

## **DIMETHYLFUMARATE (DMF)**

Dimethylfumarate (DMF)<sup>1</sup> is a biocide that prevents moulds appearing on leather furniture and footwear during storage or transport in humid climates. DMF is often contained in sachets fixed inside the furniture or added to footwear boxes. DMF evaporates and impregnates the product to protect it from mould. However, it also affects consumers who were in contact with the products, penetrating through clothing onto their skin, **causing painful skin contact dermatitis, itching, irritation, redness and burns, as well as, in some cases, acute respiratory difficulties**<sup>2</sup>, presenting a serious risk to consumers. Clinical studies confirmed that **concentration of DMF in products must not be greater than 0,1 mg/kg of the weight of the product or part of the product**, since concentration above 0,1 mg/kg causes the above mentioned health difficulties.

**Only Dimethylfumarate is banned, not silica gel.** It is often considered that silica gel and DMF are the same substance. However, silica gel is very pure and natural product and it can not be correlated with DMF. Some companies used DMF instead of silica gel, which caused problems. Therefore, **it is important for consumers, producers and importers to know that silica gel has not been banned and is safe for use.**

However, some companies added sachets containing DMF, with the inscription "mouldproof agent" etc. inside product packaging. Some products have been imported from Asia to Europe with sachets and packets containing silica gel impregnated with dimethylfumarate. Unfortunately, these silica gel sachets and packets were only labelled "silica gel" thus concealing the true content which comprised the banned biocide.

According to current knowledge, it is impossible to visually determine the presence of dimethylfumarate in products (e.g. furniture, footwear, clothes), as well as in the sachets enclosed with products (unless the presence of DMF is declared on a sachet). **The presence of dimethylfumarate may be determined reliably by laboratory testing.** Importers and distributors should request that manufacturers submit a Statement of compliance and a laboratory test report which clearly states that the product does not contain dimethylfumarate.

Considering the fact that products containing DMF present a serious risk to consumers, on March 17<sup>th</sup> 2009, the European Commission adopted the Decision 2009/251/EC requiring Member States to ensure that products containing the biocide dimethylfumarate are not placed or made available on the EU market. In order to protect consumer safety in BiH, Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted **The Decision on the prohibition of placing consumer products containing biocide dimethylfumarate on the market**, transposing Commission Decision 2009/251/EC.

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<sup>1</sup> "DMF" means the chemical dimethylfumarate, with the IUPAC name Dimethyl (E)-butenedioate, the CAS No 624-49-7 and the Eines No 210-849-0.

<sup>2</sup> Consumers in France, Finland, Poland, Sweden and Great Britain, exposed to products containing DMF, have experienced serious health problems.