



New EU wide occupational exposure limit for RCF/ASW

In December 2017 the EU Council and Parliament agreed on a number of occupational exposure limits for substances classified as carcinogenic. These limit values or BOELVs (binding occupational exposure limit values) have been added to Annex III of the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive 2004/37/EC via Directive (EU) 2017/2398 on 12th December 2017.

For Refractory Ceramic Fibres (RCF), also known as Alumino-Silicate-Wools (ASW) the regulators followed the recommendation of the EU Scientific Committee for Occupational Exposure Limits (SCOEL) and adopted a BOELV of 0.3 f/ml which is considered a “practical threshold” or “no observed adverse effect level” (NOAEL). EU Member States now have a two year transition period during which they must adopt the limit value in their national regulation (deadline 17.01.2020).

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Directive (EU)
2017/2398

BOELVs are considered “binding minimum standards”. This means that Member States are forced to establish OELs in their national regulation, which must not exceed the BOELV. Hence any national limit value for RCF/ASW currently exceeding 0.3 f/ml or using another measurement value (e.g. mg/m³), must be reduced or converted accordingly and countries without an OEL must introduce one within the transitional period. Countries that already have an OEL at or below this value will not have to make any changes. For most EU Member States the implementation of the BOELV will hence lead to a reduction of the current national OEL.

The BOELV is implemented in addition to existing obligations under the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive and users of RCF/ASW products should assess requirements to maintain compliance with the more stringent workplace exposure limit values. ECFIA has established a Product Stewardship Program (PSP) including a workplace monitoring component known as CARE (control and reduce exposure), which has been designed to help users of HTIW products to manage the potential workplace risk via appropriate exposure controls (often a combination of technical, organisational and personal measures).

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ECFIA's
Product
Stewardship
Program

ECFIA members can help you evaluate the current exposure situation at your site and can provide recommendations and guidance on exposure controls, based on several decades of ECFIA's joint occupational hygiene experience. Please contact your supplier if you require any support or further information.

Important points to note:

- An EU-wide binding occupational exposure limit value has been established at 0.3 f/ml
- Current national OELs must be reduced over the next 2 years to meet the new standard
- We can help you to comply via our industry's Product Stewardship Program (PSP)