

The EU is promoting nickel-free finishes. What do you need to do?

REACH as a Challenge

What's it all about?

Nickel can damage people's health. That's why regulations are becoming more and more strict. Meanwhile, nickel-free earrings and piercings have become obvious. Now, any object that could come into prolonged contact with human skin is supposed to be nickel-free.

What are the regulations?

REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals) gives a clear direction: Annex XVII requires that consumers have even less contact with nickel. The text outlines that objects that are intended to have prolonged, direct contact with human skin must be free of nickel. 'Prolonged contact' is defined as more than ten minutes on three or more occasions within two weeks or one thirty-minute period within two weeks. The European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) defined this in a document from 2nd April 2014 ('Prolonged Contact with Skin'), which is currently available as a PDF by searching the term 'nickel' on www.echa.europa.eu.

Who will the new regulations affect?

The regulations don't name any specific objects; they only formulate general regulations. This means that manufacturers are obliged to make arrangements themselves: the now exact definition of 'prolonged' could apply to objects that only briefly come into contact with human skin. This could include writing instruments, tools for handicraft, scissors and kitchen gadgets.

Where does Uyemura fit in?

Uyemura is North America's exclusive distributor of Umicore REACH-compliant finishing solutions. These include Miralloy, the industry's cost-effective alternative to silver, palladium and nickel; Arguna, Palluna and Rhoduna Series electrolytes, and Sealing 691, an organic nanotechnology process that preserves metal brightness indefinitely, allowing substantial reductions in precious metal use.

For more information,
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