When looking at the key DRIVERS in today's boiler industry, we find four: energy conservation, emission reduction, reliability and safety. Although these are of equal importance for a well-run boiler operation, the emissions factor is often overlooked because it is primarily driven by government mandate—*tying into the often-amended Clean Air Act of 1963 ("the Act").*

Keeping abreast of the Act's amendments is critical, and any sound training program will have emissions as part of the curriculum (i.e., imparting the ongoing essentials needed for determining if the [dynamic] changes may affect your operation). Such is the case with what occurred recently (Area Source Rule, March 21, 2011). In this change, the Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") called for owners of all fuel-fired boilers of various sizes to take specific steps to assure higher air-quality standards.

This new rule divides subject equipment into fuel categories (Oil/Biomass, Natural Gas and Coal) and boiler horsepower above or below approximately 300. Operators of such boilers are required to submit an "Initial Notification of Applicability" to the EPA by September 17, 2011. Then, depending on fuel type and horsepower, the operator may be required to take certain steps to run its referenced boilers without violation. Some of these requirements include:

- For oil burning in excess of 48 hours per year, the burner must be tuned annually, the fuel has to be metered and a one-time energy assessment needs to be performed.
- For natural gas-fired boilers, the fuel has to be metered.
- For coal-fired boilers, the fuel has to be metered and must meet maximum requirements for mercury (Hg), carbon monoxide (CO) and particulate.

As noted in previous installments of this column, "knowledge is power." Ongoing boiler training is an excellent way to assure that all boiler-operating personnel are properly informed about the essentials of keeping their equipment safe, reliable, energy-efficient and compliant with clean-air regulations. It's all about staying ahead of the curve—*when you are, all drivers are aligned* . That translates into boilers that run safely, reliably, efficiently and in compliance with environmental regulations. This not only makes good operational sense, it makes good economic "cents!"
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