



Australian
Competition &
Consumer
Commission

Product safety bulletin September 2007

BANNED: DEG in toothpaste



Do you supply this product?

Nature of the ban

An unsafe goods notice banning the supply of toothpaste containing more than 0.25 per cent by weight of diethylene glycol (DEG) was declared on 3 August 2007. The ban took effect immediately.

DEG is a toxic substance which may cause injury to consumers, in particular children and individuals with kidney or liver disease. Although toothpaste is not intended to be swallowed, there is concern about unintentional swallowing or ingestion of toothpaste containing DEG, particularly when present in significant concentrations.

Before the ban, in June and July 2007, three toothpastes containing DEG were identified on the Australian market: Excel, Mr Cool and Raven. Excel brand toothpaste was recalled and Mr Cool and Raven were withdrawn from sale. Certain batches of Tri Leaf Spearmint toothpaste were recalled on 10 August 2007.

What should suppliers/retailers/importers do?

Suppliers/retailers should be able to identify if a toothpaste has DEG by checking the ingredients label. Toothpaste in Australia—except for toothpaste samples and therapeutic toothpaste, such as desensitising toothpaste—is required to have a full ingredient list according to the Trade Practices (Consumer Product Information Standards) (Cosmetics) Regulations 1991. Suppliers/retailers should be able to identify if a toothpaste has DEG by checking the ingredients label.

Suppliers, including retailers, must ensure that toothpaste supplied in Australia does not contain more than 0.25 per cent by weight of DEG. If DEG is listed as an ingredient, it should be withdrawn from sale immediately and checks made as to the level of DEG contained in the toothpaste. Toothpaste sold to consumers that exceeds the limit should be recalled.

Penalties

Penalties under the Act can be severe on suppliers, including importers and retailers. The courts can impose fines of up to \$1.1 million for corporations and \$220 000 for individuals.

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