

SVHCs—what you need to know

SVHC (Substances of Very High Concern) are a diverse group of substances that have been placed in a 'Candidate List' for authorisation by the ECHA because of their particularly hazardous properties. Due to the specific hazards associated with these chemicals REACH imposes controls on them over and above those that apply to standard chemicals. On the 28th October 2008 the ECHA published the first version of the 'Candidate List' containing 15 SVHCs. The list will be regularly updated, with more substances to be added over time.

What this means for manufacturers, importers, and article producers/suppliers...

Communicating information on SVHCs in articles

Any supplier of an article containing a SVHC on the 'Candidate List' in a concentration above 0.1 % (w/w) has the duty to provide the recipient of the article with sufficient information to allow safe use of the article.

As of the 28th October 2008, manufacturers and importers supplying products containing SVHCs on the Candidate List also have mandatory requirements to declare SVHCs in products present in concentrations of 0.1% by weight within 45 days of a request for SVHC information by a consumer.

Notifying the ECHA of SVHCs in articles

EEA* producers and importers of articles have to notify the ECHA if their article contains a substance on the Candidate List. This obligation applies if the substance is present above 0.1% (w/w) and its quantities in the produced/imported articles are above 1 tonne in total per year per company. If you import or produce several articles containing the same SVHC you need to consider the total tonnage, which is calculated by adding the tonnages of the substance for each article that contains the substance at 0.1% (w/w) or higher.

* European Economic Area = 27 EU member states plus Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway

Authorisation

The candidate list is also the basis for the authorisation process under REACH. Substances included in the candidate list will progressively be put forward for inclusion in the Authorisation List (Annex XIV of the REACH Regulation). Substances that will be included in the Authorisation List cannot be manufactured or imported in the EU from a specific date set by the Commission (the 'sunset date'), except if the companies have obtained an authorisation for their specific use(s). This authorisation can either be granted because the risks are controlled or because the socioeconomic benefits outweigh the risks. The aim of authorisation is to ensure that the risks from substances of very high concern are properly controlled and that these substances are progressively substituted by alternative substances or technologies.

The REACH SIN list

The SIN (Substitute It Now) List is a list of substances that fulfil the criteria for Substance of Very High Concern as defined by REACH, developed by an NGO Advisory Committee which includes (amongst others) WWF, Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace. Although it has no legal basis, the list is used by NGOs to lobby Member States for proposing substances for inclusion into the 'Candidate List'. For more information, visit www.sinlist.org.

Latest developments

On 19th January 2009 ECHA launched a public consultation on the first draft recommendation of 7 SVHCs to be included in the list of substances subject to Authorisation (see table overleaf).

In the first draft recommendation ECHA proposes that:

- applications for authorisations should be submitted between 24 and 30 months after the above substances have been included in Annex XIV of REACH, and
- these substances could not be used after 42 to 48 months from the date of inclusion in Annex XIV.

SVHC advisory and testing service

Our SVHC advisory and testing service is provided in collaboration with Lancaster University (UK) which has an international reputation for world-class analytical chemistry.

We can test a wide variety of materials including **articles** (e.g. anything from plastic toys to printed circuit boards) and **preparations** (e.g. adhesives, lubricants, paints). Examples of market sectors we provide services to include automotive, aerospace, textiles, electronics, cosmetics, and white goods.

SVHC advice

- Advice on SVHC testing strategies to minimize costs
- Advice to set up auditing/monitoring process for suppliers to ensure compliance through your supply chain
- Training courses for your supply chain

SVHC testing

- Analysis of complete suite of 15 SVHCs, or individual substances
- Cost-saving initial screening available for selected substances
- Routine analysis for auditing purposes or 'fast-track' for '45-day consumer requests'

We also offer testing for a range of other substances that are likely to find their way onto the candidate list in the future. For example, those on the SIN (Substitute It Now) list, and the GADSL (Global Automotive Declarable Substances List), and substances affected by the WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) and RoHS (Restriction of the Use of Certain Hazardous Substances in Electrical and Electronic Equipment) regulations.

Substances currently on the Candidate List**

Substance name	Main uses
Triethyl arsenate	Intermediate used in fabrication of integrated circuits
Lead hydrogen arsenate	Pesticide, biocide for wood
Diarsenic pentaoxide	Pesticide, dyeing agent, metal hardener
Diarsenic trioxide	Decolorizing agent for glass and enamel
Cobalt dichloride	Moisture indicator e.g. in dyeing agents, pigments
Sodium dichromate hydrate	Leather tanning, corrosion inhibitor, pigment
Bis(tributyltin)oxide (TBTO)	Anti-fouling agent, antiseptic, refrigerant, foaming agent
Anthracene	Raw material for other synthesis
4,4'- Diaminodiphenylmethane (MDA)	Curing agent for epoxy resin, azo dyes for textiles
Dibutyl phthalate (DBP)	Plasticizer for resins, in adhesives / coatings / sealants
Bis (2-ethylhexyl)phthalate (DEHP)	
Benzyl butyl phthalate (BBP)	
5-tert-butyl-2,4,6-trinitro-m-xylene (musk xylene)	Fragrant in cosmetics, soap
Hexabromocyclododecane (HBCDD)	Flame retardant in construction, textiles, electronics
Short Chain Chlorinated Paraffins (SCCP)	Metal working lubricant, flame retardant

** Substances highlighted in red were recently proposed for inclusion in the Authorisation List (annex XIV of REACH).

For more information, email svhc@thereachcentre.com, phone +44(0)1524 510278, or visit our website.