

CPI Supports Industry Guideline for Food Contact

The Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI) and the International Confederation of paper and board Converters in Europe (CITPA) have launched a voluntary 'Industry Guideline for the Compliance of Paper & Board Materials and Articles for Food Contact'.

The Guideline, which has been independently peer reviewed by PIRA International, offers a route to compliance with EC Framework regulation 1935/2004, which covers all materials and articles which come into contact with food. It gives guidance to paper and board producers as well as institutions and public authorities on how to ensure that paper and board meets the quality standards appropriate to its intended use in food contact.

The health and safety implications of food contact are taken very seriously by the paper industry. When it comes to consumer protection, the sector has cooperated at national government and EU level for many years.

Many of the materials which come into direct contact with food, such as cellulose film, plastics and ceramics, are subject to material-specific measures which apply uniformly throughout the EU. For paper, no such measure exists and as a result the picture is fragmented, with countries such as Germany, France, the Netherlands and Italy, having national legislation, while other countries simply conform with the more general, non-material specific regulation 1935/2004. This sometimes gives the unintended and incorrect impression to buyers that compliance for paper and board is less rigorous than for other materials.

So it is against this background that the European paper packaging value chain has compiled the voluntary Industry Guideline for the Compliance of Paper & Board Materials and Articles for Food Contact (the Guideline). CEPI will also shortly publish a complementary Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) for the industry. Put simply, the Guideline spells out the rules, and the GMP describes a management system for compliance with those rules. GMP is not an optional addition to the Guideline, but is required by Regulation 2023/2006, a general GMP requirement, recently published by the European Commission.

CPI supports this stance and recommends that any operator in the food packaging chain, not already having an equivalent system, should study the document with a view to its adoption.

Andrew Barnetson, the CPI expert on food contact issues, said "This represents an opportunity for the paper industry to take the initiative and demonstrate, without the need for legislation, the safety of its products in a very critical manufacturing sector."

Food Contact guidelines: http://www.paper.org.uk/current_issues/food_contact.html

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Notes to Editors

- CPI is the voice of the paper industry in the UK, representing papermakers, tissue manufacturers, corrugated packaging producers and recovered paper merchants.
- CPI represents 265 member sites across 60 companies, with a combined annual turnover of £4 billion and 24,500 personnel.
- Over 80% of all corrugated cardboard boxes are recycled, giving the corrugated industry the best UK recycling rate of all packaging materials.
- For additional information on the UK paper industry, in the first instance, please contact Catherine Waterfield, External Affairs Coordinator, on 01793 889612 or email cwaterfield@paper.org.uk. Alternatively, please visit: <http://www.paper.org.uk>.