



# Smart Terminology for Substances of Interest

## IN DISPOSABLE HYGIENE

**a** **Absence of Risk:** Indicates that the substance of interest (SOI) poses no risk. It is possible that a substance is still present. This may be because the SOI is present at a safe level, or used in such a way that there is no exposure to the consumer.

**Absence of Substance:** Indicates that the substance of interest (SOI) is not [present](#). From a scientific point of view, it is more accurate to state that an SOI is not detected, or that its concentration is below detection limit.

**Adsorbable Organic Halides (AOX or AOH):** Also called adsorbable organic halogens. The standard detection method measures chlorine, bromine and iodine as equivalent halogens, but does not measure fluorine levels in the sample.

**AHPs:** An acronym for [Absorbent Hygiene Products](#), which includes diapers, pull-ups and pads used in baby care, adult incontinence and feminine care.

**Alkylphenols:** A family of organic compounds commonly used as detergents and fuel additives. Alkylphenols are also used in manufacturing elastomers.

**Annex XIV:** A list of substances subject to authorisation under the European Union's REACH regulation. It is frequently updated based on ECHA (European Chemical Agency) recommendations.

**Antimony:** A semi-metallic element that appears freestanding or in a variety of ores.

**b** **Bisphenol A:** Often called BPA, bisphenol A is an industrial chemical used to make certain plastics and resins. BPA was the subject of many high-profile [news stories](#) with regards its use in baby bottles and other consumer products.

**Blauer Engel:** The eco-label of the federal government of Germany since 1978. The Blauer Engel (Blue Angel) sets high standards for environmentally friendly product design and services.

**C** **Chemicals of Concern (COC):** A list of chemicals that have garnered public concern.

**Chemical footprint:** A measure of the actions a company takes to advance the development and use of safer chemicals in products and across supply chains.

**Chemophobia:** A fear of chemicals, especially those with names one cannot pronounce or understand. Reports linking exposure to a public health or environmental danger can increase chemophobia.

**Chlorine:** A chemical that was used as a bleaching agent for fluff pulp. Chlorine bleaching can create dioxins, which are also a substance of interest (SOI). Bleaching of fluff used in absorbent hygiene products is now chlorine free (TCF or ECF).

**Composition:** A list of what is present in a product, similar to a list of ingredients on food or cosmetics packaging. It is worth noting that composition lists include only what is intentionally added, not the SOIs that are present as impurities at trace levels.

**d** **Detected:** Indicates a substance of interest (SOI) was found in a sample at a concentration that is above the detection limit of the analytical technique employed. It is possible for a substance to be present in quantities too low to be detected (below detection limits).

**Dioxins:** A class of organic compounds, which can be formed as a byproduct of combustion or chlorine bleaching.

**e** **European Chemicals Agency (ECHA):** The driving force among regulatory authorities in implementing the European Union's chemicals legislation.

**Eco-label:** A certification that identifies products or services as environmentally friendly. This commonly includes testing and evaluation of the products and their supply chain. Many disposable hygiene products in Europe have earned eco-labels, or are in the process of doing so.

**EDANA:** The international association for the nonwovens and related industries, a trade organization that also includes manufacturers of disposable hygiene articles. Bostik is a member of EDANA and the EDANA task force on SOIs.

EDANA is working to identify substances of interest (SOIs), as well as educate people in the disposable hygiene industry and beyond. The task force is compiling a SOI list, identifying safe limits and establishing testing standards.

**Elemental chlorine free (ECF):** Indicates a bleaching process for fluff pulp, and the resulting fluff pulp, where the bleaching agents are free of elemental chlorine. (It may still include chlorine in other forms.) ECF can refer specifically to bleaching with chlorine dioxide or other bleaching agents that prevent the formation of certain SOIs.

**Ethanol:** A specific type of alcohol, most commonly found in alcoholic beverages.

**Exposure-based risk assessment:** Examines the How, Where, How Much and How Long of exposure to substances to determine how much **risk** there is.

**f** **Formaldehyde:** A naturally occurring, colourless gas, with a very strong smell. It is mostly used in pressed-wood products. Formaldehyde is considered a volatile organic compound (VOC).

**Furans:** A class of organic compounds. Furans are often released in the process of chlorine bleaching.

**g** **Glyphosate:** An herbicide applied to kill both broadleaf plants and grasses. Glyphosate was recently detected in some disposable diapers by the French health agency Anses.

**Group'Hygiène:** A French professional trade association for the manufacturers of single-use products for hygiene, health and wiping.

**h** **Heavy metals:** Any one of several metallic elements that has a high density. They include mercury, cadmium, arsenic, and others.

**Herbicides:** A chemical used to kill unwanted plants. Herbicides typically contain a variety of chemical substances.

**l** **Latex:** Chemically, this is a polymer that is available as a dispersion in water. In the context of Absorbent Hygiene Products, latex commonly refers to natural rubber latex, a naturally occurring rubber collected by tapping of rubber trees. It can cause an allergic reaction in some people.

**Lead:** A heavy metal found in many natural ores. Lead was once common in many products including gasoline, paint and dyes.

**m** **Mercury:** A heavy metal. Also called quicksilver, mercury is the only metallic element that is liquid at room temperature. It was once used in many dyes.

**n** **Non-Governmental Organization (NGO):** A nonprofit organization that operates independent of any government and often addresses social or political issues.

**Nordic Swan:** The official eco-label of the Nordic countries, Nordic swan sets strict standards for goods and services that are awarded its seal of approval.

**o** **Organotin compounds:** A class of organic compounds that include tin. Organotins are often used as antibacterial and anti-fungal agents.

**p** **Parabens:** A class of related organic compounds. Commonly used as preservatives, parabens help prevent the growth of fungus, bacteria and other potentially dangerous microbes.

**Pesticide:** A chemical used to destroy unwanted insects and other harmful organisms. Pesticides may contain several chemical substances.

**Phthalates:** A group of chemicals often used to soften and increase the flexibility of polymers.

**Polyaromatic hydrocarbon (PAH):** Also called polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, this class of chemicals occur naturally in coal, petroleum, crude oil and other organic resources. They can also be produced when organic compounds are burned.

**Polyvinyl chloride (PVC):** A polymer of vinyl chloride. PVC is a versatile compound, often used for its thermoplastic qualities.

**Rash:** An unhealthy change in skin which affects its colour, appearance and/or texture.

**Regulation, Evaluation Authorisation and restriction of Chemicals (REACH):** A regulation of the European Union (EU), adopted to improve the protection of human health and the environment from the risks that can be posed by chemicals, while enhancing the competitiveness of the EU chemicals industry. It also promotes alternative methods for the hazard assessment of substances in order to reduce the number of tests on animals.

**Restricted Substance Lists (RSLs):** A list of substances that ECHA has decided to restrict (whether limit or ban) for manufacture, import or use. Specific conditions such as labelling or technical measures can be imposed.

**Safe:** With regards to substances of interest (SOIs), “safe” generally means that there is little or no [risk](#) when used according to directions.

**Substance of Very High Concern (SVHCs):** Substances that may have serious effect on human health and the environment. ECHA regularly updates a list of SVHC, considered for authorisation in REACH. Once a substance is listed as SVHC, it should be disclosed in a product composition if present at concentrations above 0.1%.

**Substance:** Generally, something made of a single element or molecule.

**Substance of Interest (SOI):** Any element or chemical that is of interest to those wanting to know about its effects on human health and/or the [environment](#).

t

**Talc:** A clay mineral used in talcum powder and other cosmetic products for decades. Although not literally a substance, it has been considered as an SOI by some.

**Totally chlorine free (TCF):** Indicates a bleaching process for fluff pulp, and the resulting fluff pulp, where the bleaching agents do not contain chlorine as an element or as an atom in the molecule. TCF refers to complete absence of chlorine (in any form) in materials and products.

**Toxic:** Poisonous or otherwise harmful to the environment or human health if inhaled, ingested, or absorbed through the skin.

**Trace Amounts:** A very low concentration of a chemical or element. Trace amounts may or may not be detectable, depending on the sensitivity of the test.

**Toxicological Reference Values (TRV):** A list of risk thresholds for a variety of chemical substances. Also known by its French acronym, VTR (Valeurs Toxicologiques de Référence).

V

**Volatile organic compounds (VOCs):** Organic compounds which are volatile, meaning they easily give off vapours or gas. VOCs are often used in perfumes, which are intended to give off scent.

**Valeurs Toxicologiques de Référence (VTR):** See Toxicological Reference Values (TRV).

**Want to learn more about substances of interest?**

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