

# SAFEGUARDS

SGS CONSUMER TESTING SERVICES

HARDGOODS, TOYS & JUVENILE PRODUCTS, COSMETICS, PERSONAL CARE AND HOUSEHOLD

NO. 115/12 JULY 2012

## TOXICS IN PACKAGING CLEARINGHOUSE FINDS HEAVY METALS VIOLATIONS

The Toxics in Packaging Clearinghouse (TPCH) was formed in the US in 1992 to promote, support, and help coordinate the implementation of the Model Toxics in Packaging Legislation for the 19 member states that have Toxics in Packaging requirements. The legislation was developed in an effort to reduce the amount of heavy metals (Lead, Mercury, Cadmium, and Hexavalent Chromium VI) in packaging and packaging components to reduce their amount entering the municipal solid-waste streams and ultimately landfills and incinerators. This legislation limits the concentration of heavy metals to 100 ppm total for all the metals. Although originally affiliated with the Coalition of Northeastern Governors (CONEG), TPCH continues in its capacity under the administration of The Northeast Recycling Council, Inc. (NERC).

TPCH released a report on 29 June 2012 with the results of a survey it conducted to assess the degree of compliance with state toxic in packaging laws in the target sector, specifically "dollar" and discount retail chain stores; and to identify non-compliant packaging. This report<sup>1</sup>, focused on the flexible Polyvinylchloride (PVC) packaging of product samples purchased from dollar/discount retail chain stores. Previous TPCH studies in 2007 and 2009 showed a propensity for inexpensive, imported materials to contain restricted materials.

The details of the survey methodology are provided below.

- A total of 61 samples were purchased from six discount chains plus the "dollar bins" at two major retailers
- Stores were selected for multi-state presence
- Stores were located in seven member states
- Packaging materials were screened for heavy metals by hand-held XRF
- A list of failed samples was sent to all member states
- Member states purchased additional samples of failed products for another round of XRF testing

<sup>1</sup> [Discount Retail Chains Importing PVC Packaging in Violation of State Laws](#)

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	QUANTITY
China	54
Pakistan	2
Thailand	1
Brazil	1
Korea	1
Unknown	2

TYPES OF PRODUCTS	QUANTITY
Children's Toys & Games	18
Pet Supplies	13
Personal Care/Cosmetics	12
Home Furnishings/ Apparel	9
Hardware	5
Household Items	4

The logo for SGS, consisting of the letters 'SGS' in a bold, sans-serif font. A vertical line is positioned to the right of the letters, and a horizontal line is positioned below the letters, forming an L-shape that frames the text.

**Findings of the report:**

- 24 packages (39%) failed XRF testing for Cadmium; 1 also failed for lead
- Twenty two of the failed samples originated in China, 1 from Pakistan and 1 Unknown
- Cadmium Range: 177-669 ppm
- Lead Range: 361 ppm
- Failures were not confined to one geographic region, one discount chain, or one product sector.
- The same product would fail across multiple locations

Depending upon whom the states held responsible, 17 unique manufacturers, distributors, and retailers were notified of the non-compliant packages. Retail stores took corrective action by pulling the product from the shelf, returned product/packaging to the supplier, implemented new QA procedures for the suppliers, or purchased an XRF unit for internal testing.

The 2012 study focused on flexible PVC packaging from a specific retail sector comprising of dollar/discount stores, however across a wider spectrum of retail outlets with the inclusion of data from 2007 and 2009, a downward trend is seen in the number of failed samples, 39% in 2012 from 52% in 2009 and 61% in 2007 for all flexible PVC packaging samples. The TPCH study concluded that that "compliance with state toxics in packaging laws continues to be problematic for packaging made from imported, flexible PVC."



# SOLUTION

Throughout our global network of laboratories, we are able to provide a range of services, including analytical testing for cadmium, lead, mercury, chromium VI and other restricted substances in consumer packaging for compliance with TPCH and other worldwide requirements. Please do not hesitate to contact us for further information.

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