

REACH 2018 - Call to action!

Workers' reps in companies manufacturing, importing or using chemicals



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The REACH Regulation requires companies manufacturing or importing chemical substances into the EU, Iceland, Norway or Liechtenstein in quantities of one tonne or more per year to register them with ECHA. If information on the hazardous properties of the chemical is unavailable, it should be generated and safety data sheets should be updated if needed.

IS YOUR EMPLOYER READY?

The last registration deadline is on 31 May 2018 and it impacts companies manufacturing or importing existing substances in volumes between 1 and 100 tonnes per year. Registration concerns chemical substances as such, in mixtures or, in specific cases, in articles.

Your employer should start preparing for the REACH 2018 registration deadline now by analysing the company's portfolio from the REACH 2018 perspective and making a plan for managing the 2018 registrations!

WHAT ARE THE DUTIES OF YOUR EMPLOYER?

If your company has to register substances by the last registration deadline of 31 May 2018 your employer has to:

- gather all available information about the properties of the substance;
- share it with other manufacturers and importers of the same substance;
- determine with them if they as co-registrants have all information needed for registration;
- if not, fill in the gaps together; and
- document this in a registration dossier.

In addition, if the volume manufactured or imported is at or above 10 tonnes per year, your employer also has to:

- use the information collected to assess the risks for workers' and consumers' health, as well as for the environment; and
- identify the necessary risk management measures to ensure the safe use of the substance by your company and by your customers.

In all cases, your employer has to:

- submit a registration dossier to the European Chemicals Agency. The majority of the information has to be submitted jointly with other companies registering the same substance; and
- update safety data sheets for your users if warranted by information generated for registration.

If your company is using chemicals in the workplace, check with your employer whether:

- the chemical substances you use have been registered or are intended to be registered by your suppliers by 2018;
- your uses are covered by up-to-date safety data sheets; and
- the risk management measures as described in the safety data sheets and exposure scenarios are implemented to ensure the safe use of the chemical.

WHY SHOULD YOU BE CONCERNED?

If your company fails to comply with the REACH requirements, it can have a significant impact on you as you may not be using the chemicals safely.

National enforcement authorities may also take action against your employer with potential cost implications and may even shut down your production lines.

HOW WILL THESE RULES BENEFIT YOU?

By complementing occupational health and safety rules, they will improve worker protection by enhancing the safe use of chemicals, reducing exposure to hazardous chemicals and avoiding occupational diseases caused by them.

WHERE TO FIND FURTHER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT?

ETUC offers dedicated REACH web pages: www.etuc.org/issue/reach

ECHA provides guidance, IT tools and assistance to companies in their roles and obligations as registrants and users of chemicals:

echa.europa.eu/reach-2018
echa.europa.eu/downstream

National REACH helpdesks offer practical advice in local languages:

echa.europa.eu/support/helpdesks

EU-OSHA provides information on how to manage the risks of using dangerous substances at work:

osha.europa.eu/en/themes/dangerous-substances

