Customer Information

Classification of titanium dioxide
as suspected of causing cancer by inhalation

On October 4, 2019, the European Commission decided to classify titanium dioxide as a suspected carcinogen (cat 2.) by inhalation. This classification will only apply to titanium dioxide in its pure powder form and solid mixtures containing 1% or more of the substance. It does not apply to dried printing ink films.

On February 18, 2020, the Commission decision on the classification of titanium dioxide as part of the 14th ATP to the CLP Regulation was published in the Official Journal of the European Union (EU) 2020/217. After the 18-month transition period has expired, i.e. by October 1, 2021, at the latest, the classification must be implemented by the entire supply chain.

For printing inks the following warning statement will be required on labels:

EUH211: ‘Warning! Hazardous respirable droplets may be formed when sprayed. Do not breathe spray or mist.’

This warning statement is mandatory regardless of whether a liquid mixture is suitable for spray applications or not. It will therefore be shown on Siegwerk product labels, but is of limited relevance in practice. Inhalation exposure due to potential ink misting on high-speed printing machines does not raise concerns under typical printing conditions. Additionally, titanium dioxide particles are firmly embedded in the binder matrix and, as such, cannot be inhaled.

It should also be noted that mixtures carrying exclusively warning statement EUH211 are still considered non-hazardous.

The impact on downstream legislation such as waste law or the European Toy Directive is currently under evaluation by EU expert groups. The aim is to ensure that the new labeling does not have any further negative effects in these areas.

Siegwerk continues to share the conviction of the German Paint and Printing Ink Industry Association (VdL), the European Council of the Paint, Printing Inks and Artists’ Colours Industry (CEPE) and the Titanium Dioxide Manufacturers Association (TDMA): the use of titanium dioxide is safe in paints, coatings and printing inks.

More information is available at www.tdma.info (in English) and www.forum-titandioxid.de (in German).

The information in this document reflects Siegwerk’s policy and commitments. This statement is valid without signature.

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1 German Social Accident Insurance Institution for the energy, textile, electrical and media products sectors (BG ETEM): Impact of re-classification of titanium dioxide, March 2020 (in German)