

**Hazardous chemicals  
in everyday products –  
we have the right to know!**



**THINK BEFORE YOU BUY**  
[WWW.THINKBEFORE.EU](http://WWW.THINKBEFORE.EU)

European Union is most advanced in protecting its citizens from hazardous substances found in our products. It has the strictest regulation (REACH) and every year it moves forward. In European Union everyone has the right to know whether the product he is interested in contains any hazardous chemicals and how to use it safely.

## REACH and substances of very high concern

European Union has a lot of legal acts regulating product safety and chemicals in the products. One of the most important is REACH regulation (EC 1907/2006) about registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemicals.

REACH is a regulation of the European Union, adopted to improve the protection of human health and the environment from the risks that can be posed by chemicals. It also promotes alternative methods for the hazard assessment of substances in order to reduce the number of tests on animals.

According to REACH regulation, the most hazardous chemicals – **substances of very high concern, SVHC** – are those that:

- cause cancer (carcinogens)
- change our DNA (mutagens)
- damage fertility or the foetus (toxic to reproduction)
- break down in the environment very slowly, can accumulate in the body or may be toxic (persistent, bioaccumulative, toxic)

- may have serious effect on human health or the environment which give rise to an equivalent level of concern to the hazards named above, for example endocrine disrupting properties

These chemicals are included in the Candidate List - <http://echa.europa.eu/candidate-list-table> - and public has to be informed about them.

## Article 33

REACH regulation Article 33 obliges suppliers to communicate information about substances of very high concern that may be present in their articles and gives consumers the right to request that information. When requested for information, suppliers are obliged to tell within 45 days if their product contains REACH's Candidate List chemicals in concentration of more than 0,1% of its weight. The supplier must also give consumers enough information to be able to use the product safely. Information can be requested before or after buying a product. This gives consumers the possibility to make more informed and safer choices!



## Everyone can influence producers or suppliers

Using consumers „right to know” helps to change how companies make products, what they put in them and even what kinds of products are available in the shops. Public pressure works often faster and more effectively than regulations. Producers need to understand that consumers want safer products.

## Requesting information

You can request information about the substances of very high concern in the product either directly from the shop where you bought the product or from its producer or supplier. The best way to make your request is in written form. Following information should be presented in your written request:

- The exact name/description of the product, bar code, producer/supplier of the product you are interested in;
- Ask for information about the presence of any substances on the REACH Candidate List above 0.1 % weight by weight in the product or in its packaging.

If any of these substances are present in the product, the producer or supplier needs to provide you with sufficient information within 45 days, to allow you to use the product safely. This is required by Article 33(2) of the REACH regulation. You can include a reference to the website of the European Chemicals Agency, ECHA, where they can find more information about their obligations under the REACH regulation - <http://echa.europa.eu/>.



## Example of the letter to the supplier

Contacts of the supplier

Date

Information request regarding substances of very high concern in the product

Dear \_\_\_\_\_(company name) management

According to the REACH regulation (EC 1907/2006) Article 33, every consumer has the right to ask from the supplier if their product contains hazardous chemicals from the Candidate List of substances of very high concern in concentration of more than 0,1% of its weight.

I would like you to inform me about the presence of any substances of very high concern in the following product you are supplying:  
\_\_\_\_\_ (detailed information about the product: product name, producer, series, bar code).

If any of these hazardous chemicals is present in your product, REACH regulation requires that you name them, and give me sufficient information to allow safe use of the product, within 45 days.

I would be grateful if you would also tell me about what other hazardous chemicals may be in this product or what you are doing to offer this or similar products which do not contain them. Please notify me each time when the product composition has been changed.

More information on your obligations under REACH you can find from National REACH helpdesk here: <http://echa.europa.eu/web/guest/support/helpdesks/national-helpdesks/list-of-national-helpdesks>

Sincerely,

Your name and contacts

If you do not receive an answer within 45 days, please contact your national REACH helpdesk. Contacts you can find here: <http://echa.europa.eu/web/guest/support/helpdesks/national-helpdesks/list-of-national-helpdesks>

## Information you should receive from the supplier

REACH obliges the supplier to provide information to consumers about the safe use of the product. Consumer has the right to know at least the name of the substance of very high concern that the product contains.

The obligation of informing the consumers covers only these substances of very high concern in the REACH Candidate List that are present in concentration of more than 0,1% weight by weight. This means that suppliers are not obliged to inform you about other substances in the product or if an SVHC is present at a lower concentration. They can, however, do this on a voluntary basis.

## Examples of substances of very high concern in products

Hazardous chemical	Possible health effects	Uses in products
Formamide	Damages central nervous system, irritates eyes and skin, increases cancer risk	Products made of EVA (ethylene vinyl acetate) plastic: puzzle mats, gymnastics mats, beach slippers
Phthalates (bis(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate, benzyl butyl phthalate, diisobutyl phthalate, bis(2-methoxyethyl) phthalate, diisopentylphthalate, N-pentyl-isopentylphthalate, dipentyl phthalate, dihexyl phthalate)	Disrupts development and the hormone system. Impairs fertility	Products made of PVC (polyvinyl chloride) plastic: toys, automotive components, building materials, vinyl flooring, furniture, pool liners and garden hoses, cosmetics (perfume and nail polish), footwear, outdoor clothing and rain wear, inflatable products, sporting goods
Pentadecafluorooctanoic acid (PFOA)	Disrupts development and the hormone system, may cause cancer	Cook wear with non-sticking surface, textile, wires, cables, electronics, semiconductors
Brominated flame retardants (deca-BDE)	Persistent, bio-accumulative, toxic. Disrupts the hormone system	Electronic equipment, plastic covers of television sets, carpets

## More information

Campaign „Think before you buy“ -  
[www.thinkbefore.eu/en/](http://www.thinkbefore.eu/en/)

REACH helpdesk -  
[echa.europa.eu/support/helpdesks](http://echa.europa.eu/support/helpdesks)



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