Food contact materials

Overview of key regulation on food contact materials.

We are responsible for protecting the public against chemicals that might transfer onto food from materials they come into contact with, for example packaging and utensils. We help enforce controls based on research and surveillance.

Framework regulation on all food contact materials

Regulation 1935/2004 sets out the law on chemical migration from all materials and articles in contact with food.

The Regulations include provisions for materials and articles expected to come into contact with foods or to transfer their constituents to food, for example, materials like printing inks and adhesive labels. This does not include covering or coating substances that are part of the food and that may be eaten with it, such as sausage skin.

National 2012 Regulations

The national Regulations of 2012 provide a single point of reference for businesses and enforcement authorities by consolidating three main Statutory Instruments on materials and articles intended to come into contact with food into one set of Regulations. The consolidated Regulations, ensure continuity of enforcement provisions for existing directly applicable European legislation on materials and articles intended to come into contact with food.

The Materials and Articles in Contact with Food (England) Regulations 2012
The Materials and Articles in Contact with Food (Wales) Regulations 2012
The Materials and Articles in Contact with Food (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2012

The 2012 Regulations identify which breaches of EU provisions will constitute an offence and incur penalties, and what constitutes a competent authority in the following European Regulations:

- 1935/2004 - Framework Regulation on all food contact materials
- 2023/2006 - Good Manufacturing Practice Regulation
- 450/2009 the Active and Intelligent Materials and Articles Regulation
- 10/2011 the Food Contact Plastics Regulation
- 1895/2005 on the use of certain epoxy derivatives

The national regulations implement the requirements of EU Directives (which are not directly applicable) relating to ceramic articles 84/500/EC and regenerated cellulose film 2007/42/EC.

They maintain the controls on vinyl chloride polymer/co-polymer in Directive 78/142/EEC that are not covered under the Food Contact Plastics Regulation.

There are similar Regulations for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and also for Scotland.

Food contact materials privacy notice