



Environment Agency: REACH update, February 2021.

REACH Annex 17, entry 46a: Nonylphenol Ethoxylates within the textile sector.

The Environment Agency's Chemical Compliance Team (CCT) are one of the regulatory bodies for UK REACH, which is the regime governing the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals. We enforce this legislation for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

We would like to notify businesses of a restriction on the placing on the market of textile articles containing Nonylphenol Ethoxylates (NPEs) which applies from 3 February 2021. The restriction is set out in entry 46a of Annex 17 of the REACH Regulation and is shown below.

NPEs are man-made compounds with dispersant properties. They have been used in textiles processing, though this application is now restricted. NPEs are known to be toxic to aquatic life. In 2013, the CCT undertook a study to determine the presence and concentration of NPEs in textiles bought in the UK¹. After laboratory analysis, it was identified that many of the samples contained NPEs. Further tests discovered that when washed, these chemicals were released into waste waters, causing potential harm to wildlife and the environment.

The REACH Regulation restricts the placing on the market and use of both Nonylphenol and NPEs. Restriction 46 in Annex 17 of REACH states that Nonylphenol and NPE cannot be placed on the market or used for textile processing purposes if the content equals or exceeds 0.1% by weight unless there is no release to waste water. From 3 February 2021, Restriction 46a also applies. Restriction 46a states that NPEs shall not be placed on the market after 3 February 2021 in textile articles which can be expected to be washed in water, in concentrations equal to or greater than 0.01% by weight of that textile article or of each part of the textile article.

"Placing on the Market" relates to the first party that makes available or supplies a product to a third party, for the first time, and includes importation.

Suppliers and manufacturers in the textiles sector should be aware of these restrictions when using NPEs in textiles processing and placing textiles on the UK market.

If you have any questions relating to this subject, please contact the Chemical Compliance Team at chemicalrestrictions@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Annex 17 of the REACH Regulation, Entry 46a: Nonylphenol Ethoxylates (NPE)

- 1. Shall not be placed on the market after 3 February 2021 in textile articles which can reasonably be expected to be washed in water during their normal lifecycle, in concentrations equal to or greater than 0,01 % by weight of that textile article or of each part of the textile article.*
- 2. Paragraph 1 shall not apply to the placing on the market of second-hand textile articles or of new textile articles produced, without the use of NPE, exclusively from recycled textiles.*
- 3. For the purposes of paragraphs 1 and 2, 'textile article' means any unfinished, semi-finished or finished product which is composed of at least 80 % textile fibres by weight, or any other product that contains a part which is composed of at least 80 % textile fibres by weight, including products such as clothing, accessories, interior textiles, fibres, yarn, fabrics and knitted panels.*

¹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/296853/13_04_29_Rpt_NPE_textiles_summary_report_LIT_7721__5b9cd4.pdf