Additive distributors would only be required to produce PTDs stating that the additive complies with the 15 ppm sulfur standard; (2) additive manufacturers would also be required to produce PTDs complying in an accurate manner with the regulatory requirements, as well as producing test results, or retained samples on which tests could be run, establishing the additive's compliance with the 15 ppm

sulfur standard prior to leaving the manufacturer's control. Once their presumptive liability was refuted by producing such documentation in a convincing manner, these additive system parties would only be held responsible for the diesel fuel non-conformity in situations in which EPA can establish that the party actually caused the violation.

Under this proposed rule, parties in the diesel fuel distribution system would have the typical affirmative defenses of other fuels rules. For parties blending an additive into their diesel fuel, the requirement of producing PTDs showing that the product complied with the regulatory standards would necessarily include PTDs for the additive that was used, affirming the compliance of the additive and the fuel.

c. Liability When The Additive Is Designated as Having a Possible Sulfur Content Greater Than 15 ppm

Under this proposed rule, a nonroad diesel additive would be permitted to have a maximum sulfur content above 15 ppm if the blended fuel continues to meet the 15 ppm standard and the additive is used at a concentration no greater than one volume percent of the blended fuel. However, if nonroad diesel fuel containing that additive is found by EPA to have high sulfur content, then all the parties in both the additive and the fuel distribution chains would be presumed liable for causing the nonroad diesel fuel violation.

Since this type of high sulfur additive presents a much greater probability of causing diesel fuel non-compliance, parties in the additive's distribution system would have to satisfy an additional element to establish an affirmative defense. In addition to the elements of an affirmative defense described above, parties in the additive distribution system for such a high sulfur additive would also be required to establish that they did not cause the violation, an element of an affirmative defense that is typically required in EPA fuel programs to rebut presumptive liability.

Parties in the diesel fuel distribution system would essentially have to establish the same affirmative elements as in other fuels rules, with an addition comparable to the highway diesel rule. Blenders of high sulfur additives into 15 ppm sulfur nonroad diesel fuel, would have to establish a more rigorous quality control program than would exist without the addition of such a high sulfur additive. The Agency believes that parties blending high sulfur additives into their 15 ppm sulfur nonroad diesel fuel should be required