

Chemicals in Consumer Products

The Washington State Legislature passed several laws restricting or requiring reporting of toxics in certain products. Those laws focus on specific product types and chemicals known to be problems for human health and the environment. The laws are listed below with links to more information and updates (complete web addresses are written out in the Endnotes on page 4).

- The [Children's Safe Product Act](#) (CSPA) requires manufacturers of children's products sold in Washington to report if their product contains a [chemical of high concern to children](#) and why the chemical is used in the product.

CSPA also limits the amount of lead, cadmium, and phthalates allowed in children's products. These limits were substantially preempted by federal law. Ecology works with the Consumer Product Safety Commission to ensure compliance with these requirements.

You can view [information manufacturers have reported about children's products](#) on Ecology's website. Join the [Children's Safe Products email list](#) for periodic updates.

- [Toxics in packaging legislation](#) limits levels of lead, mercury, cadmium, and hexavalent chromium used in product packaging to no more than 100 parts per million by weight for the total concentration of all four metals. Manufacturers and suppliers are responsible for providing a "certificate of compliance" stating their packaging meets the requirements of the law.
- The [Better Brakes Law](#) restricts the use of several heavy metals and asbestos in automotive brake pads and shoes and works to phase out copper. Manufacturers are required to report concentrations of copper, nickel, zinc, and antimony in brake friction materials currently sold in Washington. Join the [Better Brakes email list](#) for periodic updates.

Why it Matters

Toxics from consumer products are getting into the environment and people. Toxics can be found everywhere – in our air, land, and water. Products are one source of exposure to toxic chemicals. Many products release chemicals during use or end up as waste at the end of their use, causing pollution.

Pollutants can impact human health and harm fish and other wildlife. For these reasons, Washington passed several laws that address chemicals in consumer products. Ecology is testing products to ensure product manufacturers comply with those laws.

For more information

Download reports with results of Ecology's product testing from our [website](#).

Access the data from Ecology's product testing by searching our online [database](#).

If you have questions or need more information, contact:

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ADA Accommodation

To request ADA accommodation including materials in a format for the visually impaired, call the Hazardous Waste and Toxics Reduction Program at 360-407-6700.

Persons with impaired hearing may call Washington Relay Service at 711. Persons with a speech disability may call TTY at 877-833-6341.

Other laws limit particular chemicals in certain products. [Bisphenol A \(BPA\)](#) is banned in bottles and cups for children, as well as sports bottles. [Polybrominated diphenyl ether \(PBDE\) flame retardants](#) are banned in a wide array of uses. A ban of copper in [antifouling paints for recreational boats](#) will take effect in 2018.

Ecology will also be working with all Washington State agency purchasing programs to evaluate the products we buy to select products with the least [toxic chemicals](#). For example, new purchasing policies will favor products without Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

Ensuring compliance through testing

Ecology is responsible for ensuring compliance with these laws. The only way to do this is to test products to find out whether manufacturers are complying. We focus on chemicals of concern identified in Washington law. The testing also provides information about which products contain toxic chemicals. Reducing or eliminating these hazardous chemicals will reduce risk to people and the environment.

Testing so far focused on—and found—several classes of toxic chemicals:

- [Polychlorinated biphenyls](#) (PCBs)
- Toxic metals, including [lead](#), [mercury](#), cadmium, antimony, and cobalt
- [Phthalates](#) (used to make plastic softer)
- [Parabens](#) (used as preservatives in personal care products and cosmetics)
- [Volatile organic chemicals](#), including formaldehyde
- [Flame retardants](#), including PBDEs and potential substitutes

The presence of a chemical in a product does not necessarily mean it's unsafe. However, some chemicals have been banned for specific uses because they are unsafe, such as BPA in baby bottles and toxic metals, such as lead, in packaging.

Tests show most manufacturers are following laws that regulate the use of toxic chemicals. When Ecology finds a chemical in a product that is banned or requires reporting, we notify the manufacturer. We may bring the company into compliance through [technical assistance](#) or education. Ecology may have to enforce against a company that is violating the law, which may result in financial penalties. In some cases, we work with other state, local, or federal agencies to achieve compliance.

Data from testing products for toxic chemicals now available

Informed consumers make better choices, so we share the data. You can search this data to see the results of Ecology's testing. Ecology checks whether any of these chemicals exceed allowable thresholds. We will continue testing products and adding results to the database on our website.

The consumer market for products without toxic chemicals is growing

Knowing when and how chemicals are used in products helps Ecology to better understand where [safer alternatives](#) are needed. Using the results from testing and reporting, we partner with manufacturers to find safer alternatives to toxics for their products and processes.

The growing demand for products that do not contain toxic chemicals helps drive innovation in business and industry. This creates opportunity for Washington businesses to lead the nation in reducing toxics in products and compete in tomorrow's market. Ultimately, finding safer alternatives for harmful chemicals is the smartest, cheapest, and healthiest way to protect people and the environment.

Complete web addresses referenced in this document

Antifouling paints for recreational boats: <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=70.300.020>

Better Brakes Law: www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/hwtr/betterbrakes.html

Better Brakes email list: <http://listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?A0=ECOLOGY-BETTER-BRAKES>

Bisphenol A (BPA): www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/bpa.html

Chemical of high concern to children: www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/cspa/chcc.html

Children's Safe Product Act: www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/cspa/

Children's Safe Products email list: <http://listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?A0=CHILDRENS-SAFE-PRODUCTS>

Flame retardants: www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/pbt/pbde.html

Information manufacturers have reported about children's products: www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/cspa/search.html

Lead: www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/pbt/lead.html

Mercury: www.ecy.wa.gov/mercury/index.html

Phthalates: www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/smu/phthalates/phthalates_hp.htm

Polybrominated diphenyl ether (PBDE) flame retardants: www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/pbt/pbde.html

Polychlorinated biphenyls: www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/pbt/pcb.html

Product Testing Database: <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/ptdbpublicreporting/>

Safer alternatives: www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/hwtr/ChemAlternatives/index.html

Technical assistance: www.ecy.wa.gov/ta.html

Toxics in packaging legislation: www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/hwtr/hazcom/toxpackage.html