

Government encourages range of industries to prepare for chemical use in the event of a no-deal EU exit

The UK Government has issued guidance to businesses that use chemicals on the actions they should take now to minimise any disruption in the event of a no-deal Brexit.

If the UK leaves the EU on 29 March without a deal, UK businesses that manufacture or import chemicals from the EU will have to register those chemicals to a new UK regulatory system. UK REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals) will replace EU REACH and will require businesses to demonstrate how a chemical can be safely used with minimal risk to human health or the environment.

The chemicals sector is the UK's second biggest manufacturing industry and UK businesses currently hold over 12,000 registrations with REACH. A 'no deal' would mean that a range of other key sectors would also be required to register any imported chemicals they use on UK REACH. This would include the motor manufacturing, cosmetics, construction and cleaning products industries.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

“Delivering a negotiated deal with the EU remains the Government's top priority, but it is the job of a responsible Government to ensure we are prepared for all scenarios, including no deal.

“It is not just chemicals producers that could be affected by this change so I encourage all businesses that use chemicals to read the guidance on the HSE website and check whether they need to take action.”

Under the new requirements, if the UK leaves the EU without a deal:

- UK businesses that manufacture a chemical (those currently registered to EU REACH) will need to validate their existing registration with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) within 60 days of the UK leaving the EU.
- UK businesses that import a chemical substance from the EU will need to setup a new registration with HSE within 180 days of UK leaving the EU.
- UK businesses that export chemicals to the EU will need to have an EU REACH registration in place once the UK leaves the EU.

In addition, more technical information will need to be submitted by businesses to HSE within two years of EU Exit. The requirements are part of the Government's commitment to maintain environmental standards after we leave the EU.

In order to register on UK REACH in a no deal scenario, businesses need to take the following action:

- Identify the chemical and quantity that they use;
- Understand how to register that chemical by reading the EU Exit guidance; and
- Prepare the information for that registration.
- Businesses that may be affected should read the latest guidance on requirements for using chemicals after the UK leaves the EU on [HSE.GOV.UK/EuExitReach](https://www.hse.gov.uk/EuExitReach)

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Notes to editors

- Reaching a deal with the European Union remains the Government's top priority however, the Government must prepare for every eventuality, including a no deal scenario.
- REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals):
- REACH applies to all chemical substances; not only those used in industrial processes but also in our day-to-day lives, for example in cleaning products, paints as well as in articles such as clothes, furniture and electrical appliances.
- REACH places the burden of proof on companies. To comply with the regulation, companies must identify and manage the risks linked to the substances they manufacture and market and demonstrate how the substance can be safely used. If the risks cannot be managed, authorities can restrict the use of substances.
- Further information on the principles of REACH can be found at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/reach/whatisreach.htm>
- There are a number of other chemical regulations that will be impacted if the UK leaves the EU without a deal including for biocides, pesticides and classifying, labelling and packaging of chemicals. Further information can found at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/brexit/brexit-no-deal-guidance.htm>
- The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) would act as the lead UK Agency, from the day the UK leaves the EU, building on its existing capacity and capability.