



# PVC Policies Across the World



*Some of the biggest Fortune 500 corporations in the world have enacted sweeping policies to phase out PVC in products and packaging, in favor of safer, cost-effective alternatives.*

In response to PVC's toxic threats, governments and corporations all around the world have passed sweeping policies to phase out PVC and switch to safer, healthier PVC-free products. We've highlighted just some of the many PVC-free policies and included links to in-depth resources on PVC-free governmental and corporate policies to learn more.

## **Restrictions on PVC Children's Toys and Baby Products**

Phthalates were banned in toys in the United States in 2008. Similar bans have been enacted by the states of California, Washington and Vermont. Restrictions or bans have been placed on phthalates in PVC toys in the entire European Union, Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Iceland Mexico, Norway, and Sweden. In 1998, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) reached a voluntary agreement with manufacturers to remove two phthalates from PVC rattles, teethingers, pacifiers and baby bottle nipples.

## **PVC-Free Governmental Purchasing Policies**

A number of U.S. cities have passed procurement policies to phase out the purchase of products such as PVC that contribute to dangerous toxic pollution. In December, 2005, New York City passed legislation that will reduce the City's purchase of PVC, wielding its \$11 billion annual purchasing budget to drive markets for safer, environmentally friendly products. Other U.S. cities such as Boston, Seattle, San Francisco, and Buffalo have passed similar purchasing measures.

## **USGBC: PVC an Unhealthy Building Material**

The U.S. Green Building Council, the nation's largest green building organization, released a report on PVC building materials. The report makes clear that PVC is not a healthy building material. A proper accounting of the human health impacts of PVC across its lifecycle, including disposal issues and occupational exposure, finds that PVC leads to the release



*Environmental health groups have campaigned to phase out PVC for many years. In this photo, women held a symbolic “belly brigade” action outside the World Vinyl Forum conference, to highlight chemicals from PVC trespassing into our bodies and the hazards they pose to infants and women of childbearing age.*

*Photo © Ravanesi 2007*

of dangerous quantities of dioxin and other carcinogens. The report authors found that, “When we add end of life with accidental landfill fires and backyard burning, the additional risk of dioxin emissions puts PVC consistently among the worst materials for human health impacts...”

### **Nationwide Bans on PVC**

Sweden first proposed restrictions on PVC use in 1995 and is working toward discontinuing all PVC uses. In Spain, over 60 cities have been declared PVC-free. Germany has banned the disposal of PVC in landfills as of 2005, is minimizing the incineration of PVC, and is encouraging the phase out of PVC products that cannot easily be recycled. Since 1986, at least 274 communities in Germany have enacted restrictions against PVC.

### **Bans on PVC Packaging**

PVC packaging has been banned or restricted in a number of countries around the world, such as Canada, Spain, South Korea and the Czech Republic. Some U.S. cities such as Rahway, NJ and Glen Cove, NY have prohibited the use of

PVC in food packaging or utensils. Legislation to ban PVC packaging has been introduced in California. 19 states have laws restricting heavy metals in packaging, which are often found in PVC packaging. A recent study found over 50% of all PVC packaging was contaminated with lead or cadmium. In 2009, legislation was introduced in the state of California to ban PVC packaging.

### **Hospitals Going PVC-Free**

Over 100 healthcare institutions around the world are reducing or phasing out PVC and phthalates. Hospitals are particularly concerned as several government agencies, including the U.S. FDA, the Swedish Chemicals Inspectorate, the Japanese Ministry of Health and a Health Canada expert panel have warned that certain patients — particularly sick infants — are at risk of harm from phthalate-containing vinyl medical devices. Researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health have found that sick infants treated in neonatal intensive care units have high exposure levels to this reproductive toxicant. Fortunately, medical devices that do not contain vinyl plastic

or phthalates are available for use — and many health care facilities are switching to these safer alternatives.

### Doctors and Nurses Speak Out Against PVC and Phthalates

A number of major medical and nursing professional associations have expressed concern about the health risks associated with PVC medical devices. This includes the American Nurses Association, American Medical Association, American Public Health Association, the Massachusetts Medical Society, and many others. Visit [http://noharm.org/us\\_canada/issues/toxins/pvc\\_phthalates/policies.php](http://noharm.org/us_canada/issues/toxins/pvc_phthalates/policies.php) to view and download these policy statements and resolutions.

### Investors Concerned About Financial, Legal and Reputational Risks

Many leading religious and socially responsible investors have expressed concern about the financial,

legal and reputational risks associated with PVC. Some have even filed shareholder resolutions at companies regarding PVC. Resolutions have been filed by the Adrian Dominican Sisters, As You Sow Foundation, Camilla Madden Charitable Trust, Catholic Healthcare West, Domini Social Investments, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, Trillium Asset Management, and United Methodist Church Pension Board.

### Leading Corporations Phasing Out PVC

In response to PVC's toxic lifecycle, many of the world's biggest Fortune 500 companies have committed to phase out PVC and switch to safe and healthy products. These include companies such as Apple, Honda, Johnson and Johnson, Kaiser Permanente, Microsoft, Nike, Sony, and Wal-Mart.

The following is a sampling of companies that have developed policies to reduce or phase out PVC.

**Table 1. Corporations Phasing Out PVC**

Products	Companies
<b>Athletic Shoemakers</b>	Adidas, Asics, Nike, Puma
<b>Automobile Interiors</b>	Daimler Benz, Ford, General Motors, Honda, Toyota, Volkswagen, Volvo
<b>Building Materials &amp; Furnishings</b>	Carnegie Fabrics (wall covering, upholstery), Firestone Building Products (roofing membranes), Herman Miller (office furniture), Milliken (carpet), Shaw (carpet)
<b>Consumer Products &amp; Packaging</b>	Aveda, Body Shop, Bristol Myers, Crabtree & Evelyn, Estee Lauder, Helene Curtis, Hennes & Mauritz (H&M), Honest Teas, IKEA, Johnson and Johnson, Limited Brands (Victoria's Secret, Bath & Body Works), Microsoft, SC Johnson, Wal-Mart (private brands packaging)
<b>Electronics</b>	Apple, Hewlett Packard, Nokia, Samsung, Sharp, Sony

<b>Food Packaging</b>	Dean Milk Chug brand (food packaging), Eagle Brand Cremora Brand (food packaging), Federated Groups (food packaging)
<b>Healthcare</b>	Abbott Laboratories, Baxter International, B. Braun, Catholic Healthcare West (I.V. Bags), Consorta, Kaiser Permanente, Tenet Healthcare Corporation
<b>Retailers</b>	Bed, Bath & Beyond, Best Buy, H&M, IKEA, JCPenneys, Kmart, Sears, Target, Toys “R” Us, Wal-Mart
<b>Toys</b>	Big Toys (playgrounds), Brio, Chicco, Early Start, First Years, Lamaze Infant Development, Lego Group, Little Tykes

### Learn More! Key PVC Policy Resources

- Greenpeace list of PVC Policies Worldwide:  
[http://216.92.54.3/pvc/documents/greenpeace\\_PVC\\_policy\\_sum.pdf](http://216.92.54.3/pvc/documents/greenpeace_PVC_policy_sum.pdf)
- PVC and PBT Policies from Around the World  
[http://216.92.54.3/pvc/documents/pvc\\_and\\_pbt\\_policies.pdf](http://216.92.54.3/pvc/documents/pvc_and_pbt_policies.pdf)
- Health Care Without Harm’s list of hospitals reducing and/or phasing out PVC and phthalates  
[https://noharm.org/sites/default/files/lib/downloads/pvc/List\\_of\\_Hosps\\_Reducing\\_PVC\\_DEHP.pdf](https://noharm.org/sites/default/files/lib/downloads/pvc/List_of_Hosps_Reducing_PVC_DEHP.pdf)

#### ***What Can I Do? Take Action for Healthy PVC-Free Schools***

Safer and cost-effective alternatives are already available for virtually every PVC product in our nation’s schools. Here’s how you can help today:

- **Encourage your school** to renovate or build their school with PVC-free building materials such as PVC-free linoleum flooring and TPO roofing.
- **Encourage your school district, county or state** to adopt a healthy PVC-free policy to avoid the use of PVC building materials and office supplies in favor of safer cost-effective alternatives.
- **Educate parents, teachers and students!**  
**Organize a screening of Blue Vinyl and Sam Suds** for your PTA, teacher’s union, or concerned students.
- **Encourage organizations**, such as teacher’s unions and parenting groups, to endorse the campaign.
- **Back to school – go PVC-free!** When buying your back-to-school supplies, shop for PVC-free products.
- **Get involved today!** If you’re interested in getting involved, contact CHEJ at [mike@chej.org](mailto:mike@chej.org) or 212-964-3680.