

Ask the Expert

Question:

Don Dickens, Halton Chemical Inc.

I understand that small and medium sized businesses will have to reduce their carbon footprint in the near future and want to know if we have any info on how to measure that?

Answer:

Hicham Elhalaby, M.Eng., P.Eng., Manager, Climate Change GHG, Pinchin Environmental Ltd

The new regulations are targeting facilities that emit more than 25,000 tonne of CO₂e on the provincial level and 50,000 tonnes of CO₂e on the federal level. Also, there are specific sectors that are being targeted. For example, in Ontario, the new regulations are expected to affect about 300 facilities that will be required to reduce their carbon footprint. The provinces will also be working/encouraging facilities that emit more than 10,000 tonnes of CO₂e to report on their emissions.

I am not sure of the size of the businesses referenced in your question below but one option is for these manufacturing companies to consider completing a carbon footprint assessment to get a better understanding of whether they will be impacted by the new regulations or not. Please note that the emissions level above will mostly affect large facilities.

Regarding reduction options in general for GHG emissions whether covered or outside the regulations, there are many. As example, businesses might want to consider the following:

- Reductions from suppliers
- Reducing energy use
- Reducing transportation emissions
- Reducing/changing material inputs
- Reduce travel practices
- Reduce Use of product/services
- Reduce Disposal of products
- Improving operational efficiency
- Purchase offsets

These are some options. The approach to go about it is to map all sources, identify the most significant ones, and then develop a strategy for reduction. Note that only select GHG sources are covered under the new proposed regulations.

Regarding calculators, there are numerous on the internet but you need to know how to use them. One option is to search Environment Canada or NRcan for GHG calculators.