

Press release from Jan de Beer, cell 082 456 3677:

Ten Years' In Jail For Lead And Methanol In Coatings Products, Govt Warns

The government is no longer going to tolerate lead in paint and methanol in thinners – and offenders will face prison sentences of up to 10 years or heavy fines.

Noluzuko Gwayi: Senior Policy Advisor (Director), International Chemicals and Waste Cooperation of the Department of Environmental Affairs, issued this stern warning at the recent Coatings for Africa exposition and conference in Sandton.

Gwayi said the draft amendment for the Hazardous Substances Act decrees that the level of lead in paint - previously legislated at 600ppm – would now be only 90ppm to fall in line with international standards. A socio-economic impact assessment study (SEIAS) was already underway and the amendment affecting both lead and methanol levels is likely to be promulgated next year or early 2020.

“Once the amendment is legal, all manufacturers and retailers who continue to manufacture or sell products with illegal levels of hazardous substances will be prosecuted and face fines of up to R10 million and/or 10 years' imprisonment,” Gwayi added.

She also gave the assurance that the proposed new legislation would be strictly policed by the government.

Deryck Spence, executive director of the SA Paint Manufacturing Association (SAPMA) welcomed the government's strong stance on a matter SAPMA had for many years crusaded for.

“It should be noted that the Department of Health has announced that methanol - another deadly toxic chemical – was also on the hazardous substances list and has already undergone the necessary SEIAS assessment study which is now with the Department of Monitoring and Evaluation for approval. Once the SEIAS is approved, the declaration list will be submitted for publication and implementation.”

Spence says methanol – now liberally used by some manufacturers and blenders to dilute lacquer thinners - would then be banned, like lead, from use and manufacturers, blenders and retailers subject to similar prosecution. SAPMA has now issued a warning to all members to obtain a signed declaration from suppliers that all products supplied are safe and comply with the Hazardous Substances Act.

"It is vital that retailers protect themselves by demanding that their suppliers of paint and lacquer thinners sign an indemnification document, testifying that the products they supply are free of both lead and methanol and no danger to the public. SAPMA intends assisting the government in every way possible to police this legislation to ensure that members who act responsibly do not face unfair competition from offenders who use the cheap - but highly dangerous – formulas that still include methanol in thinners and lead in paint."

Chirag Madhu, MD of Medal Paints – a SAPMA pioneer of lead and methanol-free products - says despite competition against cheaper methanol-diluted products, Medal Paints would continue to put human health and safety above cheaper and more dangerous raw materials. "Medal's lacquer thinners contains no methanol and will remain so regardless of market pressure, as will our child-proof caps on the bottles. It is not negotiable," Madhu confirmed.

Medal Paints is currently in the transition phase for upgraded re-certification from the ISO9001:2008 quality standard to the ISO9001:2015 standard.

ends.

Caption:

Deryck Spence, executive director of SAPMA, says SAPMA has warned members to obtain signed declarations from suppliers that all products supplied are safe and comply with the Hazardous Substances Act.

ends

*Issued for SAPMA, Bedfordview/ Further info: Deryck Spence, tel 011 615 1195/
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