



Media Alert

For Immediate Release

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Attention: Media Common Errors in Phthalates News Reports

This media alert is in response to inaccurate statements about phthalates – a family of compounds used primarily as a vinyl softener – that have appeared in recent news reports. Specifically, the Phthalate Esters Panel of the American Chemistry Council seeks to clarify the following regarding phthalates:

- **In the U.S., these plastic products are typically not made of vinyl and therefore are not made with phthalates:** food packaging, baby bottles and nipples, plastic water bottles, plastic food containers, plastic food wrap, and polyethylene terephthalate (PET).
- **Phthalates are not responsible for that “new car smell”** – phthalates have little to no odor. They have very low volatility, which means they do not tend to evaporate. While a 2007 study of two auto interiors exposed to elevated temperatures identified 50 contaminants, none were phthalates. An earlier [study](#) by Australia’s Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) also did not find phthalates or vinyl among the substances found in new car interior air
- **Phthalates do not leach or migrate easily from flexible vinyl products** – They are tightly bound in the structure of vinyl. Exposure from the release of phthalates is minimal, as indicated below.
- **Exposure to the small amount of a phthalates typically experienced does not pose a human health concern** – Biomonitoring data collected by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and others indicate that the phthalate exposures experienced by the general public are below levels deemed to be safe by regulatory agencies around the world. These “safe” levels are based on the results of experiments with laboratory animals exposed to high doses. Despite the fact that the common phthalates have been used for many years, the evidence suggesting a link between phthalates and various human health effects is limited and often conflicting.
- **Phthalates are not all the same** – Phthalates are often referred to as if they are a single substance. In fact, there are about 14 phthalates currently in commerce. Too often, individuals mistakenly attribute the characteristics of one phthalate to the whole group.



Phthalates, however, exhibit a variety of physical, chemical and toxicological properties, and must be considered as individual substances, not as a group.

- **Different phthalates are used for different applications** – While some phthalates can be used to substitute for others, each possesses properties that make it particularly well suited for a given application. For example, diisodecyl phthalate (DIDP) is commonly used as a plasticizer to make the flexible vinyl surfaces in automobile interiors because it is extremely non-volatile and does not contribute to “new car smell.” This is true even when the auto interior is subjected to extreme heat. On the other hand, diethyl phthalate (DEP) is more volatile (compared to other phthalates) and is therefore not used to make flexible vinyl. Instead, it is used as a carrier for fragrance in consumer and personal care products to help the scent last longer.

The American Chemistry Council is happy to answer your questions about phthalates and to provide more information about where phthalates are used. Please contact us or visit www.phthalates.org for more information.

<http://www.americanchemistry.com>

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