

Statement on HSE proposals to restrict use of lead ammunition in Great Britain

- Proposals follow series of GB consultations and intend to reduce harm to the environment
- Regulator proposes alternatives to lead ammunition would need to be used for some outdoor shooting
- Derogation proposed for athletes who are preparing for Olympic and Paralympic Games

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in its role as the Agency for UK REACH, has today [set out proposals](#) to be considered by government ministers in England, Scotland and Wales to restrict the supply and certain outdoor uses of lead ammunition in Great Britain.

Under the proposals the use of lead shot for live quarry shooting and target shooting would be prohibited.

Dr Richard Daniels, HSE's Director of Chemicals Regulation Division said:

"Following a comprehensive analysis of the evidence, we propose new restrictions to protect wildlife, particularly wildfowl and birds of prey, from lead poisoning. They would prevent an estimated 7,000 tonnes of lead entering the environment each year.

"The final agency opinion follows significant responses to two public consultations. We worked through nearly 11,000 responses – dwarfing the recent exercise in the EU.

"This detailed work, carried out under our UK REACH obligations, sets out the necessary balance we have struck to protect the environment and minimise disruption to those who shoot.

"Currently, the risks of lead shot to the wider environment are not adequately controlled. While there are already legally binding measures in place to protect Britain's wildlife in designated wetlands from the use of lead shot, our analysis has demonstrated the need for further restrictions.

"People will still be able to continue to shoot, but we are proposing that for some outdoor uses in the future, alternatives to lead ammunition would need to be used."

Further information

1. [The Health and Safety Executive](#) (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We are dedicated to protecting people

and places, and helping everyone lead safer and healthier lives.

2. In its role as the Agency for the UK Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) Regulation, which is the framework for managing the risks from chemical substances in Great Britain, HSE has worked with the Environment Agency and [published its final opinion on its restriction proposals](#) to control the risks from lead in ammunition.
3. The published opinion was developed after considering the 2,759 responses received from the [6-month public consultation](#) in 2022. Additionally, in line with the legal requirements under the UK Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) Regulation, HSE opened a [60-day public consultation](#) on the draft socioeconomic opinion last year – this again received a large number of responses (8,159).
4. The Agency also met stakeholders to listen to their concerns, gather evidence and discuss the proposals. The Agency's final consolidated opinion has been reviewed by a Challenge Panel made up of independent experts from the REACH Independent Scientific Expert Pool (RISEP), who provide scrutiny and challenge.
5. One exception where use of lead shot could still be used for outdoor targetshooting is for athletes training for international competitions, such as the Olympics and Paralympics, where the use of lead shot is mandated. HSE has proposed a derogation for this, for athletes that meet defined criteria. This would allow competitive athletes to continue training and representing their country.
6. The EU is also currently considering a proposed restriction on the use of lead ammunition in all habitats, which has passed all the ECHA committee stages and is now being considered by the European Commission. The EU received 319 responses for their 6-month public consultation on their dossier (and extended the process by 6 months) and received 175 responses for their 60-day SEA consultation.
7. HSE, in its role as the Agency for UK REACH, has also identified a risk to young children and women of childbearing age who consume high volumes of game meat shot with lead ammunition. The Food Standards Agency already recommends that pregnant woman cut down on game meat in their diets. Food Standards Agency advice on lead shot game can be found here: <https://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/lead-shot-game>.
8. For bullets, other derogations would allow the use of lead bullets in target shooting at outdoor ranges with appropriate risk management measures in place. HSE estimates that 95% of outdoor ranges already have these controls. In developing this derogation the Agency met with shooting organisations to discuss current practice at ranges.
9. HSE also proposes that the use of large calibre lead bullets (≥ 6.17 mm) for live quarry shooting is prohibited, as there are viable alternatives which can be used. However, as concerns remain regarding the technical feasibility and socioeconomic impacts of non-lead alternatives for small calibre bullets, HSE are not currently proposing to restrict their use for live quarry shooting.
10. HSE has sent its final opinion to the Appropriate Authorities (i.e. the Defra Secretary of State and the Scottish and Welsh Governments). The Appropriate Authorities will now consider the proposals and decide if

legislation should be drafted to start the process of introducing a restriction on lead in ammunition.