

Welcome to Leather Update.....

MAR 2009

It is hard to believe that we are almost into the second quarter of the year and as many of us prepare to travel to Hong Kong for the Asia Pacific Leather Fair (and for some the Rugby Sevens) we are all looking forward to a positive experience as the show celebrates its 25th Anniversary.

VISIT BLC IN HALL 1, STAND 1E07— WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE!

This issue of Update brings you information on CPSC tracking, DMF, organotins, REACH, leather training courses and the 2009 Global Market Study for the leather Industry.



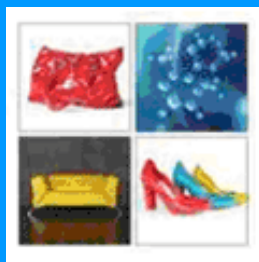
CPSC tracking labels for children's products

The CPSC has put forward a request for comments on the implementation of Section 103 of the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA) regarding Tracking Labels for Children's Products. Section 103, effective from 14 August 2009, aims to implement a nationally accepted and uniform system of labelling products aimed at children under the age of 12. Permanent and distinguishable marks on the product and packaging will be required to contain information such as location and date of production, batch numbers and run numbers. This will allow for traceability of the product, and will also allow improved information for consumers in the event of a product recall.

The CPSC has requested comments specifically relating to "practicable" implementation of the system, as well as comments on how the information should be presented (in English, numerically or electronically). The deadline for comments is 27 April 2009.

Contact tracey@blcleathertech.com or +44 (0) 1604 679967

Effective leather sourcing conference
30 March 2009 (pm)
Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre



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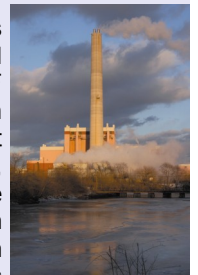
Dimethyl Fumarate

Dimethyl fumarate, also known as DMF, is an ester of Fumaric acid with a chemical formula of $C_6H_8O_4$. DMF has good antifungal properties, and has been used as a mould inhibitor in sachets for footwear and furniture. Recently, DMF has been highlighted as being an allergenic sensitiser causing eczema at low concentrations. As a result, member states have voted in favour of a draft European Commission decision to ensure that products containing DMF are not placed on the EU market and a ban on the import of products containing dimethyl fumarate is likely to be enforced



Dimethyl Formamide

Dimethyl formamide, also abbreviated to DMF, is a volatile organic compound with the chemical formula C_3H_7NO . The most common use of DMF is as a solvent in chemical reactions, primarily in the production of plastics and polyurethane. It also has uses in the manufacture of adhesives, solvent dyes, synthetic leather and surface coatings. Exposure to DMF has been shown in studies by the US Environmental Protection Agency to cause dermatitis, however this relates to acute exposure to DMF in its chemical form, and not to products and articles. The release of DMF into the environment is controlled in Europe under the Hazardous Waste Directive, but there are no plans to restrict the use of DMF in the production of consumer articles now, or in the future



For testing or further information contact tracey@blcleathertech.com or +44 (0) 1604 679967

RESTRICTED SUBSTANCE - FACT SHEET

All you need to know about.....

Organotins

Introduction

Organotins (also known as organic tin or organostannic compounds) are a large family of chemical compounds with a structure that is based on tin (Sn) with a number of hydrocarbon substituents. These compounds have many uses in the production of consumer products and, depending on their composition, have uses ranging from antifungal agents to stabilisers in the production of plastics.

Although organotin compounds have a large scope of uses depending on the wide range of possible structures available, certain compounds have been highlighted by the EU as having adverse effects on human health and the environment. As a result, the Commission of European Communities has put together a proposal to restrict the use of organostannic compounds in consumer articles.

Organotin properties and uses

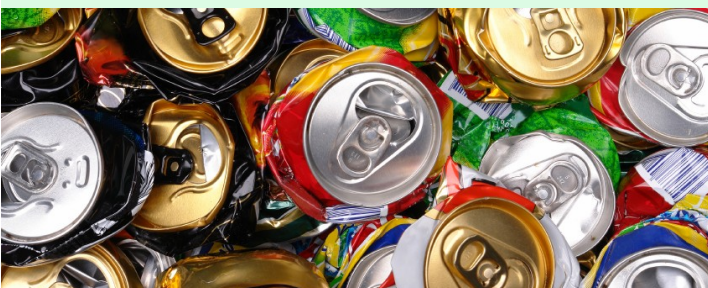
There are four main classes of organotin compounds classified by the number of organic groups bound to the tin atom:

Tetra-substituted organotins – These compounds are very stable and are used as the starting materials for catalysts. Although they have low toxicity and are unusable as biocides, they can be metabolised to form toxic tri-substituted compounds.

Tri-substituted organotins – These are toxic compounds such as tributyltin (TBT) and triphenyltin (TPT). Depending on the organic groups bound to the tin, they can be used as effective fungicides, for example TBT is an industrial fungicide used in the manufacture of textiles and paper. Historically, TBT and TPT were used as biocides in antifouling paints for ships, however, they were found to pose risks to the aquatic environment through endocrine (hormone) disruption, and as a result, have been banned in the EU for use in anti-fouling paints for ships, and as biocides in the aquatic environment. Trialkyltins are also banned for use as biocides in agriculture due to their high plant toxicity. Organotins are not found naturally in the environment and biocide applications are the biggest contributor of organotins in waterways, due to problems such as leaching from soil sprayed with molluscicide formulations, and from anti-fouling paints. TBT is still used as a biocide in small amounts in the textile industry, for example as a fungicide on textiles exposed to extreme weather conditions, such as canvas or sportswear.

Di-substituted organotins – These compounds, such as dioctyltin (DOT) and dibutyltin (DBT) are widely used as heat stabilisers and catalysts in the production of polyurethane (PU) and polyvinyl chloride (PVC). As PVC is inherently thermally unstable, the organotin-based heat stabilisers are added to stop fragmentation and cure any existing damage. They can also help to maintain the materials stability to light during use. Di-substituted organotins have no use as fungicides, and apart from DPT, they exhibit low antibacterial activity.

Mono-substituted organotins – These have low toxicity, and certain compounds such as methyl tin and butyl tin are used as PVC heat stabilisers.



The risks and legislation

Certain organotin structures have low toxicity to humans and certain complexes are even being studied as possible anti-cancer drugs; however, studies have shown that organostannic compounds in consumer articles pose a risk to human health, especially in children.

Tin in its metallic form is not very toxic due to its poor gastrointestinal absorption. Contact with certain tri-substituted organotins, such as triethyltin, through inhaling, swallowing or skin contact can interfere with the way the brain and the immune system work. In severe cases, with chronic exposure, it can result in death. In addition, organotin compounds have been studied as obesogens (compounds that promote obesity in humans) as they disrupt endocrine control and can disrupt fat breakdown regulation.

The Commission of European Communities has recently conducted an assessment into the health risks associated with environmental exposure to organotin compounds through manufacture and product use. The study focused on triphenyltin, tributyltin, dioctyltin and dibutyltin in particular, as these have been detected in a wide variety of consumer articles such as textiles, footwear, nappies and feminine hygiene products. Both di- and tri-substituted organotins affect human health by immunotoxicity via the thymus gland, and act in a cumulative way. Tri-substituted organotins affect health more rapidly than DOT and DBT as they have greater potency.

As a result of the risk assessment, the EU is proposing to restrict the use of organotin compounds in consumer articles under Annex I of the Directive 76/769/EEC, in order to reduce the risk to human health. The restrictions will be phased in, with the organotin compounds causing the most risk coming into force first. The proposal states that:

Tri-substituted organotin compounds emitted from consumer articles not only affect human health, but also have adverse effects on the environment, and therefore severe restrictions should be imposed. Tri-substituted organotins shall not be used in consumer articles where their concentration in the article or component is greater than 0.1% by weight of tin, after 1 July 2010.

Certain dibutyltin compounds, such as dibutyltin chloride, will soon be prohibited from sale in substances and mixtures under a different piece of European legislation, as they are also toxic to reproduction. Restrictions will be placed on articles containing DBT compounds, but will allow for an additional period of time where no suitable alternative can be found. The proposal states that after 1 January 2012 articles and mixtures containing DBT in concentrations of above 0.1% by weight of tin will be banned. The legislation will not apply to PVC coated fabrics for outdoor use, and to coatings for articles that use DBT compounds as catalysts until the 1 January 2015.

Dioctyltin compounds shall also be restricted for use after 1 January 2012 in textiles and footwear that come into contact with the skin, along with gloves, childcare articles and female hygiene products. DOT compounds shall not be used in these articles, where the concentration in the article or component is greater than 0.1% by weight of tin.

Conclusion

Due to the adverse effects of certain organotin compounds to human health and the environment, the EU proposes to ban their use in the manufacture of certain consumer products. If accepted by the Commission, the legislation will come into force on the 1 July 2010, restricting the use of TBT and TPT, followed by restrictions to the use of DBT and DOT on 1 January 2012.

Contact tracey@blcleathertech.com or +44 (0) 1604 679967

BLC Training dates in 2009..... an opportunity not to be missed

Half Day Mould in Leather 21 Apr

Gain an understanding of mould causes, how the problem can be prevented & when it occurs. There will be presentations of different mould types, an overview of how the problem is investigated and how you can trace the origin of the cause.

Half Day Why Test? 22 Apr

This half day workshop will give a clear understanding of how to assess products for testing. The course is designed to allow technicians to recognise critical testing of products to ensure they are fit for sale.

1 Day Understanding Leather 28 Apr

Perfect for those new to the leather industry and also for designers, buyers and retailers of leather products, this course offers an ideal grounding of information and knowledge on leather as a material.

LONDON BASED COURSE

1 Day Garment Construction, Drycleaning & Aftercare 29 Apr

This course gives an in depth explanation of different hides and skins and their suitability for purpose for garments. Aimed at people who would like a further insight to standard leather types and how they perform in the fashion market. It will allow you to reduce problems or customer complaints through clear supplier specifications.



5 Day Intensive Leather Technology 11-15 May

An ideal refresher for existing technologist or a comprehensive introduction to leather technology for those who are new to the industry or need to rapidly expand their knowledge. Aimed at all sectors of the supply chain, from tanners to manufacturers and retailers, the course provides a fundamental understanding of the leather making process, working through all the stages of leather production both theoretical and practical, and using a range of presentations team working hands-on problem solving and case studies.

For more information contact

Tracey Faulkner +44 (0) 1604 679967 or visit
www.blcleathertech.com

LOOK OUT FOR INFORMATION ON LEATHER TRAINING COURSES IN HONG KONG ON

**WEDNESDAY 6 MAY
THURSDAY 7 MAY**

Contact tracey@blcleathertech.com
or +44 (0) 1604 679967



REACH Regulations

Substances of Very High Concern

On the 14 January 2009, the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) published a candidate list of seven priority substances of very high concern to be included in Annex XIV of the REACH regulations. This means that, once included in the regulations, the use of these seven substances will be subject to authorisation, and once granted, registration with the ECHA will be required. The aim is to encourage the use of alternatives, and ultimately the removal of the chemicals from the supply chain after 4 years.

The ECHA must receive comments regarding the ECHA's justification on inclusion of the seven priority SVHC by interested parties by the 14 April 2009. After this time the decision for inclusion will be made, and the Annex will then be updated every second year.

The seven priority chemicals to be considered are:

- 5-*tert*-butyl-2,4,6-trinitro-*m*-xylene (xylene musk)
- 4,4-Diaminodiphenylmethane (MDA)
- C10-13 Chloroalkanes
- Hexabromocyclododecane
- *Bis*(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate
- Benzyl butyl phthalate
- Dibutyl phthalate

It is our understanding that a REACH screen test will still require analysis for all 15 SVHC and the requirements will still be <0.1% by weight of article. The aim of prioritisation of the 7 SVHC is to encourage the use of alternative chemicals, and ultimately to remove these chemicals from the supply chain after 4 years.

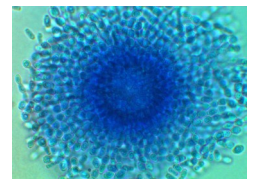
Directive 76/769/EC

On the 1 June 2009 the Directive 76/769/EC, which places restrictions on use of substances, such as Azo dyes, will be repealed and replaced by the list of chemicals found in Annex XVII of the REACH regulations. The purpose of this is to harmonise the legislation regarding the "manufacture, placing on the market and use of certain dangerous substances, preparations and articles". The limits and restrictions should not change and the same testing protocols for consumer articles regarding the appropriate restricted substances will still be required.

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Coming up next time.

All you need to know about mould...



Disclaimer BLC Leather Technology Centre Ltd has made all reasonable efforts to ensure the accuracy of the information provided. However, the information should not be relied upon as legal advice or regarded as a substitute for legal advice. Due care and attention should be exercised when using this information.

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