Bisphenol A (BPA)

BPA has historically been used in a range of packaging and other applications. It has come under scrutiny in recent years and a study from the University of Granada has been reported in January 2019 by a range of media.

Current use of BPA by the Paper Industry

The use of BPA by the Paper Industry is extremely limited, only occurring in heat sensitive papers such as till receipts. Such papers are not made in the UK.

We cannot absolutely rule out the presence of BPA as a 'non-intentionally added substance' in recycled pulp but it remains unlikely and will be an extremely small (vanishingly so) amount in the grand total of all recycled paper. It should not be considered a risk.

Industry is phasing out BPA. In December 2016, the European Commission decided to restrict BPA in thermal paper in the EU. This ban will take effect in 2020, giving manufacturers, importers and users of thermal paper the time to phase it out and find an alternative. (https://echa.europa.eu/hot-topics/bisphenol-a)

Is BPA safe?

There have been many studies into the use of BPA, which have sometimes drawn contradictory conclusions. Importantly, two leading global authorities have commented as follows:

The European Food Safety Authority conducted a survey in 2015 which concludes that "BPA poses no health risk to consumers of any age group (including unborn children, infants and adolescents) at current exposure levels" (http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/topics/topic/bisphenol)

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the USA has answered the specific question "Is BPA safe?" with a simple "Yes", going on to note that studies have shown "no effects of BPA from low-dose exposure" (www.fda.gov/food/ingredientspackaginglabeling/foodadditivesingredients/ucm355155.htm)

Paper & Board in food contact

It is important to remember that paper and board has a long and successful history of safe use in many applications, including the food industry. These include products where 'intimate' contact is involved, such as tea bags and baking papers, and direct contact packaging such as sugar bags and cartons for dry foods.

The sector has co-operated over a long period of time with government, both at national and European level, and with other regulators to ensure necessary levels of consumer protection. Further Information with the CPI Position Paper: "Paper and Board in Food Contact Applications" at https://thecpi.org.uk/library/PDF/Public/Publications/Position%20Papers/PP_FoodContact_June2020.pdf

Further information

Further information is available from Andy Barnetson, Director of Packaging Affairs, on 01793 889602 or email abarnetson@paper.org.uk

Confederation of Paper Industries

- The Confederation of Paper Industries (CPI) is the leading trade association representing the UK's Paper-based Industries, comprising paper and board manufacturers and converters, corrugated packaging producers, makers of soft tissue papers and collectors of paper for recycling.

- CPI represents an industry with an aggregate annual turnover of £12 billion, 62,000 employees, which supports a further 100,000 jobs in the wider economy.

- For facts on the UK's Paper-based Industries please visit: www.paper.org.uk.

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