



24 April 2024

(24-3375)

Page: 1/3

Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade

Original: English

NOTIFICATION

The following notification is being circulated in accordance with Article 10.6

1. Notifying Member: <u>UNITED KINGDOM</u> If applicable, name of local government involved (Article 3.2 and 7.2):
2. Agency responsible: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Name and address (including telephone and fax numbers, email and website addresses, if available) of agency or authority designated to handle comments regarding the notification shall be indicated if different from above: UK TBT Enquiry Point Trade Policy Group Department for Business and Trade Old Admiralty Building London SW1A 2DY TBTEnquiriesUK@businessandtrade.gov.uk
3. Notified under Article 2.9.2 [X], 2.10.1 [], 5.6.2 [], 5.7.1 [], 3.2 [], 7.2 [], other:
4. Products covered (HS or CCCN where applicable, otherwise national tariff heading. ICS numbers may be provided in addition, where applicable): Beauty or make-up preparations and preparations for the care of the skin (other than medicaments), including sunscreen or suntan preparations; manicure or pedicure products. (CCCN 3304990000) Organic surface-active agents (other than soap); surface-active preparations, washing preparations (including auxiliary washing preparations) and cleaning preparations, whether or not containing soap, other than those of heading 3401. (HS 3402) Insecticides, rodenticides, fungicides, herbicides, anti-sprouting products and plant-growth regulators, disinfectants and similar products, put up in forms or packings for retail sale or as preparations or articles (for example, sulphur-treated bands, wicks and candles, and fly-papers) HS 3808)
5. Title, number of pages and language(s) of the notified document: The Environmental Protection (Wet Wipes Containing Plastic) (England) Regulations 2024; (18 page(s), in English)
6. Description of content: These regulations introduce a ban on the supply and sale of wet wipes containing plastic. The draft legislation defines a wet wipe as 'a piece of pre-moistened or pre-wetted non-woven material which is conceived, designed and placed on the market for single-use (disposable) and intended for personal care e.g., personal hygiene or domestic use e.g., household cleaning purposes. Prewetted wipes typically contain an impregnation liquid which has been added to the wipe before it is placed on the market.'

<p>These regulations will apply to all businesses in England.</p> <p>These restrictions will not apply to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The manufacture or import of wet wipes containing plastic. • Supply and sale of wet wipes containing plastic, for the purpose of some business-to-business sale, as specified in the regulations. • The supply and sale of wet wipes containing plastic by a retail pharmacy business, subject to conditions. • The supply of wet wipes containing plastic for use for medical purposes by or under the direction of a healthcare professional or by a healthcare professional for medical purposes. <p>Breach of these prohibitions will be an offence under the regulations. The regulations confer powers on enforcement authorities to impose civil sanctions, including monetary penalties and stop notices, in addition to criminal prosecution.</p> <p>The draft legislation provides a transition period of 18 months for businesses.</p>
<p>7. Objective and rationale, including the nature of urgent problems where applicable: The UK Government has committed to banning unnecessary single use plastic, where there are suitable alternatives by 2042.</p> <p>Wet wipes containing plastic are an unnecessary source of plastic and microplastic pollution, which recent evidence suggests may have significant impacts on plant, animal and human health. A 2021 research project found that long microplastic fibres released into the environment could disrupt the health of the aquatic ecosystem^[1]. Further research from the Water Industry^[1].</p> <p>Wet wipes containing plastic contribute to environmental harm through littering and being wrongly flushed, as well as through production and disposal emissions.</p> <p>The proposed regulations are intended to reduce the use of wet wipes containing plastic, thereby reducing the amount of plastic entering the natural environment and the amount of microplastics entering the food chain and water treatment facilities.</p> <p>[1] Jieun Lee, Sanghyun Jeong and Kyu-Jung Chae: Discharge of microplastics fibres from wet wipes in aquatic and solid environments under different release conditions (2021) Available at: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0048969721022142 (Accessed 18 May 2023); Protection of human health or safety; Protection of animal or plant life or health; Protection of the environment</p>
<p>8. Relevant documents:</p> <p>Draft legislation: The Environmental Protection (Wet Wipes Containing Plastic) (England) Regulations 2024. (Attached)</p> <p>Summary of consultation responses and joint UK-wide government response on proposed ban on wet wipes containing plastic (published April 2024)</p>
<p>9. Proposed date of adoption: September 2024</p> <p>Proposed date of entry into force: March 2026</p>
<p>10. Final date for comments: 60 days from notification</p>

11. Texts available from: National enquiry point [] or address, telephone and fax numbers and email and website addresses, if available, of other body:

Trade Policy, Implementation and Negotiations

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Email: TBTEnquiriesUK@businessandtrade.gov.uk

Website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-business-and-trade>

https://members.wto.org/crnattachments/2024/TBT/GBR/24_02762_00_e.pdf