



News Release

From the Maine Department of Environmental Protection
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State Takes First Step in Protecting Children from Toxic Chemicals *Identifies Dangerous Chemicals*

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The Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announce the publication of Maine's List of Chemicals of High Concern. Publishing the list of about 1700 chemicals is the first step toward implementing Maine's new Toxic Chemicals in Children's Products law.

The law aims to make children's products safer and less toxic. Maine DEP and CDC have taken the first step, which is to identify and list chemicals known to governments as causing cancer and other health concerns.

"Increasing public awareness of toxic chemicals and their presence in children's products will promote the use of safer chemicals in Maine and move us toward our long term goal of protecting the public and the environment," said DEP Commissioner David Littell. "We also hope this list will prove helpful to businesses, including manufacturers, as they work to improve the chemical safety of their products"

The CHC list was compiled from existing government lists which identified chemicals that are known to pose specific health threats including those that cause cancer. Some of the commonly recognized chemicals on the list include: lead, mercury, formaldehyde, and bisphenol A.

"Far too often we are forced to confront the risks and benefits of chemicals in products only *after* we discover they are present in children's bodies at levels of possible concern," said Dr. Dora Anne Mills, State Health Officer and Director of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention. "We need to be assured that children's products are safe from toxic chemicals when they are put on the market. The Maine CHC list is an important first step toward that critical goal."

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In the past, Maine and other states have targeted specific chemicals or products. The CHC listing takes a more holistic approach – it sets up a process to, prioritize, access chemical information, and replace some of the harmful chemicals in children's products. The law gives the state the authority to phase out

the use of dangerous chemicals in children's products when safer alternatives are effective and available at a comparable cost.

Next year, the DEP and CDC will begin to look more closely at these chemicals, the extent of their use, the level of exposure to children, and documented presence in the human body or environment. The law required the DEP to move at least two "priority chemicals" forward for further scrutiny and possible regulatory action.

Maine is one of several states to implement new laws to reduce toxic chemicals in consumer products. Maine is the first state to publish a List of Chemicals of High Concern.

To view Maine's List of Chemicals of High Concern, go to: www.maine.gov/dep/oc/safechem/