



Declaration on Risk Reduction for Lead

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Background Information

The Declaration on Risk Reduction for Lead was adopted on the 20 February 1996 on the occasion of the Ministerial Meeting of the Environment Policy Committee. The Declaration seeks to advance national and co-operative efforts to reduce risks from exposure to lead. In this instrument, Adherents declare, among other things, that they will develop, continue or strengthen, as appropriate, national and co-operative efforts considered necessary to reduce risks from exposure to lead while giving highest priority to actions which address the risk of exposure from potential pathways in accordance with Annex I of the Declaration. Implementation of the Declaration is on-going and includes such activities as a joint project with UNEP's Industry and Environment Office to co-ordinate the activities of international organisations and industry to reduce the use of lead in gasoline.

THE GOVERNMENTS OF OECD MEMBER COUNTRIES¹,

HAVING REGARD to the call of the Environment Ministers for risk reduction action in Member countries as set out in their 1991 Communiqué "An Environmental Strategy in the 1990's" ;

HAVING REGARD to the Decision-Recommendation of the Council concerning Co-operative Investigation and Risk Reduction of Existing Chemicals [C(90)163/FINAL] as well as to its Recommendation concerning Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control [C(90)164/FINAL];

HAVING REGARD to the conclusions of the meeting of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development in May 1994 concerning the health impact to humans exposed to lead in gasoline, and encouraging further efforts to reduce exposure of humans to lead in gasoline (UN Economic and Social Council Official Records, 1994, Supplement No. 13, pp 32-34);

RECOGNISING the risks to human health, in particular for children and other high risk and sensitive populations, and risks to the environment associated with lead exposure and the need for co-operative commitments to reduce any transboundary exposure;

RECOGNISING the differing needs and circumstances of Member countries which call for flexible national risk reduction strategies and time frames;

RECOGNISING the value of national and international risk assessments in setting priorities for action on lead risk reduction and in determining the risks and benefits of proposed alternative solutions;

RECOGNISING the willingness of industry to share their experience in the sound management and prudent use of products containing lead including development of alternative solutions;

WELCOMING the willingness of the lead industry to share responsibility for risk reduction of lead and benefits of such co-operation in the management of the risks;

WISHING to build upon the results of work to date and the significant reductions in exposure that have been achieved by Member countries and noting with approval the valuable contribution of the OECD Chemicals Programme;

CONSIDERING that the sound management of risk from lead exposure is beneficial to all countries and that the range of national actions taken by OECD Member countries could assist and serve as examples to non-member countries;

DECLARE THAT THEY WILL:

1. Develop, continue or strengthen, as appropriate, national and co-operative efforts considered necessary to reduce risks from exposure to lead through actions which take into account national priorities, policies, programmes and achievements -- recognising that implementation may take the form of voluntary, economic, and/or regulatory actions;
2. Give highest priority to actions which address the risk of exposure from food and beverages, water, air, occupational exposure and other potential pathways in accordance with Annex I;
3. Continue to review lead levels in the environment and exposure to lead of sensitive populations (such as children and pregnant women) and of high risk populations (such as certain groups of workers) using the results to evaluate the effectiveness of national programs in reducing risks from exposure to lead and to identify priorities and opportunities for future actions;
4. Promote and maximise the use of environmentally sound and economically viable collection and recycling programmes for lead and lead containing products in order to reduce the release of lead to the environment from waste streams;
5. Extend co-operative efforts to share, including with non-OECD countries, information about exposures of concern, risk reduction options and environmentally sound and economically viable technologies in order to reduce risks from exposure to lead;

6. Encourage the lead producing and using industries to make best use of their expertise on the management of risks from lead and encourage them to make this expertise available to OECD and non-OECD countries;

7. Work with the lead producer industry to develop its voluntary programme of action to reduce exposure to lead, which will be implemented in co-operation with national authorities in OECD and interested non-OECD countries and encourage user industries to develop similar programmes;

FURTHER DECLARE THAT THE OECD SHOULD:

8. Support Member countries in implementing this Declaration;

9. Review progress by Member countries in pursuance of this Declaration three years after adoption and assess the need for further action;

10. Develop a framework for the co-operation of industry in implementing voluntary industry programmes for risk reduction on lead with a view to its wider applicability to other risk reduction activities;

11. Compile a guide on risk reduction of lead drawing on the extensive experience of Member countries and the work of the OECD risk reduction programme to assist OECD and non-OECD countries in developing and implementing lead risk reduction programmes;

12. Bring this Declaration to the attention of the United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development and other intergovernmental bodies and forums concerned with the sound management of chemicals.

INVITE:

13. Non-member countries to take account of the terms of this Declaration, to associate themselves with it and to implement the measures therein;

14. The relevant international standards organisations (including the International Standards Organisation), to develop or modify, as appropriate, international standards, testing procedures and definitions for products with a view to reducing the release of lead;

15. Other international organisations, involved with the protection of public health and the environment, to take this Declaration into consideration as they develop or revise goals, guidelines, and associated codes of practice for protection of human health and the environment.

ANNEX

a. Progressively phase-down use of lead in gasoline except where needed for essential or specialised uses for which there are no practical, viable alternatives;

b. Eliminate exposure of children to lead resulting from products intended for use by children (e.g., toys, cribs, crayons);

c. Eliminate exposure to lead from food packaging (e.g., for cans, by phasing down use of lead solder in existing canning lines, not using lead solder in new canning lines, or where these are not practical, using functional barriers to prevent lead migration; for wine-bottle capsules, substituting other materials);

d. Phase down the use of lead in paint and rust-proofing agents except in cases of essential or specialised uses for which there are no practical alternatives;

e. Restrict exposure to lead from the leaching of lead from ceramic ware and crystal ware used for food and beverages (e.g., by effective production and process controls);

- f. Restrict the use of lead shot in wetlands and promote the use of alternatives to lead sinkers in shallow waters;
- g. Reduce lead levels in drinking water through appropriate measures (e.g. treatment of the water, use of materials in the distribution system which do not release lead into the water);
- h. Reduce levels of lead in occupational settings;
- i. Limit air emissions from major point sources;
- j. Establish strategies, including public information programmes, to abate significant exposures arising from the historic use of lead-containing materials in buildings.

¹ The mention of "Governments" is deemed to also apply to the European Communities.

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