

Code of Practice for the Use of Lead and Cadmium in PVC Products in Australia

Purpose

This is a voluntary Code of Practice for the use of lead and cadmium in PVC products manufactured in Australia by the Signatories to this Product Stewardship Program. It reflects the intention of Signatories who use these stabilisers to comply with its terms and oversee its implementation.

Undertakings by Signatories

1. Phase out of cadmium based stabilisers

As a result of a commitment under the Product Stewardship Program 2002 the use of cadmium stabiliser by Signatories ceased by 30th June 2004.

New Signatories to the Program who are using cadmium stabilisers are to agree to a specific phase out date upon signing. Total usage of cadmium stabilisers by Signatories will be reported on an annual basis until phase-out is complete.

2. Phase out of lead based stabilisers

Signatories do not use lead stabilised PVC in children's toys, medical devices, food contact products or potable water pipe.

Signatories are committed to phasing out the use of lead stabilisers in all other pipe and conduit products by 2008 and in all products by 2010.

Usage of lead stabilisers will be reported annually by quantity and by major end-use product category until the phase out is complete.

3. Recycling of lead stabilised PVC products

Recyclate derived from lead stabilised PVC products may be used in applications where the product meets relevant performance standards.

4. Lead, Cadmium and hexavalent chrome pigments

The use of lead, cadmium and hexavalent chrome pigments by Signatories is very low. A review of technical and commercial constraints and consequences of replacement is to be reviewed and completed by 2007, and a commitment is to be developed on the use of these pigments.

5. Products where further assessment may be required

Where insufficient data is available to adequately determine the risk to human health and the environment, the Signatories will make appropriate endeavours to obtain the necessary data.

6. Overseas trends

The Signatories will monitor overseas initiatives and trends in:

- reduction in the usage of lead based stabilisers;
- development of alternative stabiliser systems;
- the recycling or disposal of lead stabilised PVC products;
- the abatement of any environmental impacts of lead based stabilisers;

and act on these initiatives and trends where appropriate and practicable.

7. Safe manufacturing practice

The Signatories are committed, as a minimum, to conformance with the requirements of WorkSafe Australia and the relevant state Codes of Practice applicable to stabiliser manufacture and their use in PVC products.

8. Australian Standards

The Signatories will comply with relevant Australian Standards and recommend inclusion of the practical outcomes of this code in relevant new standards or revisions.

9. Consultation

The Signatories will maintain appropriate contact and consultation with the regulatory, environment and health authorities and agencies, including WorkSafe Australia, Department of Environment and Heritage, the State Environment Protection Agencies and the EnHealth Council.

10. Public Reporting

The Council will report annually on the implementation of the code. This will include:

- progress made towards objectives;
- barriers to meeting objectives;
- usage of lead and cadmium stabilisers and pigments by quantity and end-use product category; and
- overseas initiatives and trends.

The report will be posted on the Vinyl Council's website. Signatories will submit the data needed by the Council for this purpose, and will provide periodic reports to the Technical Steering Group on their implementation of the code.