

List of chemicals regulated under Hazardous Chemicals Control Ordinance to be expanded

The Government will table the Hazardous Chemicals Control Ordinance (Amendment of Schedules 1 and 2) Order 2023 (Amendment Order) before the Legislative Council on June 14. The Amendment Order will add several hazardous chemicals that are newly regulated under international conventions into the Hazardous Chemicals Control Ordinance (Cap. 595) (the Ordinance), to reduce the risk of public exposure to these chemicals, thus protecting public health and the environment.

According to a spokesperson for the Environment and Ecology Bureau today (June 9), newly regulated hazardous chemicals will be prescribed in Schedule 1 and Schedule 2. Those to be added to Schedule 1 include (i) hexachlorobutadiene, (ii) polychlorinated naphthalenes, and (iii) decabromodiphenyl ether. Short-chain chlorinated paraffins, currently prescribed in Schedule 2, will be added to Schedule 1 instead for more stringent control. Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), its salts, and its PFOA-related compounds will be added to Schedule 2. Under the Ordinance, the manufacture, import, export, and use of regulated hazardous chemicals are subject to permit controls.

The spokesperson added, "The amendment puts these hazardous chemicals under the control mechanism of the Ordinance. This helps Hong Kong implement the latest amendments to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (the Stockholm Convention) and the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade (the Rotterdam Convention) regarding the control of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) and hazardous chemicals."

The Stockholm Convention is an international convention that aims to control or restrict the trade, production and use of POPs, as well as to reduce and ultimately eliminate the intentional production of POPs and the release of unintentionally produced POPs. Another international convention, the Rotterdam Convention, implements a prior informed consent procedure in the international trade of specified hazardous chemicals. The Rotterdam Convention aims to promote shared responsibility and co-operative efforts among parties to the Convention, with a view to protecting human health and avoiding potential harm to the environment caused by such chemicals.

Starting from October 20, 2023, the aforementioned hazardous chemicals will be regulated under the Ordinance. Any person found guilty of manufacturing, importing, exporting, or using regulated chemicals without a permit is liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for one year.