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PAINTS AND OTHER SURFACE-COATINGS CONTAINING HEAVY METALS

Request for Data

In the FEDERAL REGISTER of November 2, 1971 (36 F.R. 20896), the Commissioner of Food and Drugs proposed that certain paints and other surface-coatings containing heavy metals be declared hazardous substances that require special labeling for child protection. In the same issue of the FEDERAL REGISTER (36 F.R. 20896), the Commissioner published a petition submitted by Joseph A. Page et al., proposing to identify as banned hazardous substances paints which are for household use and contain more than minute traces of lead. Interested persons were allowed 60 days to file written comments regarding these proposals.

By a letter dated February 3, 1972, petitioners requested that the Commissioner ask paint companies to submit certified analyses of their product lines "[in] order to assist in resolution of the argument of technical incapacity that the paint industry is making * * *." In consideration of this request and in view of the numerous conflicting and apparently irreconcilable comments received in response to the above proposals, the Commissioner considers that such data would be of value in preparing the final order.

Therefore, the Commissioner hereby requests that all manufacturers of paint and/or other surface-coatings submit the following information for their interior and general purpose exterior paints and for those paints and coatings which are supplied to industry for use on toys and other children's articles as well as furniture and other household articles which may be accessible to children:

1. The total amount of each of the heavy metals lead, antimony, arsenic, barium, cadmium, mercury, and selenium (all calculated as the metal) present in the contained solids or dried paint film together with identification of the quantitative method used for such determination;

2. If barium is present, the percentage of the total barium which is water soluble barium (calculated as the metal);

3. The amount, if any, of each of the above heavy metals that was intentionally added to the product together with the reason for such addition; and

4. A current label for each analyzed product.

Products should be tested for the specified heavy metals by any generally accepted quantitative method having a sensitivity of at least 0.01 percent of the metal in the contained solids or dried paint film and a reproducibility of plus or minus 10 percent of the particular metal.

The requested data should be submitted by April 7, 1972, to the Bureau of Product Safety, 5401 Westbard Avenue, Bethesda, Maryland 20016.

Dated: February 17, 1972.

CHARLES C. EDWARDS,
Commissioner of Food and Drugs.

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