

Reach Begins Operations

Are You Ready?

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Reach becomes operational on 1 June 2008. The first action for companies under the Regulation is the pre-registration of substances between 1 June and 1 December 2008.

No data, no market

Pre-registration applies to most chemicals which are currently on the market in the EU. It involves substances individually, in formulated products (preparations), and also in finished products from which the chemicals may be intentionally released under normal conditions of use. The one tonne threshold applies to all these cases.

Pre-registration allows companies to benefit from the staggered registration deadlines of 2010, 2013, or 2018.

If companies do not pre-register a chemical, they cannot continue manufacturing or importing it after 1 December 2008 until they have registered it with ECHA and paid the appropriate registration fee.

Pre-registration Is easy

Pre-registration information consists of the substance name/identifiers, company information, anticipated registration deadline, tonnage band and an indication of related substances that could potentially aid in the assessment of the substance. Unlike registration, pre-registration is free of charge.

Companies must submit their pre-registrations electronically to the Agency via the REACH-IT portal on the ECHA website. A file can be prepared for submission either online using the REACH-IT system, by compiling the required information using an IT tool called IUCLID 5, or using the company's own IT system. Files from IUCLID 5 or 'third party' applications are then imported into REACH-IT as XML files. ECHA provides the file specifications on its website.

Next Steps: SIEF and registration

ECHA will publish a list of pre-registered substances by 1 January 2009. Once the Agency has published this list, companies will begin to form SIEFs (Substance Information Exchange Forums). The purpose of a SIEF is to allow companies to share and assess data and information on the same sub-

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stance, and to prepare the common parts of a registration dossier ('joint submission'). After the *lead registrant* has submitted the joint submission, each company in a SIEF will submit their own registration containing the company-specific information and a reference to the joint submission. Each company will also pay their own registration fee.

Participation in a SIEF allows companies to reduce costs and the need for testing, especially on vertebrate animals.

Know your substances

A basic requirement for companies under the Reach regulation is that they have to know their substances and register them. One of the important aims of Reach is to enhance downstream industry user knowledge about the chemicals they use. Another is to increase the flow of information from users to suppliers so that appropriate safety assessments can be carried out. The resulting improvement in knowledge in the supply chain should ensure safer use of chemicals and lead to improved human health as well as to better protection of the environment.

The objectives of Reach will be achieved

over time as chemicals are registered, safety assessments for their identified uses have been carried out, and the information generated has been cascaded down the supply chain to the users of the chemicals.

What is ECHA's role in pre-registration?

ECHA has published guidelines and tools for the industry on its multilingual website, and its Helpdesk is assisting companies in doing pre-registration online. The Agency is also responsible for the management of the REACH-IT portal—the channel for submitting pre-registrations to ECHA. The portal will be launched by 1 June.

The main source of information on Reach is the Agency's website. It contains a specific section for pre-registration at <http://echa.europa.eu/preregistration>. The Agency will also actively disseminate information through workshops, Member State and industry networks, and media activities.

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