



20.04.17

To
Anjana Singh
Central Pollution Control Board

Sub: Comments on draft document for the measurement of lead contents in household and decorative paints

Dear Madam,

This has reference to the draft document issued by CPCB dated 28th March, 2017 for the measurement of lead contents in household and decorative paints.

EIA Resource and Response Centre (eRc) is a national level voluntary organization engaged in keeping a watch on the environmental clearance and forest clearance process across the country. We are presenting our opinion on the proposed draft document.

We have gone through the proposed document and henceforth sending our comments and suggestions. We would be available for providing any further clarifications or information as well as for participation in any consultation meetings on the subject.

Yours sincerely,

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Introduction:

Central Pollution Control Board vide dated 28th March, 2017 has come up with a draft document on “MEASUREMENT OF 'LEAD CONTENTS IN HOUSEHOLD AND DECORATIVE PAINTS'” asking for suggestion and comments from the concerned stakeholders.

EIA Resource and Response Centre (eRc) is a national level voluntary organization engaged in keeping a watch on the environmental clearance and forest clearance process across the country. We are presenting its opinion on the proposed draft document.

Background:

Lead content in household and decorative paints in India was a major issue of concern, as a study¹ by Toxics Link in 2007 identified alarming level of lead in enamel paints, ranging from 2 percent to 14 percent. A common pathway of childhood lead exposure is through ingestion of lead dust through normal hand-to-mouth contact during which children swallow lead dust dislodged from deteriorated paint or leaded dust generated during remodeling or painting. Lead dust from remodelling or deteriorated paint lands on the floor near where children play and can ingest it.

According to the US Environment Protection Agency, the chance of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) emission is also there from the household paints, which ultimately increase the indoor air pollution².

In order to address this issue, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change vide G.S.R. 1030 (E) dated 1st November, 2016 has come up with the Regulation on Lead Contents in Household and Decorative Paints Rules, 2016.

Given this background, it is important to highlight the issues of stringent compliance and enforcement of the standard put forward for lead content in household and decorative paints. eRc is hereby submitting its suggestion to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

1. Sampling protocol and Monitoring

Sampling frequency must list out the number of samples annually to be tested and should not use vague terminologies like ‘few samples’.

¹ A Brush with Toxics: An Investigation on Lead in Household Paints in India

² <https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/volatile-organic-compounds-impact-indoor-air-quality>

Also, the sampling protocol must not be kept open to a range of 3-5 samples and rather the number must be fixed to 5 samples, as otherwise, the manufacturers and/or importers will make their own excuses and come up with results based on inadequate sampling.

2. Third Party Certification

Imposing self-certification for existing paints will again pave the way for manufacturers to escape from the necessary norms to be followed; rather the third party certification should be made mandatory for recognising the presence of lead within the stipulated limit.

3. Monitoring of Paints manufactured by unorganized sector

According to Thuppil Venkatesh, Director of NRCLPI, about 60% of the paint production is unorganised with no clear distinction between industrial and household paint³. The guideline fails to address the procedure of how to monitor the paint samples from the unorganised sector to check the compliance of the standard of 90 parts per million.

4. Transitory Provision lacks urgency of phase out

According to the transitory provision given in the draft document, all those household and decorative paints manufactured or imported before the date of commencement of these Rules shall be permitted for sale for the next 2 years. Such a moderate amount of transitory period should not be provided to the paint manufacturers given the urgency of the matter to phase out and the period should be limited to a maximum of six to one year period.

³E-Article titled "Lead content limit should apply to all paints: experts" by K. V. AdityaBharadwaj published on May 15, 2016. Accessed on: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/bangalore/lead-content-limit-should-apply-to-all-paints-experts/article8602249.ece>.