

EU DANGEROUS PREPARATIONS DIRECTIVE BRINGS LABEL CHANGES FOR PLANT PROTECTION PRODUCTS

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Over the next year, changes will appear on Plant Protection Product labels as a result of the implementation of the Dangerous Preparations Directive. It is important to emphasise that this does not reflect any change in the products themselves or an increase in the level of risk arising from their storage and use.

The Dangerous Preparations Directive legislation covers all industrial and household chemicals, but excludes, amongst others, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals and veterinary products. It is already in place for general chemicals, e.g. White Spirit is now classified as “Dangerous to the Environment” and is required to carry the environmentally hazardous symbol which is a dead tree and dead fish on an orange square.

Implementation of the Dangerous Preparations Directive may result in new product classifications and risk and safety phrases appearing on labels, including “Dangerous to the Environment” with the “dead tree/dead fish” symbol on many plant protection product labels. Symbols such as those below may be included on labels.

To date, labelling has been primarily hazard based with the label providing instructions to the users on how to handle the product safely. Products have been classified and labelled primarily for their toxicity, irritancy, sensitisation and their physical-chemical properties, e.g. flammability.

Under the new regulations, products will also be labelled to reflect the hazard represented by the active substance(s) to the environment. Hazard is a measurement of the potential of the active substance(s) or product to cause harm. Risk is the likelihood of harm actually arising. Using an everyday analogy, a car is a hazard. The risk is very low when the car is parked but is much higher if it is driven at 100 miles per hour down a busy pedestrian street!

To date, products have been labelled to highlight physical, chemical and toxicity hazards but now must also be labelled to indicate hazards for the environment. In addition, new risk and safety phrases along with the hazard symbols and indications of danger may appear on the product labels reflecting properties such as toxic to aquatic organisms, may cause long-term adverse effects in the environment, etc.



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The new information to be included on the product labels has already appeared for a number of years on the product Material Safety Data Sheet under the “Information on Ingredients” section.

The risk the products pose to the user, environment or consumer has not changed. The data used to determine the new classification are the same data that have previously been evaluated under the approval process, i.e. the approval evaluation did not show an unacceptable risk.

The timescale for the implementation of these changes is that from 31st July 2004, product delivered to retailers’ stores must be labelled in accordance with these new regulations. Product already in retailers’ stores or on farm at that date can be used without the need for re-labelling.

In conclusion there will be a number of label changes occurring over the next year including the introduction of new hazard phrases and symbols and risk and safety phrases. The changes to the hazard classifications are simply due to changes in the classification regulations and do not reflect any change in risk to the user, consumer or environment.

Please contact APHA if you require any more detail in relation to this matter.

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