

Greenlist Bulletin

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at the University of Massachusetts Lowell

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In This Issue

Procurement: managing globalized and complex supply chains

California finds toxins in 'non-toxic' nail polishes

Leverage with leadership: health care systems gear up for the Healthier Hospitals Initiative


Greening up the blue dye in jeans, police uniforms and the red, white and blue

The Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA): a summary

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Procurement: managing globalized and complex supply chains

[Source: Eurosif, March 2012](#)

The responsibilities of procurement functions in companies have moved away from the simple purchase of raw materials and finished goods towards a comprehensive supply chain management that includes risk assessments of quality, financial and extra-financial factors and monitoring of suppliers and sub-suppliers.

With the acceleration of globalization, companies have outsourced production processes to external suppliers and have relocated production sites. Historically, the major drivers for this trend have been cost reduction and enhancing manufacturing flexibility. Both outsourcing and relocation have resulted in the rise of low-cost countries, such as China, as production locations. As a part of this process, the complexity of supply chains has increased, not only in terms of regional distribution, but also in terms of the number of different players. Depending on the product, supply chains are composed of various steps with a large number of independent companies. For instance, a company selling apparel products has direct suppliers ('Tier 1', e.g. garment factories), sub-suppliers ('Tier 2', e.g. manufacturers of dyed fabrics and accessories), sub-sub-suppliers ('Tier 3', e.g. spinners), and so forth, down to the raw material suppliers (e.g. cotton farmers).

As a consequence of these trends, it is more difficult for companies to control their supply chains and hence quality and supply security, as well as social and environmental impacts. Textile and Clothing, Electronics and the related retailers downstream are among those sectors that have been most exposed to the outsourcing and offshoring trend.

This paper focuses on these two industries. Another industry that is exposed to supply chain risks is the food industry, among others. Here, the supply chains are less complex, but

social conditions (e.g. labour standards in plantations) and environmental impacts (e.g. water and chemicals use in agriculture, reduction of biodiversity) are likewise important.

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California finds toxins in 'non-toxic' nail polishes

[Source: Associated Press, April 11, 2012](#)

Author: Jason Dearen

Some nail polishes commonly found in California salons and advertised as free of a so-called "toxic trio" of chemicals actually have high levels of agents linked to birth defects, state regulators said Tuesday.

A Department of Toxic Substances Control report determined that the mislabeled nail products have the potential to harm thousands of workers in more than 48,000 nail salons in California, and their customers.

The use of the three chemicals in nail products is legal if properly labeled. But agency officials said the false claims may violate a state law that requires disclosure of harmful chemicals in consumer products. The state attorney general could decide whether the companies will face legal action, which can include fines and an order to attach warning labels.

Investigators randomly chose 25 brands of polishes that are available only at nail salons, including a number of products claiming to be free of the chemicals toluene, dibutyl phthalate (DBP) and formaldehyde, which are known as the toxic trio. Regulators said exposure to large amounts of the chemicals has been linked to developmental problems, asthma and other illnesses.

Investigators found that 10 of 12 products that claimed to be free of toluene actually contained it, with four of the products having dangerously high levels.

The report also found that five of seven products that claimed to be "free of the toxic three" included one or more of the agents in significant levels.

The agency said it did not have enough data to accurately estimate how many people were being exposed to the chemicals through the products.

"We know there are exposures at salons, both to workers and customers, and we're concerned about potential harm," said Karl Palmer, the DTSC's pollution prevention performance manager who oversaw the report.

"Our strategy first and foremost is to shed light on the reality of what's in these products and put this information out to everyone."

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Leverage with leadership: health care systems gear up for the Healthier Hospitals Initiative

[Source: Practice Greenhealth, February/March 2012](#)

Author: Janet Brown

Practice Greenhealth, Health Care Without Harm, and The Center for Health Design have joined with many of the largest hospital systems in the nation to launch the Healthier Hospitals Initiative (HHI), a three year, coordinated effort to drive and measure environmental interventions in health care.

The ultimate goal of HHI is to incorporate sustainability as an integral part of the health care delivery model by demonstrating positive financial and environmental outcomes. Advocate Health Care, Dignity Health (formerly Catholic Healthcare West), HCA Healthcare, Kaiser Permanente, Partners Health Care Systems, Inc., Inova Health System, and MedStar Health are the founding sponsors of the Healthier Hospitals Initiative. Along with the other sponsoring health systems,

they have developed the standardized areas of measurement based on proven success and provided the foundation to enable any hospital in the United States to participate in the initiative, at no charge to them.

The Healthier Hospitals Initiative is based on the premise that a coordinated sector-wide approach to how the sector builds and operates hospitals can create extraordinary environmental benefits and save billions of dollars. The Initiative utilizes evidence-based design and research data on environmental sustainability and community health to outline a prioritized roadmap. It is a method for moving from good ideas implemented by individual facilities to a comprehensive system and sector-wide adoption of sustainable practices and cost reduction. The mass-movement will drive the marketplace and the sector to position health care facilities as the anchors of health in their communities.

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Greening up the blue dye in jeans, police uniforms and the red,white and blue

[Source: American Chemical Society, April 4, 2012](#)

Efforts are underway to develop a more environmentally friendly process for dyeing denim with indigo, the storied "king of dyes," used to the tune of 50,000 tons annually to color cotton blue jeans and hundreds of other products. That effort is the topic of an article in the current edition of *Chemical & Engineering News* (C&EN). C&EN is the weekly newsmagazine of the American Chemical Society (ACS), the world's largest scientific society.

In the article, C&EN Assistant Managing Editor Michael McCoy notes that concerns about the environmental effects of indigo represent a modern concern about an ancient product. Indigo produces a rainbow of hues, ranging from deep navy to pale pastels. For centuries, the primary source of indigo was branches of a bush native to India. In 1878, German chemist and Nobel laureate Adolf von Baeyer made the first synthetic indigo, but the process was too expensive. It took chemical manufacturer BASF years to find a practical process for making the dye, and that happened only because of a lucky accident in which a lab worker broke a mercury thermometer, and the mercury catalyzed a reaction to make the dye.

The story describes how a partnership between the dye manufacturer DyStar and Swiss startup RedElec Technologie may be the beginning of a new revolution in indigo dyeing that will improve its environmental profile. To get indigo dye to attach to denim and other fabrics requires chemical reactions before and after the dye impregnates the cotton fibers. Even with modern improvements to the technique, the process produces large amounts of waste.

The article highlights a new approach designed to achieve a long-standing goal of eliminating the need for sodium hydrosulfite in the dyeing process. Doing so would green up the indigo dyeing process and stop a water pollution problem at its source.

The Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA): a summary

[Source: Congressional Research Service, April 5, 2012](#)

Author: Linda-Jo Schierow


This report summarizes the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) and the major regulatory programs that mandate reporting by industrial facilities of releases of potentially hazardous chemicals to the environment, as well as local planning to respond in the event of significant, accidental releases. The text is excerpted, with minor modifications, from the corresponding chapter of CRS Report RL30798, *Environmental Laws: Summaries of Major Statutes Administered by the Environmental Protection Agency*, coordinated by David M. Bearden, which summarizes major environmental statutes.

The Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (42 U.S.C. 11001-11050) was enacted in 1986 as Title III of the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (P.L. 99-499). In Subtitle A, EPCRA established a national framework for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to mobilize local government officials, businesses, and other citizens to plan ahead for chemical accidents in their communities. EPCRA required each state to create a State Emergency Response Commission (SERC), to designate emergency planning districts, and to establish local emergency planning committees (LEPCs) for each district. EPA is required to list

extremely hazardous substances, and to establish threshold planning quantities for each substance. The law directs each facility to notify the LEPC for its district if it stores or uses any "extremely hazardous substance" in excess of its threshold planning quantity. LEPCs are to work with such facilities to develop response procedures, evacuation plans, and training programs for people who will be the first to respond in the event of an accident. EPCRA requires that facilities immediately report a sudden release of any hazardous substance that exceeds the reportable quantity to appropriate state, local, and federal officials.

Subtitle B directs covered facilities annually to submit information about the chemicals that they have present to the LEPC, SERC, and local fire department. In addition, manufacturers and other facilities designated by EPA must estimate and report to EPA annually on releases from their facilities of certain toxic chemicals to the land, air, or water. EPA must compile that data into a computerized database, known as the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI). Generally, all information about chemicals that is required to be reported to LEPCs, SERCs, or EPA is made available to the general public, but EPCRA authorizes reporting facilities to withhold the identity of a chemical if it is a trade secret. Citizens are given the authority to bring civil action against a facility, EPA, a governor, or an SERC for failure to implement EPCRA requirements.

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