

## **Paint manufacturers urged to improve product labeling**

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A consumer protection group and a waste and pollution watch group together urged paint manufacturers to improve product labeling information to better assist consumers in selecting paints that will not pose health hazards, especially to children, women of child-bearing age and workers.

The groups further called on paint makers to voluntarily retrieve old lead-containing architectural, decorative and household (ADH) paints from hardware and paint stores as their sale is no longer permitted following the completion of the three-year phaseout schedule for such paints.

Laban Konsyumer Inc. (LKI) and the EcoWaste Coalition issued the appeal in their efforts to eliminate lead in paints, a common source of childhood lead exposure.

“Paint can labels are an important source of information that will help consumers in selecting products, which are suitable for their needs and which meet safety requirements such as the maximum permissible lead limit,” said Vic Dimagiba, LKI president.

“Paint products should provide adequate information about lead and other chemicals of concern on paint can labels, and also provide a precautionary warning that disturbing lead paint creates hazardous dust that is harmful to children, pregnant women and workers,” Dimagiba added.

Thony Dizon, chemical safety campaigner of the EcoWaste Coalition, encouraged paint manufacturers to obtain third-party certification of their compliance to the regulatory lead in paint limit.

“An independent verification that will confirm a product’s compliance to the lead paint regulation will increase consumer confidence that the paint being purchased does not present lead hazards to children and other vulnerable groups,” Dizon said.

“As consumers have the right to know, the certificate of compliance should be posted on the company’s website,” he suggested.

LKI and the EcoWaste Coalition also appealed to concerned paint manufacturers to take back old lead-containing paints that are still in the possession of their distributors and vendors.

Removing lead-containing ADH paints from store shelves will prevent their unlawful sale to consumers.

“Removing such paints from the market will also benefit their manufacturers,” the groups said.

“Paint manufacturers who have already replaced lead in paint formulations should not allow their reputation to be tarnished by old leaded stocks that are still offered for sale even after the phase-out deadline,” they added.

Both groups also emphasized the importance of a clearly-written manufacturing date and batch number information on the paint can labels to assist consumers in avoiding the purchase of older products that may still contain lead additives.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Administrative Order 2013-24, or the Chemical Control Order for Lead and Lead Compounds, established 90 parts per million (ppm) as total lead content limit for paints and directed the phase-out of lead-containing ADH from 2013-2016. Lead-containing paints for industrial applications were provided a longer phase-out schedule from 2013-2019.

The 1991 Philippine National Standard specifications for alkyd-based metal primer (PNS 366:2016) and gloss latex paint (PNS 462:2016) were duly revised to make them aligned with DENR A.O. 2013-24.

According to the 2017 lead in paint report released by the EcoWaste Coalition last Monday, 80 out of 104 samples (77 %) representing 54 brands from 31 manufacturers passed the 90 ppm limit, and 24 of 104 samples (23%) failed.

The study conducted in collaboration with IPEN (an international NGO network promoting safe chemicals policies and practices) reiterated the need to stop the use of lead-based ingredients in paint formulations, especially by paint companies that still produce lead paints.

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