



How to obtain better information about chemicals in products



Why your company needs to know what chemicals are contained in your products

All products, materials and articles contain chemical substances. The substances produced or extracted from nature by humans have contributed to increased welfare. But some of them also cause serious harm to human health and the environment.

Products and components are bought and sold all over the world. International collaboration is required in order to gain better control over dangerous chemical substances in products. For this reason, a global collaboration network of companies, governments, government agencies and civil society representatives has been set up to provide better information about chemicals. This collaboration is called the Chemicals in Products (CiP) Programme and is coordinated by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

As a manufacturer and importer of products, you can participate in the programme and get support with processes and systems to increase the information about chemical substances in your products. Doing so is a way to contribute to sustainability and a better environment. You are contributing to products being safely manufactured, used and recycled. The goal is for everyone to be able to make active choices in order to reduce the risks to human health and the environment.

What is a product?

A product is defined as an object which during production is given a special shape, surface or design which determines its function to a greater degree than does its chemical composition. The EU's REACH regulation consistently uses "article" rather than "product".

Why should I work to improve information?

There are many benefits for your company in working systematically to improve the information about chemical substances in products:

- It will be easier for you to meet the statutory requirements in place.
- You will be better able to contribute correct and relevant answers to questions from customers and government agencies.
- It improves waste management and the recycling of materials, which is a condition for sustainable development.
- It can lead to financial gains.
- You will have a greater chance of opting out of unwanted substances.
- You will feel confident going into inspections and audits.
- Your company will be better prepared when legislative measures come into force.

What statutory requirements are in place today?

- Mandatory requirements regarding the substances in products exist in several EU regulations, including:
- The REACH regulation (Regulation (EC) No. 1907/2006): Annex XVII on restrictions and the duty to communicate information set out in Article 33.
- The RoHS Directive (2011/65/EU): restrictions on the use of hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment.
- The Toy Safety Directive (2009/48/EC): special requirements regarding the content and migration of hazardous substances.
- The Biocidal Products Regulation (Regulation (EU) No 528/2012): information regarding active substances in biocidal products.

More information on legislation can be found on the Swedish Chemicals Agency's website www.kemikalieinspektionen.se.

What can we do as a company?

Guidance

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) provides guidance for companies that want a system for better knowledge of the chemicals contained in products. This [guidance document](#) can be found at the website www.unep.org.

The guidance document gives examples of how different industries have collaborated and what support systems are in place, such as databases and substance lists. The document also shows what measures are required in the system construction phase. It details how you can work with substance selection, how to provide information and which information is suitable to communicate. It also provides general support on how to start working systematically to increase your knowledge in this area.

Selecting substances

The minimum level of knowledge that you need to have when you manufacture and import products is information about the substances that are covered by legal requirements.

If you acquire more knowledge than you are legally required to, your company can work proactively to identify substances and choose to phase out substances that are undesirable due to health or environment considerations. A common approach is for companies to make their own lists of unwanted substances. The guidance document contains information about different ways of selecting substances and different lists to assist you.

Guarantee disclosal of information

It is important to maintain an active dialogue with suppliers and customers. The most common way of exchanging information is to utilise established relationships. This requires commitment from all parties and your company must be capable of getting business partners involved and describing how and why you want to work with the exchange of information, how it is to be used and how you will ensure that the information is handled in a safe way, i.e. confidentially, when necessary.

Formulating and communicating the company policy, training staff and establishing contacts with customers are a few ways of making headway. The guidance document gives you more detailed advice.

Check that the information is reliable

It is important for your company to verify the information you get about the chemicals in various products. This information should be both up-to-date and relevant. One way of ensuring quality is to check that your supplier has a quality management system. You can also ask your suppliers to show some form of third-party verification. You may need to carry out random checks to make sure that the information you receive is correct. The guidance document provides more detailed advice in this regard.

Your company can make a contribution

If you want to work proactively and systematically to get access to relevant and reliable information about the substances contained in your products and actively exchange information about chemicals in products, your company can use the Chemicals in Products (CiP) Programme.

UNEP coordinates, disseminates information, educates and provides good examples. UNEP publishes information about how stakeholders work to improve information exchange on chemicals in products. In order to develop the programme further, industry stakeholders are encouraged to share information of their progress on a voluntary basis with UNEP.

The goal is for anyone who handles products to have knowledge of their contents, for them to share that knowledge and be able to verify the information provided.

Find out more

Read more about the [goals of the Chemicals in Products \(CiP\) Programme](#) and the roles that companies and other stakeholders can assume at www.unep.org.

Information about regulations for companies that manufacture or import goods can be found on the the Swedish Chemicals Agency's website, www.kemikalieinspektionen.se.

More information about the global chemicals strategy SAICM can be found at www.saicm.org.



An illustration of a mobile phone's life cycle, from design and production to sale, use, waste management and recycling. In order to achieve sustainable development, information regarding the chemicals in the mobile phone must be communicated between all parties involved, so that they can handle it safely at all stages of the process. The central principle is that all stakeholders are to have access to relevant and reliable information in order to make well-informed decisions about the substances used in products.

KEMI
Swedish Chemicals Agency

The Swedish Chemicals Agency is supervisory authority under the Swedish Government. We work in Sweden, the EU and internationally to develop legislation and other incentives to promote good health and improved environment. We monitor compliance of applicable rules on chemical products, pesticides and substances in articles and carry out inspections. We review and authorise pesticides before they can be used. Our environmental quality objective is A Non-toxic Environment.

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Article number: 511 242