



Understanding your Detergents label

Introducing some changes to detergent labels and what they mean for you



Working together for a cleaner Europe

During the next few months, you will progressively see some changes in how detergent products are labelled. These changes are intended to help you, the consumer, use your detergent safely and effectively. This leaflet is designed to explain these changes to you.

DETERGENTS IN OUR DAILY LIVES

People use detergents every day in their homes, to clean all sorts of things and so ensure good hygiene as well as their health and well-being.

Detergents have been around for a long time, and might not be something people think about very much. But since soaps became widely available in Europe in the early 1900s, detergents have made a huge difference in maintaining health and preventing disease. Today, they still play a vital role in ensuring hygiene – in people's homes and in public places like schools and hospitals, hotels and restaurants.

Often, when people talk about 'detergents', they mean products that are used to wash and condition laundry. In reality, the term 'detergents' covers all those products that are commonly used for washing and cleaning - textiles, dishes, floors and other household surfaces.



MAKING SURE DETERGENTS ARE SAFE TO USE

Because detergents are used every day in people's homes to maintain health and well-being, it is all the more important that people can trust them to do just that. Companies in the detergents industry have a long-established track record of ensuring that the products they make are safe for people and the environment, and extensive European legislation underpins this approach.

The industry is also working continuously to make further improvements – in consultation with consumer groups, government authorities and other experts – in areas ranging from efforts to introduce more environmentally-friendly ingredients into detergent products, to developing better labels, and making it easier for consumers to get hold of information to answer any question they may have.

WHAT'S NEW?

On 8 October 2005, a new Detergents Regulation will come into effect in Europe. The Regulation brings together several older, existing pieces of legislation, and adds some new elements. This is, in itself, not unusual. Existing legislation is regularly updated to take account of new scientific findings, and to respond to ongoing reviews of ingredients carried out either by the authorities or by industry on a voluntary basis.

The new Detergents Regulation mainly affects how detergent products are labelled. The changes you may notice to your detergent labels during 2005 – and which will appear progressively as from October – are intended to make it easier for you to choose the right product, to use it safely and to obtain the best possible results.



MORE DETAIL ON INGREDIENTS

Labels on detergent products already include a list of ingredients – that has been a well-established practice for some time. Under the new Regulation, even more information will be provided on ingredients. This is to help ensure that people having allergic reactions are well informed when selecting a product. However, for most people, this is no cause for concern, as allergic reactions to detergent ingredients are relatively rare.

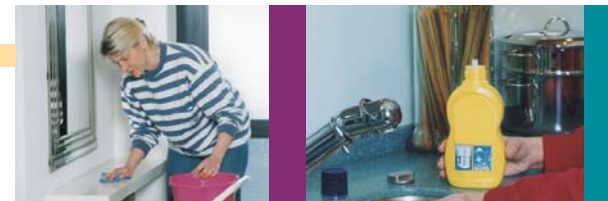
▶ Altogether, 26 fragrance ingredients have been identified by the EU Scientific Committee (SCCP*) as the ones most often linked with allergic reactions and so these substances will in future be indicated on the label if they are present in the product above a concentration exceeding 0.01% by weight. As a result, detergent labels will now show a more detailed list of perfume ingredients, rather than just grouping them under the word 'perfume'. The full list of these ingredients is given below.



ALLERGENIC FRAGRANCES INGREDIENTS

- AMYL CINNAMAL
- BENZYL ALCOHOL
- CINNAMYL ALCOHOL
- CITRAL
- EUGENOL
- HYDROXYCITRONELLAL
- ISOEUGENOL
- AMYLCINNAMYL ALCOHOL
- BENZYL SALICYLATE
- CINNAMAL
- COUMARIN
- GERANIOL
- HYDROXYISOHEXYL 3-CYCLOHEXENE CARBOXYALDEHYDE
- ANISE ALCOHOL
- BENZYL CINNAMATE
- FARNESOL
- BUTYLPHENYL METHYLPROPIONAL
- LINALOOL
- BENZYL BENZOATE
- CITRONELLOL
- HEXYL CINNAMAL
- LIMONENE
- METHYL 2-OCTYNOATE
- ALPHA-ISOMETHYL IONONE
- EVERNIA PRUNASTRI EXTRACT
- EVERNIA FURFURACEA EXTRACT

* SCCP: Scientific Committee on Consumer Products



▶ Any preservative ingredients added to the product will also be specified on the label. Very small amounts of preservatives are present in many detergent products to make sure the product lasts a long time and that the quality stays as good as new.

Each ingredient, whether fragrance or preservative, will be listed along with its internationally recognised name – its INCI (International Nomenclature of Cosmetic Ingredients) name. By giving each ingredient a single name, it makes it easy for consumers in all countries, irrespective of language differences, to recognise the ingredients present.

Lastly, in case there is anything else you want to know about the ingredients of a product, labels will also give a website address where you can go for even more detailed information.

If you think you have an allergy:

- ▶ Don't continue using a product if you think you might have had a reaction to it.
- ▶ It is always best to see your doctor and/or a dermatologist.
- ▶ Take a list of all the products that you have used during the weeks before you had the reaction, along with the packaging where possible, and also note any lifestyle and dietary changes you may have made.

NEW ICONS ON LAUNDRY DETERGENT PACKS TO SHOW NUMBER OF WASHES

Laundry detergents to be used in your washing machine will have a new, uniform way of showing the number of standard loads that can be washed with the content of that particular pack or bottle.

The number of standard loads (that is, with "normally" soiled items under medium water hardness conditions) will mostly be shown on the front label nearby the following common laundry 'basket' icon design.

Below are examples of what will appear on the front of a standard 18-wash detergent pack.



DOSING

In future, labels will advise on how much to dose, according to:

- three water hardness* conditions (soft, medium, hard)
- and one, two or three levels of how soiled the wash load is.

A T-shirt symbol will indicate the level of soil

where 1 stain = light soil;
2 stains = normal soil;
3 stains = heavy soil.

The design of the T-shirt icon may vary from brand to brand. Here is an example of the type of symbols that will appear on packs:



Following these dosage guidelines will not only help you get the best laundry results with your detergents, but it will also help to minimise environmental impact through more accurate dosing.



***Water hardness**
is caused by soluble mineral salts being present in the water in appreciable amounts. These are principally salts of calcium and magnesium, and sometimes iron and manganese.
Water essentially free of calcium and magnesium is described as soft.
You can find out how hard the water is in your home usually either directly from your water bill, or by contacting your water supply company.
You may need to adapt the dosing of detergents according to the water hardness level in your area. As a general rule, the harder the water, the more detergent you may need to use to maintain an efficient washing cycle.

CLEARER INSTRUCTIONS AND TIPS FOR SAFE USE

It is already standard practice for product labels to carry usage instructions and any tips for safe use that may be necessary when handling the product and it is always important to read these instructions carefully.

However, you may notice some changes to how instructions for use and safety tips are given. The industry is continually working on a voluntary basis with authorities and consumers groups to make labels better, clearer and easier to understand for consumers. As part of this process, they have collectively come up with some new standard symbols to help you make the best choice and the best use of your product. You will progressively see these symbols on more and more products across Europe. The number of symbols to appear on any given pack will vary depending on the most relevant tips for the product type.

- ▶ Store your products in a place out of the reach of children.
- ▶ Avoid that the product gets into the eyes. In case this happens, rinse them thoroughly with plenty of water.
- ▶ After using or getting in contact with products, rinse your hands and dry them.
- ▶ If you have sensitive or damaged skin, avoid prolonged contact with the product and in any case rinse and dry hands after use.
- ▶ Do not ingest the product. In case this happens, do not induce vomiting and seek medical advice.
- ▶ Keep your products in the original containers to avoid confusion and possible ingestion by mistake.
- ▶ Never mix different products unless this is specifically recommended by the manufacturer.
- ▶ Do not use highly volatile products in rooms where there are children, elderly people or pets. After use, open the windows and ventilate the room.



WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION

You may occasionally have specific questions about product ingredients safety that are not answered on the product label.

As already mentioned, all detergent product labels will soon carry a website address where you can go for more information on the product. In addition, individual company care-lines, the telephone number of which is listed on pack, continue to provide consumer advice. You can also contact the company in question by writing to the address on the product label.



SAFE BEHAVIOUR TIPS



Keep away from children.



Keep away from eyes. If product gets into eyes rinse thoroughly with water.



Rinse and dry hands after use.



People with sensitive or damaged skin should avoid prolonged contact with the product.



Do not ingest. If product is ingested then seek medical advice.



Do not change container to store contents.



Do not mix with other products.



Ventilate the room after use.

Transfer refill content in the original container only.

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WASHING IN A SUSTAINABLE WAY

On your packs of laundry detergents, you will also be able to find the 'Washright' tips first introduced by the industry in 1998. These tips help you to do the laundry in a more environmentally-friendly and cost-effective way.



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