

Focus on: Safer Products for Washington



Contact information

Cheryl Niemi

360-407-6850

cheryl.niemi@ecy.wa.gov

Marissa Smith

360-407-7398

marissa.smith@ecy.wa.gov

ADA accommodations

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Preventing exposure to toxic chemicals

We all benefit from the convenience and services of consumer products. But those products shouldn't harm us, our kids, or our environment. Consumer products can contain toxic chemicals. The chemicals in these products can get into household dust, food, water, and sediments, and can harm our children and wildlife. This can happen during use or after disposal. Chemicals are released when carpets wear down, when building caulk degrades, and even when we wash our clothes. In our state, millions of dollars have been spent removing toxics from contaminated water bodies, yet some fish are still unsafe to eat and sensitive species like our orcas continue to dwindle due, in part, to chemical contamination.

Protecting human and environmental health in Washington

The [Pollution Prevention for Healthy People and Puget Sound Act](#)¹ makes consumer products safer for our families and our environment. We named the implementation program **Safer Products for Washington**. It marks a major milestone for how we address chemicals in everyday products.

The law builds off the Departments of Ecology's and Health's successful collaboration developing chemical action plans² and implementing the [Children's Safe Products Act \(CSPA\)](#).³ It provides a regulatory structure and systematic approach for Ecology to follow that will reduce the impact and cost of dealing with toxics in products. We can now:

- Focus on preventing toxic chemicals from reaching people and the environment, rather than just cleaning up the mess afterwards.
- Regulate the use of toxic chemicals in consumer products through rulemaking.
- Consider chemical classes in regulatory decision-making when there is strong evidence to do so.

¹ <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=70.365&full=true>

² Find chemical action plans at ecology.wa.gov.

³ ecology.wa.gov/cspa

Safer Products for Washington Implementation

Under this new law, Ecology will work with stakeholders, report to the legislature, and follow the four steps below on a repeating, five-year cycle:

- **Phase 1.** Identify at least five priority chemicals/classes based on whether they are a human or environmental health hazard, or on potential exposures or impacts. The five priority chemicals identified in the law for the first cycle are:
 - Phthalates
 - Phenolic compounds
 - Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB)
 - Organohalogen flame retardants
 - Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)
- **Phase 2.** Identify consumer products containing those five priority chemicals/classes. The proposed priority products for the first cycle are:
 - Electric and electronic equipment containing flame retardants.
 - Carpet and aftermarket carpet treatments containing PFAS.
 - Printing inks containing PCBs.
 - Food cans, laundry detergent, and thermal paper containing phenolic compounds.
 - Fragrances and vinyl flooring containing phthalates.
- **Phase 3.** Identify safer alternatives that can be used in place of those five priority chemicals/classes.
- **Phase 4.** Adopt rules, if necessary, to regulate the use of those five priority chemicals/classes (such as reporting or restrictions).



Figure 1. Safer Products for Washington implementation phases.

Ecology and Health are using a transparent process that relies on scientific evidence to identify priority chemicals and products. Our stakeholder process will ensure interested parties have the opportunity to provide input on product identification and rulemaking. Implementation of this act builds on our investment to support innovations and promote development of safer alternatives to toxic chemicals.

More information

Implementation information:

- [Report on priority products](https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/summarypages/2004004.html)⁴
- [Stakeholder site](https://bit.ly/SaferProductsWA)⁵

Chemical Action Plans:

- [Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances](https://ecology.wa.gov/PFAS)⁶
- [Flame Retardants](https://ecology.wa.gov/PBDE)⁷
- [Polychlorinated Biphenyls](https://ecology.wa.gov/PCBS)⁸

⁴ <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/summarypages/2004004.html>

⁵ bit.ly/SaferProductsWA

⁶ ecology.wa.gov/PFAS

⁷ ecology.wa.gov/PBDE

⁸ ecology.wa.gov/PCBS