

## European Parliament Backs Toy Safety Directive

A new draft Directive on toy safety has won the support of the Members of the European Parliament. Under the new directive, manufacturers will have to ensure that toys are not harmful or toxic to children's health, and Member States will have to carry out stricter checks on all toys that enter the EU market. Restrictions on the use of chemicals, fragrances and heavy metals are tightened, and rules about warnings are clarified.

Under the Directive, a toy is defined as a product intended to be used for playing by children under 14 years of age. A list of products not regarded as toys is annexed to the text. It includes party decorations, collectors' items clearly intended for people aged 14 or over (including reproductions of real firearms or faithful scale models), puzzles with more than 500 pieces, fireworks and new products such as video games and game consoles.

### Highlights of the new Directive are:

- A ban on the use of chemical substances that are carcinogenic, mutagenic, or toxic for reproduction, with exceptions being granted only on a case-by-case basis depending on their concentration and accessibility.
- A ban on a specific list of allergenic fragrances from use in toys. A limited group of fragrances will be allowed as long as they are clearly labeled. Some exceptions are granted for toys designed to develop the senses, such as olfactory, gustative and cosmetic games, but the packaging must contain the warning: "contains fragrances that may cause allergies."
- Tighter rules regarding heavy metals. For lead, cadmium, mercury and chromium (VI), only traces that cannot be avoided with good manufacturing practices are allowed. In addition, maximum values are imposed for aluminum, copper, nickel and tin.
- Stricter rules for sound-producing toys. Sound produced by toys cannot impair children's hearing, and the existing standards for sound will be revised and made stricter.
- Warnings on toys need to be clear, visible and easily understandable, and they must be visible at the point of sale. Warnings which contradict the intended use of a toy are prohibited. For example, the warning "not suitable for children under 36 months" could not appear on toys which are clearly intended for this age group.
- New, clearer rules to prevent the risk of choking or suffocation on small parts.
- Currently no specific provisions exist for toys in food. The revised Directive requires that toys contained within food or co-mingled with food must have their own packaging. This packaging, in its supplied condition, must not, itself, pose a choking hazard. Toys firmly attached to a food product at the moment of consumption, in such a way that the food product needs to be consumed in order to get direct access to the toy are prohibited. Toys contained in food or co-mingled with food shall bear the warning: "Toy inside; Adult supervision recommended."

The Directive, which is a revision of Directive 88/378/EEC, will enter into force twenty days after its publication in the Official Journal of the European Union. However, in order to allow toy manufacturers sufficient time to adapt to the new requirements, a transitional period of two years after the Directive's entry into force will be provided. During this period, toys which comply with Directive 88/378/EEC may be placed on the market. In the case of chemical requirements, this period is set at four years so as to allow the development of the harmonized standards which are necessary for compliance with those requirements.

Link to: [European Commission Toy Safety Directive](#)

Link to: [European Parliament Press Release](#)

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