

SCOOP

THE LATEST TRENDS, SERVICES & PROMOTIONS

ELECTRICAL & ELECTRONICS, SGS HONG KONG

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REGULATORY TRENDS FOR PER- AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES (PFAS)

What are PFAS?

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, abbreviated as PFAS, are widely used in the past decades due to their non-stick, water repellence and anti-grease characteristics. According to the U.S. EPA and UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme), PFOS and PFOA are persistent, bio-accumulative and toxic, and EU REACH deem PFOS and PFOA to be **Substances of Very High Concerns (or SvHC)**.

What substances are considered as PFAS?

PFAS substances are a chemical family consisting of almost 5,000 industrially produced chemicals. PFOA, PFOS, PFHxS and PFCAs are some of the examples.



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Earlier this year, PFAS substances were found in the food packages of well-known transnational food service enterprises, which attracted worldwide attention. Recently, many countries and regions have announced regulatory requirements on PFAS.

The updates related to PFAS substances are shown below:

- In October 2020, Switzerland published RO 2020/3916 to revise its legislation on POPs (POP Convention, RS 0.814.03). The latest amendment transposes three "Decisions" from the Stockholm Convention on POP chemicals, which contains important changes to Annexes A and B of the Swiss legislation on POPs, several provisions are related to PFAS substances. This amendment includes, inter alia, the following:

SUBSTANCE	UPDATES
Dicofol	Adding dicofol to Part I of Annex A ('Elimination') with no specific exemptions for its production and use
PFOA, its salts and PFOA-related compounds	Adding PFOA, its salts and PFOA-related compounds to Part I on Annex A ('Elimination') with certain specific exemptions for their production and use
PFOS, its salts and PFOSF	Replacing the entry for PFOS, its salts and PFOSF in Part I to Annex B ('Restriction') with information on acceptable purposes and specific exemptions for their production and use.

The latest revision will become effective on December 3, 2020

- On October 14, 2020, the European Commission adopted the "EU Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability", its first step towards a zero-pollution ambition for a toxic-free environment announced in the "European Green Deal". The strategy lays out more than fifty wide-ranging actions that are listed for completion by 2024. One of these is:
 - Phase out per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in the EU, unless essential uses.

Due to the harm that PFAS substances can cause to humans and the environment, the restriction of PFAS in many countries and regions have become more and more stringent, and the enforcement agencies have also strengthened the enforcement actions on PFAS. Therefore, enterprises need to proactively investigate the content of PFAS in the products to ensure that they comply with the regulatory requirements of relevant policies and regulations.

FOR ENQUIRIES

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