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PROPOSED BAN OF POLYCYCLIC AROMATIC HYDROCARBONS (PAHS) IN CONSUMER ARTICLES

In June 2010, Germany formally urged the European Commission to impose restrictions for eight PAH substances in articles that could be used by consumers¹. Recently, the draft commission regulation has been released². The restriction proposal was discussed in November in the REACH Comitology Committee and the vote of the committee is expected in January 2013. The proposal is expected to be adopted in the second half of 2013.

The draft regulation to amend entry 50 of REACH Annex XVII will be to add rubber or plastic components, including toys, sports equipment, household utensils, tools for domestic use, clothing, and watch straps to the entry. This only will apply if the stated items come into direct and prolonged contact with human skin or oral cavities under normal or reasonably foreseeable conditions of use. The limits will be 1 mg/kg (0.0001% by weight of this component) of any of the listed PAHs.

Highlights of the draft Regulation are summarised in Table 1.



¹ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/reach/pdf/minutes-100615-17_en.pdf

² http://members.wto.org/cnattachments/2012/tbt/EEC/12_4272_01_e.pdf

TABLE 1.

PROPOSED REGULATION TO EXPAND ENTRY 50 ON PAHS UNDER ANNEX XVII OF REACH					
JURISDICTION	PAH	CAS NO.	SCOPE	REQUIREMENT	EFFECTIVE DATE
EU	Benzo[a]pyrene (BaP)	50-32-8	Rubber or plastic components in articles that come into direct and prolonged contact with human skin or oral cavity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apparel, footwear, gloves and sportswear • Household utensils, trolleys, walking frames • Sports equipment • Tools for domestic use • Toys • Watch-straps, wrist-bands, masks, head-bands 	≤ 1 mg/kg (each PAH)	2 years after date of entry into force
	Benzo[e]pyrene (BeP)	192-79-2			
	Benzo[a]anthracene (BaA)	56-55-3			
	Chrysen (CHR)	218-01-9			
	Benzo[b]fluoranthene (BbFA)	205-99-2			
	Benzo[j]fluoranthene (BjFA)	205-82-3			
	Benzo[k]fluoranthene (BkFA)	207-08-9			
	Dibenzo[a,h]anthracene (DBAhA)	53-70-3			

PAHs are a group of substances classified as carcinogenic, mutagenic or toxic to reproduction (CRM), and are currently restricted as regards their use and marketing in extender oils and tyres under the REACH Regulation (entry 50 of Annex XVII). PAHs are not intentionally-added substances, but are present as impurities in raw materials such as carbon black and extender oils. Therefore, they are commonly found in oil, coal and tar deposits used for the production of tyres and plastic or rubber product components.

Once the restriction has been adopted by the European Parliament and Council according to the comitology procedure, it will become the first example of the "fast track" restriction procedure outlined in Article 68.2 of REACH that allows a quick restriction (without a proper risk assessment), if a compound is considered to be of particularly hazardous nature.



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