

EU BAN ON MEASURING DEVICES CONTAINING MERCURY

From 3rd April 2009 the placing on the market of certain measuring devices **containing mercury** has been banned under chemical legislation, REACH.

Ban on fever thermometers

It is not permitted to supply or make mercury-containing fever thermometers available to the Irish or EU market, whether for payment or free of charge. This **includes** fever thermometers supplied or made available to:

- members of the general public e.g. via pharmacies or supermarkets and
- Professionals e.g. medical and veterinary practitioners and
- Industrial sectors.

Ban on other measuring devices

It is prohibited to place other mercury-containing measuring devices intended **for sale to the general public** on the market. Such devices include manometers, barometers, sphygmomanometers and thermometers other than fever thermometers.

This ban only applies to those devices supplied to members of the general public via outlets such as pharmacies and supermarkets. Supply of mercury containing measuring devices (other than fever thermometers) to professionals (e.g. medical and veterinary practitioners) and industrial sectors can continue under the current restriction.

There is one exception to this rule, measuring devices more than 50 years old on 3rd October 2007 are permitted to be placed on the market.

The entry into force of the restriction on barometers (other than those more than 50 years old on 3rd October 2007) came into effect on the 3rd October 2009.

Non-compliant stock

If Irish importers, recipients and/or suppliers have non-compliant devices in stock, these cannot be placed on the market. Contact could be made with the suppliers of these devices requesting that this old stock is taken back. Old mercury-containing thermometers should be disposed of as hazardous waste, as every effort should be made to ensure that mercury does not get into the general waste stream.

Legislation

Details of the full restriction can be found at entry no. 18a in [Regulation EC No. 552/2009](#), the amended Annex XVII to the REACH Regulation.

It should be noted that the European Chemicals Agency are currently reviewing a proposal to extend the restriction to include certain mercury-containing measuring devices in healthcare and other professional and industrial uses. For further information, please see the [ECHA website](#).

If you have any questions on the above please contact the Health and Safety Authority. Email: REACHRight@hsa.ie.