



Technical Brief

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) in Consumer and Commercial Products

What are VOCs?

The term 'volatile' refers to a solid or liquid that readily evaporates at a normal temperature. An organic compound is one based on carbon and hydrogen. Therefore, Volatile Organic Compounds are organic chemicals that easily evaporate at normal temperature and pressure. Many solvents, aerosol propellants, and petroleum distillates are VOCs.

Why are we concerned about VOC's?

VOCs are an ingredient in the formation of ground-level ozone, also known as 'smog'. Smog contributes to respiratory problems for humans and animals, and extended exposure can lead to asthma, pneumonia, and bronchitis. Peak smog levels typically occur during hot, dry, stagnant summertime conditions.

How are VOCs regulated in Canada?

In 2009, Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) published the VOC Concentration Limits for Automotive Refinishing Products Regulations and the VOC Concentration Limits for Architectural Coatings Regulations.

Most recently on January 5, 2022, the Volatile Organic Compound Concentration Limits for Certain Products Regulations were published. The new regulations set out VOC concentration limits for Certain Products. The term 'certain products' mean "products that are used in households and by institutional and commercial consumers".

Key points:

- The VOC limits go into effect on January 1, 2024.
- Regulated product categories are the following, with more than 130 subcategories:
 - Personal care products;
 - Automotive and household maintenance products;
 - Adhesives, adhesive removers, sealants and caulks; and
 - Other miscellaneous products.
- Products that are designed to be used solely in a manufacturing or processing activity are not regulated. Manufacturing or processing are defined as activities whereby any goods, products, commodities or wares:
 - are made, fabricated, processed or refined out of any raw material or other substance or combination thereof,
 - are converted or rebuilt, but not repaired, or
 - are made by causing any raw material or other substance to undergo a significant chemical, biochemical or physical change including change that preserves or improves the keeping qualities of that raw material or other substance but excluding change by growth or decay.
- The regulations do not restrict sale. Products manufactured and imported prior to January 1, 2024, have no limit on sell-through.

CRC has your Solution

CRC is working diligently to ensure compliance with this new regulation. Our approach will minimize disruption and provide the smoothest transition for our distributors and customers with minimal oversight. **For more information, contact CRC Technical Services at 1-800-556-5074.**