

GERMANY BANS CHROMIUM (VI) IN LEATHER PRODUCTS

Chromium (VI) is a chromium species in the oxidation state +6. It is a hazardous substance which is carcinogenic, mutagenic and toxic for reproduction. It also can cause skin irritation when in close skin contact. In the past chromium (VI) containing salts of chromic acid have been used for leather tanning leaving some residue in the leather. Most leathers are still tanned by using chromium salts but chromium (VI) has been replaced by safer alternatives, e.g. by using chromium (III) salts for tanning. Due to a potential conversion process of chromium (III) to chromium (VI) this is still occasionally found in consumer products during market surveillance¹ - especially working gloves.

European Union Regulation (EC) No. 552/2009 (REACH Annex XVII) restricts chromium (VI) substances under No. 47, however, this is currently limited to non-consumer products². In order to strengthen consumer protection there has been an initiative by Germany to cover consumer products made from leather as well.

In January 2009, Germany proposed to restrict chromium (VI) in leather materials in toys and other consumer products. The recent adoption of this proposal amended the German Consumer Goods Ordinance (18 BedGgstVÄndV)³. Verification of the chromium (VI) content shall be done by using the method § 64 LFGB 82.02-11 B⁴.

Highlights of the new law are summarized in Table 1.

Substance	Scope	Method	Requirement	Effective Date
Chromium (VI)	Leather materials in consumer products with body contact e.g. Toys Neck Pouches Clothing Watch straps Chair covers Bags and Backpacks	§ 64 LFGB 82.02-11 B	≤ 3 mg/kg	14 August 2010

¹ [Rapex—Latest notifications](#)

² [Commission regulation \(EC\) No 552/2009 of 22 June 2009](#)

³ [Bundesgesetzblatt I: No. 42 of 03.08.2010; P. 1138](#)

⁴ [Germany Proposes to Ban Chromium \(VI\) in Consumer Products, Safeguards 65/09](#), SGS Consumer Testing Services, April 2009



SGS will follow up and inform interested parties as developments on European Union and other international legislation occur.

Throughout our global network of laboratories, we are able to provide a wide range of services, including analytical testing and consultancy for restricted substances for consumer products including those for children for the European Union and other international markets. Please do not hesitate to contact us for further information.

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