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REACH – Surface Cleaning Industry Update

Solvents for surface cleaning – such as brominated, fluorinated, chlorinated and modified alcohol solvents – have favourable properties which make them widely used in this field. Despite cleaning and process requirements, the legal status, especially under REACH, becomes more and more a significant driver for choosing the right solvent for cleaning applications.

In the following paragraphs you will find some information about the recent developments and current status under REACH for different solvents.

Chlorinated Hydrocarbons

Perchloroethylene (PER):

ECHA's "Substance Evaluation Report for Perchloroethylene" published in October 2014 concludes, based on the REACH registration dossier, that **no further regulatory actions like authorisation or restriction is needed at EU level**. PER was one of the few substances that came out of this evaluation with no further information requested.

PER is **not** considered as Substance of Very High Concern (SVHC). Therefore companies can continue to use the solvent which is, due to its excellent solvency power and easy and efficient recycling behavior, still considered as the benchmark in the industry. In order to continue using the substance according to REACH, users need to ensure the strict compliance with risk management measures or instructions on uses which are specified in the registration dossier or extended safety data sheet.

Trichloroethylene (TRI):

The use of TRI after April 21st, 2016 (Sunset Date) is only allowed if an authorisation for the relevant use is granted. ECHA published their final opinion on the application submitted by Dow/SAFECEM for the use of TRI in industrial parts cleaning by vapour degreasing in September 2015 and suggested a review period of 7 years. Now the application for authorisation is under review by the European Commission.

Nevertheless, Article 58 (1) (c) (ii) of the REACH legislation outlines that users can benefit from transitional arrangements if the application for authorisation was submitted prior the so called "Latest Application Date". Dow/SAFECEM submitted the application for authorisation prior this Latest Application Date, a date 18 months before the Sunset Date. Therewith all users who require to continue using TRI after the Sunset Date and are in compliance with all requirements from Dow/SAFECEM's authorisation dossier can continue to use TRI until the European Commission has taken the final decision.



1-Bromopropane / n-propylbromide (n-PB)

At the end of September 2016 the European Commission drafted the amendment of Annex XIV including n-PB due to the classification as toxic for reproduction (category 1B), hence it is a Substance of Very High Concern (SVHC). According to the principles of REACH n-PB can therefore not be considered as a drop-in replacement for TRI.

The amendment proposed a sunset date for n-PB of 36 months after inclusion into the Annex XIV. After the sunset date, the use of n-PB is only allowed, if an authorisation is granted for the specific use. A final decision is expected still in December this year.

Alkoxy-propanols

Alkoxy-propanols are synthetic solvents also known as modified alcohols. These solvents provide excellent cleaning results for many applications due to their balanced ability to dissolve polar and nonpolar substances. These products have a low toxicity and a good environmental profile and are therefore not considered as SVHC.

Alkoxy-propanols have been registered for surface cleaning and dry cleaning applications respectively.

To learn more about the different kinds of solvent, please visit www.CHEMAWARE.org or contact SAFECHEM Europe GmbH for expert information.