

China tightens pollution control with discharge permits

China released a list of industries that need to obtain licenses before discharging pollutants Thursday.

The list specified the deadlines for stationary sources of pollution in 82 industries to get licenses and named sectors to be focal points of management in a statement by the Ministry of Environmental Protection.

Thermal power stations and paper-making enterprises were among the first required to operate with the permits, with more than 5,100 licenses already issued.

From the second half of this year, 13 industries including the steel and chemical sectors must apply for the permits. All 82 industries should have licenses by 2020.

By issuing the licenses, environmental authorities will specify the location and number of pollutant discharge outlets for companies, the method and direction of discharge, as well as set ceilings on the variety, concentration and amount of pollutants.

Companies in breach of the policy may face fines up to 1 million yuan (about 150,000 U.S. dollars) or the suspension of operations. Actions that hamper supervision, such as the damaging of monitoring devices and failing to keep original monitoring records, will also be punished.

China is fighting pollution and environmental degradation after decades of growth left the country with problems such as smog and contaminated soil.

The central government has been stepping up supervision of environmental violations while setting detailed tasks to clean up polluted air, water and soil.