



A safe future for polyurethane products

A diverse product

Polyurethane (PU) adhesives and sealants are versatile, innovative and safe. They are used in a wide variety of applications in construction, packaging, automotive, furniture, engineering, marine, transportation, and many more.

PU products are made by combining **diisocyanates** and **polyols**.

FOR SOME PU PRODUCTS YOUR STAFF WILL NEED TO BE TRAINED TO KNOW HOW TO APPLY THEM SAFELY.

! New regulation ahead

REACH is a regulation of the European Union, adopted to improve the protection of human health and the environment from risks that can be posed by chemicals, while enhancing the competitiveness of the EU chemicals industry.

German authorities took an interest in the respiratory sensitising properties of **diisocyanates** at the workplace and have prepared a REACH restriction dossier for industrial and professional applications. Based on this, a new regulation on diisocyanates is being finalised by the European authorities.

What does the restriction mean?

Although a final regulation is not foreseen before 2019, it is expected that PU products will be divided into categories. Certain types of products intended for professional and industrial applications will only be able to be used if the users are specifically trained to handle diisocyanates safely.

Behaviour at the workplace is key to ensuring the safe use of diisocyanates.

1

PU products containing up to 0.1% by weight of monomeric diisocyanates

nothing changes, you can use the product as before

2

PU products containing 0.1% and more by weight of monomeric diisocyanates and a proven, very low exposure level when applying the product

possibly exempt from training, only then you can use the product as before

3

All other PU products

every user must be trained on safe use

“The industry is strongly committed to the safe use of diisocyanates and safety at the workplace.”



Does the PU product I buy require training?

Your supplier will inform you.

FEICA, the European Association of the Adhesive and Sealant producers, is currently **classifying the PU products** that are eligible for possible exemption and those requiring training.

Furthermore, FEICA is keen to learn what the final regulation will state regarding the **type of training**, for example off-site/on-site training, e-learning, and through the 'train the trainer' principle are currently proposed means. The training including a final exam will be mandatory for all professional and industrial users applying the product.

Frequently asked questions

? **Are diisocyanates safe?**

Like any substance, diisocyanates' use is safe when chemicals are handled according to relevant risk management and safety measures. It is also important to stress that virtually no diisocyanates can be found in finished articles. Diisocyanates are only used as reactive chemicals; they react with the polyol to form the PU product and are used up during the reaction.

? **What is respiratory sensitisation?**

Sensitisation means that after exposure, a person could become allergic to the substance. If sensitised, each time the person is in contact again with the substance (even at very low concentrations) the person would have a high allergic reaction with respiratory impacts (e.g. asthma). The majority of individuals with diisocyanates-related asthma show improvement or total recovery after exposure has ceased.

? **I am a reseller/distributor. What do I need to do?**

Pass the information you receive from your product supplier on to your customers.

? **What about PU products for consumer use?**

The new regulation only applies to PU products for professionals and industry. A separate restriction for consumer use came into force several years ago.

? **At what date will this regulation come into force?**

There is no fixed date yet and several legislative steps and agreements still need to be passed. However, we expect that the new regulation will come into force between 2020 and 2025.

? **Will PU adhesives and sealants remain on the market?**

The restriction is targeted at avoiding unsafe handling of diisocyanates but not on restricting product availability. Due to their unique properties in many applications PU adhesives and sealants are expected to remain widely available.

? **Who should I contact if I have questions?**

Your supplier will help you with any product-related questions. If you would like to learn more about the status of the regulation, please contact FEICA at info@feica.eu or check out www.feica.eu.



Glossary

EU: European Union

PU: polyurethane

REACH: Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals. The key regulation of the EU for chemicals manufactured in or imported into the EU

