

United for a toxic free future!

Many products in our homes and workplaces -- from furniture to cleaning products, electronics to cosmetics -- contain chemicals that do not have to be tested for health and safety before they are made. Worse still, we know that some products contain chemicals that can harm people's health and the environment.

Most of us expect more from the products we use every day. We expect companies to ensure that the products we buy won't harm us, our children and our communities.

That's why California passed laws in 2008 requiring the State's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to create a program that makes those products safer and healthier. The [Safer Consumer Products](#) program is part of the [Green Chemistry Initiative](#) to reduce the use of toxic chemicals in the state. It is run by the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC).

The laws say the DTSC must identify and prioritize "chemicals of concern". Companies making specific products with these chemicals must look for healthier and safer alternatives. After examining the alternatives DTSC must decide how to eliminate or reduce the use of specific toxic chemicals and their products in California.

The right questions lead to better products

This program represents a huge shift in how we deal with toxic chemicals. Until now, the question has been "How much is ok?" Too often, this leads to arguments about how much of a toxic chemical is "safe."

This new program asks manufacturers who make or use toxic chemicals different questions. Now they have to answer: "Is this chemical necessary" and "What is a healthier and safer way to make this product?"

Forward-thinking businesses already do this. In the process, they have found ways to use less toxic or non-toxic chemicals -- and still make a profit.

How does the program help you, your family and your community?

The Safer Consumer Products program advances these key priorities in California:

1. pollution prevention
2. health and safety
3. economic opportunity

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Pollution prevention

It's expensive to use chemical "risk management" approaches after the fact. The regulations encourage low-cost pollution prevention -- and avoid the toxics in the first place. In turn, this will reduce:

1. hazardous waste;
2. the costs to manage and dispose of hazardous waste, clean up contaminated sites, deal with toxic spills, etc.;
3. air and water pollution and greenhouse gas emissions; and
4. water treatment costs.

Health and safety

Toxic chemicals affect our health and safety. They contribute to the rising rates of:

1. cancers,
2. infertility, birth defects and other reproductive health problems
3. children's learning disorders,
4. other illnesses and diseases, and
5. harm to our environments -- the water we drink, the fish in our oceans and rivers, and much more.

Workers often are the "canaries" for human health effects of toxic chemicals because they make or use consumer products on the job. Our children also are uniquely vulnerable; chemicals affect their growing bodies in different ways than they do adults.

The regulations encourage development and use of safer alternatives to harmful chemicals. Less toxic products will:

1. reduce or eliminate hazards to California workplaces, communities and environments;
2. reduce the health care costs that go with them;
3. protect the health of California workers, their families, and local communities; and
4. give California businesses an advantage -- the information they need to protect their workers and customers.

Economic opportunity

Industries around the world are choosing to use less toxic chemicals in their products and practices. Innovative California businesses are doing the same thing. More can join them, to capture the growing global market for green products and services.

The Safer Consumer Products regulations will:

1. encourage efficiency
2. reduce the costs of product ingredients (less toxic chemicals often are cheaper);
3. eliminate long-term liabilities associated with toxic chemicals and the costs to "fix" the hazards left behind, especially the earth and water we share;
4. reduce costs with less energy use, lower liability insurance, and regulatory burdens; and
5. Keep California businesses competitive in this global environment.

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