

The Chemicals Management Plan

It is estimated that there are presently over 100,000 chemicals in use in Canada. Federal responsibility for regulating (or "managing") chemicals is divided among different departments administering different laws. For example, Health Canada is responsible for managing food, drugs, cosmetics and therapeutic devices through the Food and Drugs Act.

Federal Department	Act	Products
Health Canada	Food and Drugs Act	Food, drugs, cosmetics, therapeutic devices
Health Canada	Pest Control Products Act	Pesticides
Environment Canada & Health Canada	Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999 (CEPA)	Substances not covered by Food and Drugs Act and Pest Control Products Act

A provision in the CEPA required the government to identify and "categorize" chemicals, out of 23,000 that were in use in Canada in 1986, for certain hazardous properties so that further assessment could be undertaken and management considered.

Of the 23,000 substances considered, some 200 substances that were found to meet the criteria for categorization were found to be:

- **Persistent** (referring to the length of time a substance resides in the environment) and/or
- **Bioaccumulative** (the tendency for a substance to accumulate in the tissues of living organisms and to travel along the food chain) and
- **inherently Toxic** to aquatic organisms (whether a chemical is inherently harmful to human health or to other living creatures)

Collectively, these are known as "PBiTs")

And/or

- of greatest potential for human exposure (GPE) or intermediate potential for exposure (IPE)
- a high hazard to human health based on available evidence on carcinogenicity, mutagenicity, developmental toxicity or reproductive toxicity.

In the fall of 2006, federal ministers of Health and the Environment launched a new Chemicals Management Plan (CMP) for undertaking the further assessments of these 200 substances.

A key aspect of the CEPA is that substances meeting the above criteria are called "CEPA-toxic" and are listed in Schedule 1 of the Act, also known as the "List of Toxic Substances." Although listing in Schedule 1 does not necessarily mean that production,

use, import or release of the substance will be aggressively regulated, experience demonstrates that including a substance on this list means it is very likely to lead to regulatory action.

As part of the CMP, the 200 chemicals were placed on Schedule 1 and a challenge was issued to industry and other stakeholders (importers, manufacturers and users of the substances) which gave all parties an opportunity to provide scientific proof that the substance **was not** "CEPA-toxic." This "challenge" began in February 2007. Between that date and December 2009, the 200 substances were "released" in batches of 15 to 30 at a time, along with notices to industry and stakeholder groups, inviting them to submit information to enhance assessments of each substance.

As of January 2010, all of the batches have been released and all of the substances are at various stages of re-assessment. Decisions about how and whether to take regulatory action are ongoing and should be completed by 2011.

If sufficient further information is not received from stakeholders, demonstrating proof of their safety, then many of the 200 substances should remain listed on Schedule 1 and regulations should be made limiting if not eliminating their use in Canada.

Several of the substances on the CMP priority list are ingredients in products that we use every day. Questioning the potential health effects of chemicals can help to prevent long-term health effects that may be a result of chemical exposure.

In addition, there is a need to specifically examine the effects of chemicals on men and women separately. Both biology and the social experience of gender contribute to different health related outcomes for males and females.

The Chemicals Management Plan is an important process whereby the government is seeking input from the public in order to best handle the management and regulation of chemicals in our environment.

However, the Government of Canada needs to hear from the public. If you believe that strong regulations are needed to limit the use of toxic substances, we encourage you to make your voice heard. Please visit the federal government's chemical substances website (www.chemicalsubstances.gc.ca) for more information.