Regulating Lead in Surface Coating Materials in Canada

Prepared by Health Canada’s Consumer Product Safety Directorate
For the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint Event
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Lead in Paint in Canada

• Pre-1960’s: Lead added to consumer paints in significant amounts (10-50%) as a pigment or to speed up drying, resist corrosion or increase durability

• Growing scientific information on effects of lead exposure in children
  – consumer paints were a key source of lead
1976: Canada’s Initial Response

1976 Liquid Coating Materials Regulations:

- **5,000 mg/kg** (0.5%) total lead limit for interior consumer paints
Late 1980’s: Emerging Hazards

• Lead-poisoning cases seen in Canadian children from exposure to lead-based paint chips and dust in homes undergoing renovations
1991: New Voluntary Measures

1991 voluntary reduction by the Canadian Paint and Coatings Association (CPCA):
- **600 mg/kg** (0.06%) total lead limit for interior and exterior consumer paints
- CPCA represents Canada’s major paints and coatings manufacturers
2005: Surface Coating Materials Regulations

- **600 mg/kg** (0.06%) total lead limit for interior and exterior consumer paints, with exceptions
  - regulations ensure the same limit applies to all consumer paints sold, imported or advertised in Canada, which improves consumer protection
  - voluntary measures only applied to CPCA members; other manufacturers, importers not required to comply
  - difficult for CPCA to monitor and enforce compliance
2010: Lead Limit Reductions

• Surface Coating Materials Regulations further reduce limits to **90 mg/kg** (0.009%) total lead limit for interior and exterior consumer paints, with exceptions (precautionary labelling)
  – aligns with the new, lower total lead limit for consumer paints in the United States under the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act, 2008
  – simplifies trade and further improves consumer protection
Exceptions to Lead Limit

• The lead limit may be exceeded in the following surface coating materials, provided they have a warning label:
  – **Agricultural purposes**: anti-corrosive or anti-weathering coating for use on the surface of agricultural buildings, structures or equipment
  – **Art**:  
    • coatings used in the production of outdoor graphic art, including billboard displays  
    • coatings for use in an art, craft or hobby activity, except those coatings for use by children
  – **Touch-up coating** for use on metal
Compliance and Enforcement

• Health Canada regularly carries out sampling and testing of surface coating materials to determine compliance with the requirements.
  – Regular monitoring improves compliance

• Recalls and enforcement summary reports posted at canada.gc.ca/health
Keeping Stakeholders Informed

• Industry is more likely to comply if it has a say in the development of legislation and is kept informed of its obligations under the legislation.

• Involved in the regulatory development process:
  – Pre-consultations
  – Draft Regulations are published in Canada Gazette, Part I, for public comment (30, 60 or 75 days)
  – Final Regulations are published in Canada Gazette, Part II

• Information is provided:
  – on Health Canada’s website http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps
  – by Regional Product Safety Inspectors located across Canada
For Additional Information

For further information on Health Canada initiatives, please contact:

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