

The State of Maine Bans the use of Deca-BDE in Consumer Products

In June 2007, the Governor of the State of Maine in the US has signed into Law the Bill LD 1658 'An Act to Protect Pregnant Women and Children from Toxic Chemicals Released into the Home'. The Bill joins the State of Washington in a ban on the use of the flame retardant decabromodiphenyl ether (Deca-BDE) in consumer products ¹.

The Bill has already restricted the use of 'penta' and 'octa' mixtures of polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) to no more than 0.1 % of each of the 'penta' and 'octa' mixtures since 1 January, 2006. The new restriction tightens the current law on restricting the manufacture, sale and distribution of products containing 'deca' mixtures of brominated diphenyl ethers in certain consumer products.

Polybrominated diphenyl ether (PBDE) flame retardant additives have been used to reduce the flammability of a large number of common household products, from computer casings to carpet pads to foam cushions in chairs and couches. They are used in foam products such as seat cushions as well as plastics such as wire and cable insulation, adhesives, coatings and housing for electronics. With time, PBDEs can leach out of the items to which they were added and enter the environment. They are ubiquitous and can be found in the air, soil and sediment, and are building up in animals throughout the food chain. They can permanently damage the brain and reproductive systems and cause learning difficulties in children.

Effective 1 January 2008, a person may not manufacture, sell or offer for sale or distribute for sale in the State the following products that have plastic fibers containing the 'deca' mixture of PBDEs:

1. A mattress or mattress pad
2. Upholstered furniture intended for indoor use in a home or other residential occupancy

Effective 1 January 2010, a person may not manufacture, sell or offer for sale or distribute for sale in the State a television or computer that has a plastic housing containing the 'deca' mixture of PBDEs.

The use of 'deca' mixtures of PBDEs is exempted in the following:-

1. Transportation vehicles or products or parts for use in transportation vehicles or transportation equipment
2. Products or equipment used in industrial or manufacturing processes
3. Electronic wiring and cable used for power transmission

Throughout their global network of laboratories, SGS can offer a range of analytical testing and consultancy services for polybrominated flame retardants; including 'penta', 'octa' and 'deca' mixtures of PBDEs. Please do not hesitate to contact us for further information.

¹ Our SafeGuards 034/07 http://newsletter.sgs.com/eNewsletterPro/uploadedimages/000006/SafeGuards_PBDEConsumerProducts.pdf

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