



EU publishes Decision 2009/251/EC banning the use of dimethyl fumarate (DMF)

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Commission Decision 2009/251/EC requiring Member States to ensure that products containing the biocide dimethylfumarate are not placed or made available on the market

What is Dimethyl Fumarate?

It is a substance which has been used as a fungicide in leather products, for example, to prevent mould forming that may deteriorate leather, furniture, footwear or leather accessories during storage or transport in a humid climate.

Why is it a problem?

Several EU Member States - France, Finland, Poland, Sweden and the UK - have reported problems where leather furniture and footwear has caused hundreds of consumers to experience severe and painful allergic reactions. These allergies have been linked with the use of DMF in these products. The Commission Decision explains further

DMF was most often contained in little pouches fixed inside the furniture or added to the footwear boxes. It thus evaporated and impregnated the product, protecting it from moulds. However, it then also affected consumers who were in contact with the products. DMF penetrated through the clothes onto consumers' skin where it caused painful skin contact dermatitis, including itching, irritation, redness, and burns; in some cases, acute respiratory troubles were reported. The dermatitis was particularly difficult to treat. The presence of DMF is thus a serious risk.

What does the Commission Decision require?

- As of 1 May 2009 Member States shall ensure that products containing DMF are prohibited from being placed or made available on the market.
- As of 1 May 2009 Member States shall ensure that products containing DMF and already placed or made available on the market are withdrawn from the market and recalled from consumers, and that consumers are adequately informed of the risk posed by such products.

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What does “containing DMF” mean?

There are specific definitions for “products containing DMF” given in the Decision. “Product containing DMF” means any product or any part of a product where either:

- The presence of DMF is declared, such as on one or more pouches; or
- The concentration of DMF is **greater than 0.1 mg/kg** of the weight of the product or part of the product;

The Commission Decision document can be viewed in full at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:074:0032:0034:EN:PDF>

Testing for DMF

Test methods used to detect DMF must have a limit of detection of 0.1mg /kg or less.

Intertek has developed a suitable test method and this test is available at a number of Intertek locations.

If you have any queries about this, please contact linda.gallagher@intertek.com

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