



What **REACH** means for EU importers

If you import any goods into the EU then **REACH** could affect you. This leaflet gives basic information to help you understand what **REACH** is, what you might need to do and where to find more information.



What is REACH?

REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals) is the new system for controlling chemicals in Europe. It became law in the UK on 1 June 2007. You need to understand the ways it might affect you as an importer.

What chemicals are covered by REACH?

From 2008, chemicals imported into Europe in amounts at 1 tonne per year or more will need to be registered with a new European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) in Helsinki. Chemicals in these amounts, imported in mixtures and in some cases in articles, may also need to be registered.

There are a few exceptions including radioactive substances, those in customs for onwards export outside the EU, in transit and waste (as defined in EU Directives). Some chemicals, eg human and veterinary medicines, food and food additives, intermediates have reduced requirements and some will be treated as if they are already registered. More information on what is covered can be found at the UK REACH Competent Authority website www.hse.gov.uk/reach.

What is meant by importer?

If you **directly** import anything from **outside** the EU, be it chemicals, mixtures (eg paints, cosmetics, intermediates, polymers), finished products (eg clothes or plastic goods) or articles (eg scented candles) containing substances intended for release then it's quite possible that you may have some responsibilities under REACH.

Companies outside the EU cannot register chemicals themselves but can appoint an EU-based agent – an 'only representative' to act on their behalf.

What should you do now?

Check your substance/product inventory and ask yourself - do you import anything from outside the EU?

If **no** – you have no duties as an importer.

If **yes** – you will need to consider if:

- ▼ these are chemicals themselves;
- ▼ they are mixtures containing chemicals; and
- ▼ they are articles (finished goods) from which the chemical will or could be released during use or which have certain hazardous properties.



You may need to speak to your supplier to find out more and to see if they are doing anything about REACH with other importers or perhaps through an 'only representative'.

If you import more than 1 tonne per year of a chemical in any of these situations (and you would need to add this together if in different products) then you may need to register it.

Registration is phased over a period of years based on tonnage levels and in some cases the hazards of the chemical. However, to take advantage of the phase in time you will need to pre-register between 1 June and 30 November 2008.

Pre-registration is free and fairly simple. For each chemical you will need to supply the following information to the ECHA:

- ▼ name of the chemical including an identifying number, (eg CAS or EINECS number);
- ▼ your company's name and address and a contact name;
- ▼ envisaged deadline for registration and tonnage band; and
- ▼ identifier information of any structurally similar chemical which you may wish to rely on to provide useful evidence on hazards as part of your registration package.

Will it affect your business?

What should you do now?

DON'T PANIC!

Consider **now** what you might need to do to prepare for REACH. Don't leave it too late or you may not have time to manage what you need to do. **If in doubt pre-register; it may save you a lot of time and money later.**

If you are an importer and think that you might need to register one or more chemicals then there is plenty of information available. Visit the UK REACH CA website for more information on REACH including links to other source of help and advice. The CA website can be found at:

www.hse.gov.uk/reach



**WHATEVER YOUR BUSINESS IS,
FIND OUT MORE TODAY –
don't leave it until it's too late!**

UK REACH Competent Authority Information Leaflet 3 - August 2007
What REACH means for chemical manufacturers