

# What REACH means for EU importers

**This leaflet explains your responsibilities under REACH if you import chemicals or other goods from outside Europe. It is aimed at importers that have little or no knowledge of REACH.**

## What is REACH?

REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and restriction of Chemicals) is the system for controlling chemicals in Europe. It became law in the UK on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2007. You need to understand the ways it might affect you as an importer.

## What chemicals are covered by REACH?

Since 1 December 2008, chemical substances imported into Europe in amounts of 1 tonne or more per year have needed to be registered with the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), based in Helsinki.

It is only chemicals on their own that are registered, not deliberate mixtures of chemicals (formulations/preparations). Where a chemical is imported as part of a deliberate mixture, for example, in paint or glues, etc, it is the individual ingredients that are registered. In some cases, substances in [articles](#) need to be registered.

There are a few exceptions, including radioactive substances, those in customs warehouses intended for re-export outside the EU/EEA, substances in transit and waste (as defined in EU Directives). Only selected parts of REACH apply to some chemicals, e.g. human and veterinary medicines, food and food additives. For others, e.g. intermediates, there are reduced requirements under certain circumstances, and some substances are treated as if they are already registered.

More information on the different exemptions can be found in [UK REACH CA Information Leaflet Number 8 - Exemptions](#)

## What is meant by importer?

If you **directly** import anything from **outside** the EU/EEA, be it chemical substances (including metals), mixtures (e.g. paints, cosmetics), articles (finished products, e.g. clothes or plastic goods) or articles that contain substances intended for release (e.g. a scented bin-liner), then it's quite possible that you may have some responsibilities under REACH.

Companies outside the EU cannot register chemicals themselves but can appoint an EU-based agent – an 'Only Representative' – to act on behalf their EU-based importers. More information about Only Representatives can be found in the ECHA '*Guidance on registration*' document.

## What am I expected to do under REACH?

If you want to continue to import chemicals covered by REACH you will need to register them with ECHA. Registration means providing a package of technical information on the chemical and its hazards. Registration is phased over a period of years based on tonnage levels and in some cases the hazards of the chemical. However, to take advantage of the phase in time chemicals need to be pre-registered.

**Companies who imported their substance(s) before December 2008** were required to pre-register them with ECHA between 1<sup>st</sup> June and 1<sup>st</sup> December 2008 in order to continue to market and use them legally. If you missed this pre-registration window, are based in the UK, and have not submitted the required registration, you should contact the UK REACH Compliance team: [CRDCompliance@hse.gov.uk](mailto:CRDCompliance@hse.gov.uk)

More information on the enforcement of REACH in the UK including a section on pre-registration is available at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/reach/enforcement.htm>.

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Companies who import their substance for the first time since REACH has been UK law and after 1<sup>st</sup> December 2008 can, in some cases, complete a 'late pre-registration'.

The final remaining deadline for late pre-registration is 31<sup>st</sup> May 2017 for substances in the 1-100 tonnes per annum band.

Pre-registration is free and fairly simple. For each chemical you will need to supply the following information to ECHA:

- Name of the substance, including an identifying number (e.g. CAS or EINECS number);
- Your Company's name and address and a contact name;
- Envisaged deadline for registration and tonnage band; and
- (If applicable) identifier information of any structurally similar chemical which you may wish to rely on to provide useful evidence on hazards as part of your registration package.

A pre-registration can only be submitted out via ECHA's REACH-IT portal.

ECHA also provides step by step guidance on how to prepare and submit your pre-registration. There is more information in [UK REACH CA Information Leaflet Number 7 - Pre-registration](#).

Another benefit of pre-registering a chemical is that you will become part of a group of companies who have also pre-registered the same chemical. This group, called a Substance Information Exchange Forum (SIEF), will share information on the properties of a substance so that only one shared set of technical information is submitted to ECHA. The SIEF can also work collectively on other aspects of the registration package. Membership of a SIEF will also help to share expertise and spread costs, with members paying reduced registration fees.

## Other duties for importers

You should also be aware of other duties that you may have as an importer.

If you import chemicals that are subject to registration or classified as dangerous, you will have to inform (electronically) ECHA of the classification and labelling of these chemicals. This should have been done by 1<sup>st</sup> December 2010 for chemicals that you were already placing on the market or within 1 month of you placing them on the market for the first time after 1<sup>st</sup> December 2010. This is a duty placed on importers by the new European Regulation on Classification, Labelling and Packaging of Substances and Mixtures (CLP Regulation).

If you supply safety data sheets with your chemicals or products, you will have to update these with additional information. See [UK REACH CA Information Leaflet Number 13 - Safety Data Sheets](#) for more details. Users of the chemicals that you import may request that you support their uses of the chemicals in your registration.

If you import articles that contain certain chemicals with particular hazardous properties ([SVHCs](#)), then depending on the concentration of these chemicals, you may need to provide information on the safe use of these articles to professional users and, on request, to consumers. You may also have to notify the ECHA of these chemicals in articles from June 2011. See [UK REACH CA Information Leaflet Number 9 - Articles](#) for more information.

## Further information

For advice on the application of REACH, you can contact the UK REACH Competent Authority's national helpdesk or visit the website:

E-mail: [UKREACHCA@hse.gov.uk](mailto:UKREACHCA@hse.gov.uk)

Website: [www.hse.gov.uk/reach](http://www.hse.gov.uk/reach)

