

HSE extends lead in ammunition restriction process by six months

A consultation under UK REACH on restricting the use of lead in ammunition has had an overwhelming response since it launched.

Great Britain's workplace regulator, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is therefore moving the expected date of publishing its opinions along with a response to the consultation by six months due to the high volume of responses submitted.

The use of lead ammunition for outdoor shooting over wetlands is already subject to regulation in Great Britain. HSE is establishing whether additional controls are needed for outdoor shooting.

The agency has received 2,759 responses including many detailed and technical submissions that need to be worked through. This was nine times that of a similar exercise across the EU, which also saw a six-month extension.

HSE confirmed the extension today, Thursday 5 January 2023, as the agency that operates UK REACH, a system of ensuring that chemical substances used in Britain are safe.

To help HSE understand how to provide the most effective, proportionate and practical approach to manage risks to health and the environment, a public consultation was opened for six months. It was published on 6 May 2022, alongside the restriction dossier, to gather information from different groups affected.

Dr Richard Daniels, HSE's Director of Chemicals Regulation Division, said: "It has been really encouraging to see the level of interest received, underlining that it is important we get this exercise right for the benefit of affected groups, peoples' health and the environment.

"Although we have more than tripled the number of people working on the consultation responses, our technical specialists will need more time to both consider responses and put forward our concluding opinions.

"The UK REACH legislation enabled us to make an extension if needed. We are making the necessary changes to the legal timetable, and keeping ministers updated."

An initial review of responses indicates that alternative risk management options (including alternative derogations) may need to be considered. HSE is therefore working with external specialists to understand technical information submitted to the public consultation. The agency is also further engaging with interested parties to refine any derogation proposals.

HSE initially received a request in April 2021 from the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), with the agreement of the

Scottish and Welsh Governments, to prepare a restriction report assessing the use of lead in ammunition under the UK Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) Regulations.

The [restriction dossier](#) on lead in ammunition was published on 6 May 2022. HSE specialists are preparing draft opinions and engaging with independent experts on the REACH Independent Scientific Expert Pool (RISEP), who form a Challenge Panel providing knowledge, scrutiny and challenge during the opinion-forming stage.

Dr Daniels continued: “To fulfil their roles, members of the REACH Independent Scientific Expert Panel (RISEP) require accurate and comprehensive information for them to scrutinise and challenge the Agency’s draft opinions. The 6-month extension enables the Agency to provide this level of detail to RISEP.”

The restriction proposals for [tattoo inks and permanent make-up](#), which were also published on 6 May 2022, will follow their original timescales. HSE will send the final risk assessment opinion and socio-economic opinion on these proposals to the Appropriate Authorities by February 2023 and May 2023 respectively.

Notes to editors:

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain’s national regulator for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise. www.hse.gov.uk
2. HSE is the Agency for UK REACH and therefore have responsibility for the majority of the regulatory functions under UK REACH. In the delivery of these functions, HSE is supported by and/or reportable to a number of other government organisations.
3. HSE news releases are available at: <http://press.hse.gov.uk>.
4. The EU equivalent restriction, which informed the GB restriction, received 319 responses to their six-month public consultation and the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) also extended their restriction process by six months to consider their responses.
5. HSE will therefore send the final risk assessment and socio-economic opinions on the GB restriction proposals to the Appropriate Authorities (i.e. the Defra Secretary of State and the Scottish and Welsh Governments) by August 2023 and November 2023 respectively. After receiving the final socio-economic opinion, the Appropriate Authorities will then have three months to make a decision on whether to accept the proposals.