

Safe From Harm

This year has seen an overhaul of the standard manufacturers need to meet in order to make a toy safe. Team TnP chats to some of the world's leading safety testing houses to understand what has changed and what the impact has been on the manufacturing process – and ultimately, what affect this might have on retail



Safety is not a frequently discussed topic in the toy industry, yet it is one of the few that impacts all concerned – in every sector and in every arena.

Recently, there has been much talk of the change in the Toy Safety Directive which was applied in July of this year, but what have the changes actually been? Malcolm Horner Toy Technical Consultant at Bureau Veritas Consumer Products Services explains: “The chemical requirements are more stringent than before; the main changes include new restrictions on Carcinogenic, Mutagenic and Toxic to Reproduction substances; on nitrosamines and nitrosable substances; on play cosmetic for dolls and on restricted fragrances.”

Much of the discussion leading up to the change focused on the change in limits for heavy metals – part of the directive known as EN71-3. Malcolm states that it is: “Related to the migration of certain elements: the maximum specified limits for some of the existing 8 heavy metals/compounds have been lowered and an additional 9 metals, plus Organo Tin and Chromium VI (Hexavalent Chromium), have been added.”

But all these changes sound expensive. Toy manufacturers and suppliers naturally have to foot the bill, but ultimately, it's the consumers and retailers who feel the pinch. Malcolm agrees, but sees a way around the issue: “Complying with all the above requirements could be costly to toy companies if they don't find smarter ways to adapt their strategy. Moving the quality assurance process upstream, getting a better visibility of the chemical supply chain and obtaining a Bill-Of-Materials (BOM) will be key aspects of this.”

Keith Richards, Technical Director – European Toys and Childrens Products concurs: “The new chemical requirements of the Toy Safety Directive don't have to

be a financial burden to toy manufacturers and retailers: the changes are also a good opportunity for toy companies to advance from a Quality Control (validation) strategy to a Quality Assurance (prevention) strategy, hence saving on your total quality budget.”

The new legislation certainly means a change for the toy manufacturers and suppliers, but does it have any impact at all on buyers and retailers up and down the country? Malcolm of Bureau Veritas explains that while there are obligations and requirements to meet, they are by no means as tough as those applied to the manufacturers. “The obligations on independent retailers (unless they are selling “own-branded” toys) are less onerous and there should be no need to ask for BoMs. They should, however, check that the toy bears the required conformity (CE) marking and that the toy is accompanied by safety information, as applicable. They should also check that the toy bears a type, batch, model or serial number (allowing identification of the toy) and also that the toy carries the name and address of both the manufacturer and importer.”

The changes have been a long time in the making – after all, they were first introduced in 2009 – and there have been difficulties in explaining to both sides of the industry, manufacturing and supplying as well as retail, the need for change and what must be adhered to.

Philip Bullock, Technical Manager - Toys & Hardlines, Intertek UK, explains: “The complexity of the requirements and the fact that “simple” testing is no longer necessarily the best means of showing compliance (or even possible) introduces grey areas the previous standard didn't have. There is now more emphasis on risk assessment and evaluation of technical documentation than in the past and it will take time for the toy industry to become comfortable with this new approach. Manufacturers, particularly in the Far East, have been so used to submitting

products for testing that it is up to the European toy industry and retailers to drive this change through making widely available the knowledge and tools necessary to carry out such assessments.”

But if all the standards are the same in the Directive requirements how can a manufacturer decide which testing house to chose? Jo Langley-Hobbs, Group QA Manager for Vivid Imaginations, explains her company's methodology: “As the UK's No 1 Toy and Game Company, it's essential that we deliver high quality products with great play value. Therefore it's key to have an excellent relationship with our testing lab. We carry out thorough safety assessments on all of our toys, and we can work with the lab specialists to decide whether all tests are actually relevant or not. There are other times when you need more than a pass or fail answer and some guidance from the lab on how a small change

“We have to recognise where the consumer wants to shop. So we have to align with the consumer”

could achieve a safer product is invaluable. In today's economic climate, costs are of paramount importance to manufacturers and as final product testing is not the only way to show compliance, it is great to know we are getting honest advice from the test house.”

Are there more changes to come and will the burden be greater for manufacturers and retailers in the coming years?

Malcolm Horner can quell some of these fears: “The Toy Safety Directive 2009/48/EC should be around for few years – the previous Directive dated from 1988. However, standards are always subject to changes and The Toy Safety directive also foresees the possibility to amend the chemical limits when new scientific evidence is made available, in order to assure constant alignment on the latest scientific evidence and appropriate protection for children.”

WHAT IS THE BTHA'S ROLE IN SAFETY?

Jerry Burnie, the Chairman of the Technical Toy Safety committee, tell us more about how the BTHA work within the industry to ensure toy safety:

“The BTHA provide guidance documents, seminars, a toy safety advisory service and offer subsidised consultancy support to members. In addition we have developed a number of toolkits and information to help members assess their materials and products. We also give free access to 167 British Standards through a free BS Online subscription service.

“The BTHA lobbies and works directly with UK enforcement and regulatory bodies to try and ensure regulations are fair and reflect the EU Directives. We also deal direct with the EU Commission or support the work of Toy Industries of Europe (TIE) with the Commission. Our Toy Safety Advisory service and many members also sit on the various standards development committees across the EU trying to positively influence standards development on behalf of our members.

“Toyograph, developed by the BTHA in association with Bureau Veritas, is an

interactive web based tool designed to allow manufacturers to use their Bill of Materials to determine which materials are at risk of containing restricted substances above the limits specified in legislation or at levels that may be a safety concern. By helping to identify the restricted substances that are likely to be present within commonly used toy materials, (BTHA full) members can decide on appropriate, targeted compliance routes.

“The tool aims to help mitigate increased costs likely incurred by the new chemical requirements of the TSD by helping establish a risk assessment approach. This type of approach will help give members the option to target testing to higher risk areas rather than simply increasing testing spend.”

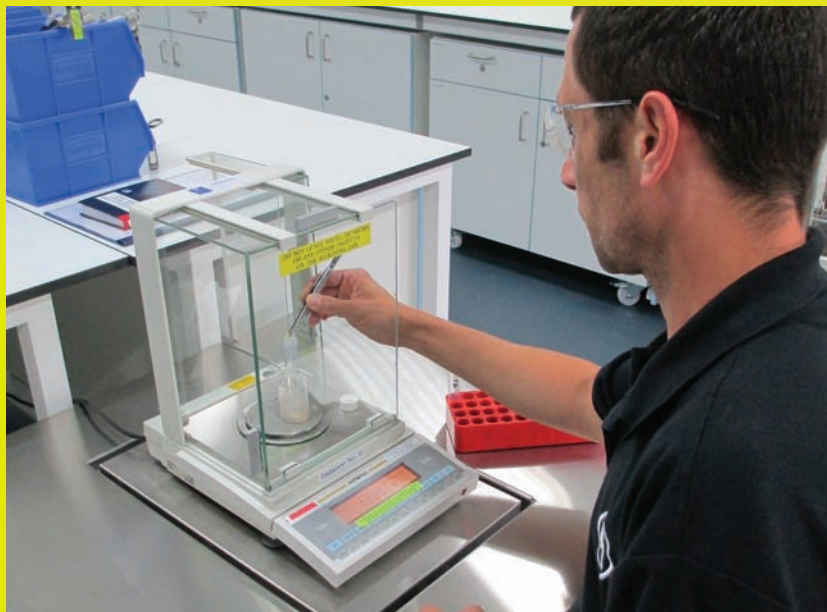


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The new EN 71-3 chemical requirements of the EU Toy Safety Directive (2009/48/EC) came into effect on July 20, 2013. This means that toys entering the EU must now be designed and manufactured in such a way to prevent exposure to harmful chemical elements that can have an adverse effect upon human health. Consideration must be given to the composition of compounds and raw materials used to actually make the item. The directive has been updated to reflect the latest scientific knowledge relating to the use of carcinogenic, mutagenic and toxic for reproduction (CMR) chemicals, expanding the migratable toxic elements requirements to cover 19 elements, including Organic Tin and Chromium VI and restricting certain allergenic fragrance compounds. The new requirements also impact upon manufacturers and importers of children's products, as many standards relating to childcare articles cite references to EN71-3 - if a date is not cited in the reference, then the latest limits apply. There are some exceptions which do have dated references, such as BS EN

1888:2012 Wheeled Child Conveyances (which cites the 1994 edition of EN71-3). This is where UL's toy experts can offer advice and provide consultation to help ensure your products comply with applicable limits and legislation. Our laboratories have actively participated in European working groups on toy safety and have been instrumental in developing the new EN71-3 standard. Through a global network of laboratories, including its new UK Chemical Centre of Excellence based in Reading, UL can provide testing solutions which can help assess product compliance for all 19 elements in accordance with the new legislation plus many other chemical management services such as Azo Dyes, Phthalates, chemical safety assessments and Due Diligence test protocols. UL offers a wide range of quality assurance solutions for childcare manufacturers including technical file management, product design evaluations, human factors, age grading and labelling reviews, to help ensure product safety and quality at every stage of production.



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As the largest player in the toy, games, and premium testing industry, Intertek can help to safeguard its clients, providing product safety testing and evaluation and a complete range of quality assurance services, including: EU Toy Safety Directive Testing, EU Type Examination, Safety Assessment, CPSIA (Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act) Testing, Safety Testing, Feasibility Testing, Juvenile Products Testing, China GB Testing, Risk Assessment and Management Service, iComply, Inspections and Auditing.

In July 2013, the EU introduced sweeping new chemical compliance requirements for toys with limits and additional restrictions on various heavy metals, CMRs, fragrances and nitrosamines. As part of the new Toy Safety Directive, these updates pose a significant challenge for suppliers of toys to the European market. Speak with Intertek about how this affects you and your products, and how we can assist in managing your risk in a cost effective and targeted method, using one of our many authoritative services including chemical screenings, quantitative testing and detailed risk assessments.



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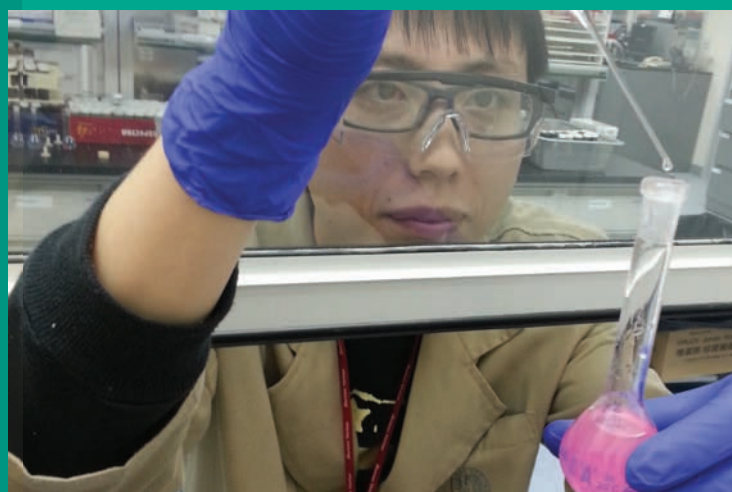
Bureau Veritas Consumer Products Services solutions are designed to assist toy manufacturers, brands, retailers, importers and distributors in minimising the risk of liability, costly product returns and brand-damaging recalls.

We provide a complete solution from product concept to store-shelves – including product testing, safety assessments, design evaluations, technical and regulatory consultancy, product inspections, factory assessments and social audits – to help our clients improve their supply chain, as well as checking that their toys meet the necessary regulatory standards.

All toy businesses need to be ready for the new chemical requirements of the Toy Safety Directive which will become applicable from 20 July 2013; those changes include new requirements for heavy metals/compounds, CMR substances, nitrosamines, play cosmetics for dolls and restricted fragrances. To help you prepare for July 2013, our UK laboratory has developed several screening offers (soluble digestion or total digestion methods) for 17 heavy metals/compounds to suit your needs.

Beyond product testing, our forward-thinking solutions are designed to help our clients, whether they are major international brands and retailers or smaller toy businesses, define and implement the best risk-based approach compliance strategy for their business. What makes Bureau Veritas stand out from the competition?

What makes the difference is the knowledge and experience of our technical consultants who participate in the development of international, industry and regulatory standards worldwide across all product lines, enabling us to keep our clients at the forefront of changes in safety requirements and test methods. With our extensive global network of toy laboratories, including our UK laboratory in Warrington (situated between Manchester and Liverpool) we have the capabilities to test our clients' products wherever they need to. Our 36 years of experience in the toy and juvenile industry make Bureau Veritas Consumer Products Services a partner of choice for retailers, brands and their supply chain.



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SATRA is the world's leading research and technology centre of its kind and employs scientific, technical and support staff in the UK, US and China.

SATRA was formed in 1919 with the original purpose of helping manufacturers and suppliers to evolve by providing technical knowledge, research and testing (the three pillars of strength). Since those early years, SATRA has developed significantly and today the brand is recognised and respected in over 70 countries across a diverse spread of product sectors.

SATRA is a leading authority on international legislation and testing, and the technical aspects of a wide range of products including footwear, leather, clothing, textiles, toys, safety products, PPE, workwear, furniture, floorcoverings, construction products, cleaning & laundry

products and candles. Many of its test methods become industry standards and its production efficiency and accreditation systems are unrivalled. It also houses a well-equipped chemical analysis laboratory to meet the global demand for restricted substances testing.

SATRA's objective is to help its customers increase their competitiveness. It provides support and expertise throughout the whole supply chain, from product research and development, material and component evaluation, quality assurance, manufacturing efficiency and cost saving, to testing and certification. SATRA also builds and sells its own branded test equipment.

Modern business looks to regenerate and revitalise through research and innovation, to exploit technology to enhance products so they have a cutting edge in home and global markets.



The world of toys at a glance



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