August 2018

American Chemistry Council Hydrogen Peroxide (HP) Panel – Internet Sales Information Statement

The Hydrogen Peroxide Panel (the ‘Panel’), of the American Chemistry Council, includes representation from all hydrogen peroxide producers in North America. The Panel promotes the principles of Responsible Care® with respect to the safe handling and use of hydrogen peroxide (HP). The purpose of this statement is to express our concern about the risk to public safety through the online sale of concentrated HP.

A variety of online sales platforms host sellers advocating the use of HP for alleged health and wellness benefits beyond its traditional use for cleansing wounds. The sellers advocate internal ingestion for treatment of AIDS, cancers, emphysema, and other life-threatening diseases, as well as improved ‘wellness’ through detoxification. The science is made to sound conventional, but the cited medical studies can be of dubious nature. Both the U.S. FDA1 and Health Canada2 have issued warnings discouraging the use of HP for medicinal uses that are obtained through illegal medical claims, especially “35 percent food grade hydrogen peroxide.” Regulatory agencies from Australia, Canada, Chile, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Turkey, United States, and 17 member states of the EU have conducted coordinated reviews of online shopping websites intended to determine the availability of unsafe products from online suppliers.

The FDA has never approved high strength HP to be taken internally and considers HP at 35% strength dangerous. A study published by the American College of Emergency Physicians in Annals of Emergency Medicine – Benjamin Hatt et al., “Outcomes After High-Concentration Peroxide Ingestion” (October 2016), found that ingestion of HP at concentrations greater than 10% can cause embolisms affecting cardiac, respiratory and neurological systems, that can lead to permanent disability or death. The lead author, Dr. Benjamin Hatt, says, “Though touted by the alternative and complementary medicine communities as ‘super water,’ peroxide should not be ingested for any reason.” Over the ten years of study data (2001 to 2011) there was an average of thirty (30) cases per year of ingestion of high concentration (>10%) HP. A concern raised in the study is that few professionals in the medical community are aware of the dangers associated with HP ingestion.

The Panel is concerned about the continued availability of concentrated HP, the significant public health and safety risk, and the mishandling and misuse of high concentration HP. Online sales may also be delivered by methods not complying with national and international regulations for shipment of hazardous materials, thereby extending the safety risks to the larger community. Further, the concentrations at which HP is available through internet sales are such that it potentially can be used in the manufacture of improvised explosive devices.

No producer of HP in North America directly provides 35% HP to any online supplier of high concentration HP, despite the claims of the websites. We urge consumers to consider the specious claims of health benefits from online sellers of high concentration HP and avoid the potential serious safety and health risks associated with the handling and use of highly concentrated HP.