

POLYMER DISPERSIONS | NEW REGULATION (EU) NO 286/2011

DISPERSIONS AND THE NEW LABELING REGULATION – PLAYING IT SAFE

From June 1, 2015, regulation (EU) No 286/2011 will impose new threshold limits that will trigger the labeling of skin-sensitizing substances that are subject to specific concentration limits (SCLs). Bio-stability and product safety are a top priority for WACKER.

Why Biocides are Needed for Product Safety

As waterborne systems, our polymer dispersions provide an environment that naturally promotes the growth of microorganisms. This growth tendency is further favored by our efforts to constantly reduce VOC content and residual monomer levels. We add biocides to counteract this tendency. Unless these are added, the result might be changes in color, odor, viscosity, and pH, as well as macroscopic defects and otherwise impaired product performance. Human health might also be impacted. Preserving our dispersions with biocides protects them against bio-contamination. By using suitable biocide systems, we minimize the risk that critical microorganisms will grow or adapt.

How We are Responding to the New Regulation

Regulation (EU) No 286/2011 stipulates that, from June 1, 2015, skin-sensitizing substances which have an SCL of < 0.1% that triggers the label R43/H317 must bear the label EUH 208 if the concentration of that sensitizing substance exceeds 1/10th of the SCL at which H317 labeling becomes mandatory.

The majority of our dispersions are affected by this regulation.

Consequently, from June 2015, most of our dispersions shall bear the label **“EUH 208 – Contains <Name of sensitizing substance>. May produce an allergic reaction.”** Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) will be updated accordingly.

Why Labeling Adds to Safety

The label itself will not increase the risk of allergic reactions, as no changes are being made to the product formulation and the type and quantity of preservation. The need for the label results from the lower threshold limits imposed by the new

regulation. The requirement to name the biocide system will make product handling safer because allergic people will now easily recognize the presence of the sensitizing substances. The label also increases transparency for both our customers and the end-consumers while our proven preservation provides the best-possible stabilization against microbial contamination (by yeast, bacteria, fungi).

Reasons for Labeling

As the bio-stability of our products is extremely important to us, we are retaining the existing, proven biocide combination, which minimizes the risk of contamination – to the best of our knowledge. We believe that, if we changed the preservation system so as to avoid the need for labeling, our products would be less resistant to microbial attack. That would adversely affect all parties along the value chain, including our customers:

- Increased risk of bio-contamination
- Higher risk of growth or adaptation of critical microorganisms; this could impair the performance of our products and destabilize them, and even prove harmful to people
- Higher risk arising during handling, transport and storage of our dispersions
- Potential reduction in the shelf life of our dispersions
- Need for closer quality monitoring
- Higher costs for all market partners along the value chain

Important to Know

- The regulation concerns product labeling only.
- The product formulation itself is unaffected.
- Actual risk is not increased. The label's purpose is merely to alert already sensitized people.
- There is no impact on transport or storage regulations.
- The label “EUH 208” applies to our dispersions. The need for end-products to be labeled will have to be checked on an individual basis.
- Upon request, our Sales and Technical Department will gladly provide details of the quantities of biocides used in our dispersions.

SHAPING THE FUTURE – RESPONSIBLY AND SUSTAINABLY

Why We Keep on Researching

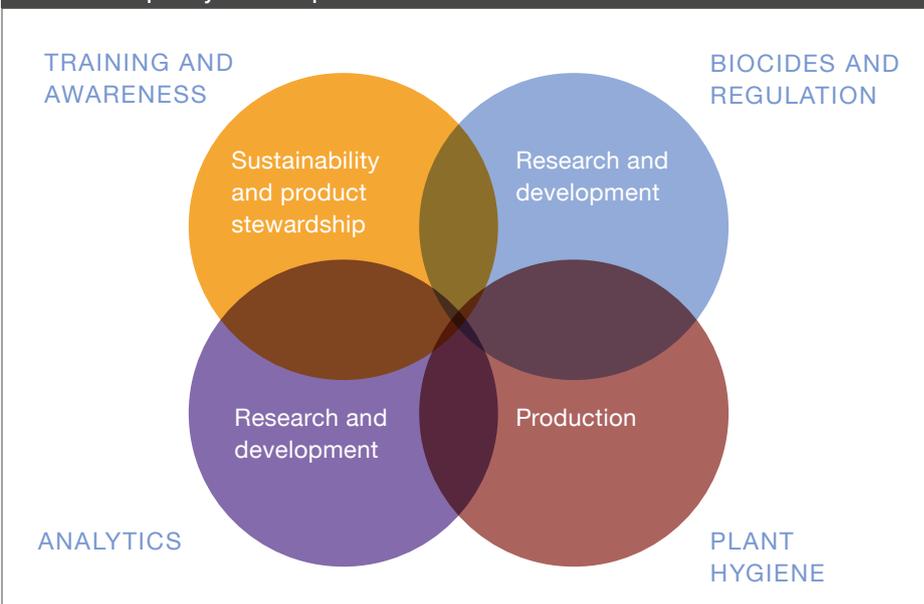
Microorganisms keep adapting and legislation keeps changing. It is incumbent upon any responsible raw materials supplier to try to anticipate new requirements. Screening and testing of new alternatives feature prominently in our daily R&D work as we strive to better meet our customers' demands – today and in the future.

How We Support You

If you need assistance or have any queries, please contact your WACKER sales representative, who will advise you and can forward inquiries to our interdisciplinary bio-competence team.

Proper preservation of dispersions with biocides is important, but plant hygiene and hygienic transportation are also key factors for minimizing the risk of bio-contamination and growth of critical microorganisms. More details can be found in infosheet 7124 on Plant Hygiene.

Our Interdisciplinary Bio-Competence Team



WACKER has created an interdisciplinary bio-competence team whose task is to ensure compliance with existing and upcoming regulations on bio-stability. The team focuses on four different areas: "R&D" is concerned with developing test methods and checking the effectiveness and compatibility of alternative biocide packages with our dispersions. "Production" covers plant hygiene while "Sustainability and product stewardship" concentrates on training. The team also provides support for our technical service, our sales force and our customers.

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