

Copper Brake Requirements – Information for Manufacturers

In 2010 Washington and California passed laws regulating the content of brake friction materials to limit their environmental impact. These laws phase out the use of copper and immediately prohibit the use of asbestos, lead, and several other heavy metals.

Most brakes manufactured after January 1, 2015, must be certified before they are sold in Washington. Similar requirements took effect January 1, 2014 in California. Businesses that sell uncertified brake friction material in Washington State can be charged a penalty of \$10,000, per violation.

Manufacturers of brake friction material are responsible for certifying that their products meet the requirements of these laws. Most manufacturers have already certified their parts, some have not.

The process to certify parts is relatively straight forward. The first thing you should do is contact the industry-sponsored registrar, NSF International. They will assist you as you certify your parts. Then you will need to:

- Have each brake friction material tested by an accredited laboratory, using the SAE J2975 testing method.
- Make sure the laboratory sends testing results to the registrar.
- Sign and submit self-certification documents.
- Mark tested brake friction materials according to SAE J866.
- Mark product packaging with a certification mark.

Once you complete these steps, your products are certified for sale in Washington and California.

Why it Matters

As brake pads wear down, copper and other metals are deposited on roadways, where they are washed into our streams and rivers. In urban areas, brake pads account for up to half of the copper entering our waterways.

Copper is highly toxic to fish and other aquatic species. Young salmon are especially susceptible to the effects of copper. Removing copper and other toxic metals from brake materials will help clean up streams and rivers.

If you have questions or need more information, contact:

Ian Wesley
360-407-6747
ian.wesley@ecy.wa.gov

This document is available in Chinese, Korean, and English.

이 문서는 한국어와 중국어, 그리고 영어로 되어 있습니다.

这份法规简介有英文，中文和韩文的翻译版本。

Special accommodations

If you need this document in a format for the visually impaired, call the Hazardous Waste and Toxics Reduction Program at 360-407-6700.

Persons with impaired hearing, call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability, call 877-833-6341.

What are the brake friction material requirements?

Brakes Made After 1/1/15 Must Not Contain:	Brakes Made After 1/1/21 Must Not Contain:	CA Requirements - Effective 1/1/2025:
	> 5% Copper	> 0.5% Copper
Asbestos	Asbestos	Asbestos
Cadmium	Cadmium	Cadmium
Chrome(VI)	Chrome(VI)	Chrome(VI)
Lead	Lead	Lead
Mercury	Mercury	Mercury

Which brakes need to be certified?

In general most brake friction materials used on vehicles traveling on the highway must be certified. This includes most passenger vehicles and heavy-duty trucks. However, there are a few exemptions. Brakes used on the following types of vehicles are exempt from these requirements in Washington:

- Motorcycles
- Military combat vehicles
- Race cars, dual-sport vehicles, or track-day vehicles, whose primary use is for off-road purposes
- Collector vehicles

When do brakes need to be certified by?

All requirements of Washington’s law are based on the manufacture date of the brake pad. All brakes manufactured after January 1, 2015, must be certified. California’s requirements became effective January 1, 2014.

Where can I find more information?

- Better Brakes Law - 70.285 Revised Code of Washington and Chapter:
 - <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=70.285>
- Better Brakes Rule- 173-901 Washington Administrative Code:
 - <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=173-901>
- Washington Better Brakes web page:
 - <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/hwtr/betterbrakes.html>
- California Limiting Copper in Brake Pads web page:
 - <http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/PollutionPrevention/BrakePads.cfm>
- NSF International:
 - <http://www.nsf.org/services/by-industry/automotive/friction-material/>