

Recommendation to restrict substances in tattoo and permanent make-up inks

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is recommending the restriction of hazardous substances in ink used for tattooing and permanent make-up (PMU) in Great Britain.

The proposed new restriction would target substances classified for carcinogenicity, mutagenicity, reproductive toxicity, skin sensitisation, skin corrosion, and serious eye damage. It aims to protect people from any potential harmful effects which may be caused by tattoo and PMU ink.

This is the first time HSE has recommended a restriction of a substance in its role as the agency for UK REACH, the chemicals regime established in Great Britain after the UK left the European Union.

The Secretary of State for Defra, in consultation with Welsh and Scottish ministers, will now decide if the restriction should be brought into law.

Dr Richard Daniels, director of HSE's chemicals regulation division, said: "Currently there is no legislation to control what substances are present in tattoo and PMU ink. We've considered the health risks carefully and looked at the social and economic impact of recommending this restriction."

Dr Daniels concluded: "If Defra, Scotland and Wales accept our recommendation, the next step is for them to draft new legislation. We are recommending a transition period of two years so there will be time for manufacturers and suppliers to adapt to any new legal requirements and to fully test the safety of reformulated inks before they start to use them, there will be a further year for artists to use up old stock and switch to new inks."

This recommendation has been reviewed by a Challenge Panel made up of independent experts from the [REACH Independent Scientific Expert Pool \(RISEP\)](#).

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.
2. HSE is the Agency for UK REACH and therefore has 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 proposes concentration limits of substances in tattoo ink and PMU are based on those established in the GB Classification, Labelling and Packaging (CLP) Regulation; a concentration limit of 0.1% for substances which are prohibited for use in cosmetics because they are listed in Annex II or Annex VI of the Cosmetic Products Regulation (CPR). A derogation is proposed for 19 pigments (including Pigment Blue 15:3 and Pigment Green 7) that are prohibited for use in hair dyes but permitted for use in other types of cosmetics (such as lipsticks). HSE's review of the available hazard information for these 19 pigments did not identify evidence indicating they are unsafe if used in tattoo or permanent makeup ink.
 4. The recommendation follows this year's [publication of the final risk assessment opinion and the 60-day public consultation on the draft socio-economic \(SE\) opinion](#),
 5. This opinion has been reviewed by a Challenge Panel made up of independent experts from the [REACH Independent Scientific Expert Pool \(RISEP\)](#).
 6. Throughout the dossier-preparation and opinion-forming stages, the registry of restriction intentions (see [Restrictions – HSE](#)) was updated with information on public consultations, Challenge Panel meetings notes, the status of the projects and the opinion adoption.
 7. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.
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HSE to lead investigation following incident at event in Southport

A spokesperson for HSE said: "We are investigating an incident in Southport on Sunday June 4 in which a nine-year-old-boy was seriously injured. We'll provide further updates when appropriate."

Firm fined following outbreak of Legionnaires' disease

A plastics manufacturing company in West Bromwich has been fined after it put workers and the public at risk of being infected with potentially deadly bacteria.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigated Riaar Plastics Limited after members of the public became infected with Legionnaire's disease in

September 2020.

Five people were infected with the potentially deadly lung infection. One person was taken to intensive care and put on a ventilator after being infected.

Riaar Plastics Limited was fined for failing to manage the risk of Legionella. HSE found the water-cooling towers inherited by Riaar Plastics Limited at its site on Black Lake, West Bromwich, were in an extremely poor condition. This allowed Legionella bacteria to grow in the water-cooling towers and pipes, exposing employees and members of the public to risks of significant ill health.



One of the water-cooling towers at Riaar Plastics Limited



One of the water-cooling towers at Riaar Plastics Limited

People can get Legionnaires' disease when they breathe in small droplets of water in air that contains the Legionella bacteria. HSE guidance can be found at: [Legionella and legionnaires' disease – HSE](#).

Riaar Plastics Limited, of Black Lake, West Bromwich, West Midlands, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The company was fined £50,000 and ordered to pay £11,000 in costs at Birmingham Magistrates' Court on 2 June 2023.

This prosecution was led by HSE principal inspector Jenny Skeldon and HSE senior enforcement lawyer Kiran Cassini.

HSE principal inspector Jenny Skeldon said: "The condition of the cooling towers at this site was the worst I had ever seen. The Legionella exposure risk to employees, site visitors, neighbouring duty holders and members of the public was extreme in nature.

"Exposure to Legionella can cause death or serious illness where water cooling systems are not been managed effectively. It is really important that proactive management of the risk from Legionella bacteria is taken seriously. There are well publicised and simple precautions for companies to take that if followed will ensure that employers manage and control the risk."

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interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise. [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk)

2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: [legislation.gov.uk/](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/)

3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

Bedding manufacturer fined £80,000 after machine operator loses fingers

A leading bedding manufacturer has been fined £80,000 after an employee suffered horrific injuries when his hand was drawn into a machine.

John Cotton Group Limited faced legal action following the incident on 9 December 2020 – which resulted in the machine operator having three fingers on their left hand amputated.

The incident occurred due to there being [inadequate procedures in place to allow safe interventions with machinery](#).

The 36-year-old, from Wigan, had noticed a fault with the machine and in an attempt to resolve the issue, tried to power down the machine to allow access. However, the machine was still moving, and his left hand contacted dangerous moving parts.

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Enforcement Lawyer Radha Vaithianathar told Manchester City Magistrates Court how the man's fingers were partially severed by the machinery with the remainder having to be surgically amputated at hospital.

An investigation by HSE found John Cotton Group Limited, a leading manufacturer of bedding, had not made adequate arrangements to prevent access to dangerous moving parts of the machine. The company failed to provide a sufficiently robust procedure for powering down the machine to allow safe access. There was also inadequate training, monitoring and supervision of employees for dealing with problems with the machine.

John Cotton Group Limited, of Beaver Court, Lockett Road, Wigan pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) and 33(1) of the Health & Safety at Work etc. act 1974. The company was fined £80,000 and was ordered to pay £4,989.05 costs at a hearing at Manchester City Magistrates Court on 5 June 2023.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Thomas Delroy said: "This severe injury could have been easily prevented and the risk should have been identified."

"Employers should make sure they have a robust procedure for isolating machinery, and they have appropriate training, supervision and monitoring to

ensure it is adhered to”

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2. More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is available.
3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.
4. Guidance on [machinery interventions and safety](#) is available.

[HSE inspections target woodworking businesses to tackle occupational lung disease](#)

are endangering workers’ lives by failing to implement the measures required to prevent or control exposure to wood dust says the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Supported by HSE’s Dust Kills campaign, which provides free advice to businesses and workers on the control measures required to prevent exposure to dust, HSE inspectors across Great Britain will be visiting businesses within woodworking industries such as sawmilling, manufacture of composite boards, and carpentry, focusing on the dangers of respiratory risks from wood dust.

Woodworking industries have the potential for high incidence rates of occupational ill-health caused by worker exposure to inadequately controlled wood dust in the workplace, such as sino-nasal cancer, occupational asthma and dermatitis.

Throughout 2023/24, inspectors will be looking for evidence that employers have considered the control measures required to reduce workers exposure to wood dust, that workers understand the risks of exposure to wood dust, and effective control measures have been put in place to protect workers from harm. Inspectors will take enforcement action when necessary to make sure workers are protected.

In 2022/23, HSE carried out more than 1,000 woodworking inspections and found 78% of businesses were not compliant in protecting workers from respiratory sensitisers (*primarily dust from hardwoods, softwoods and composite materials*

such as MDF). This resulted in 402 enforcement actions taken by HSE, highlighting particular areas of concern around provision and use of suitable Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) and Local Exhaust Ventilation (LEV), as well as the administration of health surveillance.

HSE's head of manufacturing David Butter said: "Around 12,000 workers died last year from lung diseases linked to past exposure from work, and there are an estimated 19,000 new cases of breathing and lung problems each year, where individuals regarded their condition as being caused or made worse by work.

"Wood dust can cause serious health problems. It can cause [asthma](#), which carpenters and joiners are four times more likely to get compared with other UK workers, as well as sino-nasal cancer. Our campaign aims to help businesses whose workers cut and shape wood to take action now to protect their workers' respiratory health."

HSE inspections in 2022/23 identified four main areas of concern, where businesses failed to adequately implement the control measures required to protect workers. These were housekeeping (including dry sweeping of wood dust), Local Exhaust Ventilation (LEV) maintenance and thorough examination, selection of and face fit testing for Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE), and health surveillance for exposure to wood dust.

David added: "Through visiting woodworking businesses, our inspectors are able to speak to a range of employers and look at the measures they have in place to comply with the guidance and protect workers from respiratory diseases such as occupational asthma and sino-nasal cancer.

"Our inspection initiative aims to ensure employers and workers are aware of the risks associated with the activities they do. They must recognise these dangers and manage these risks through reducing exposure. Employers need to do the right thing, for example, through completing a risk assessment, ensuring workers are trained, reducing exposure using LEV and using suitable RPE to protect workers, where required."

For more information visit the [Dust Kills: Wood Dust campaign page](#).

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2. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.
3. The inspection programme will be supported by HSE's 'Work Right Dust Kills' campaign, aimed to influence employer behaviour by providing guidance to woodworking industries.
4. Further information about HSE occupational lung disease statistics can

be found: [Occupational Lung Disease statistics in Great Britain, 2022](https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/occupational-lung-disease-2022/)
([hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk))