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TARGET TO SYSTEMATICALLY REDUCE USE OF TOXIC PVC IN INFANT PRODUCTS, CHILDREN'S TOYS, SHOWER CURTAINS, PACKAGING

Target Joins Wave of Other Retailers & Companies Moving Away from PVC, a Major Source of Exposure to Lead, Phthalates and Dioxins

After a national campaign by the Center for Health, Environment and Justice (CHEJ) and a coalition of health and environmental organizations, Target has agreed to systematically reduce its use of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) plastic, commonly known as vinyl. The company is reducing PVC found in many of its owned brand products including infant products, children's toys, shower curtains, packaging and fashion accessories. PVC commonly contains toxic additives such as lead and phthalates and is often made in China.

Target, the fifth largest U.S. retailer with \$59 billion in revenues a year, is joining a growing list of dozens of companies including Wal-Mart, Microsoft, Johnson & Johnson, Nike, and Apple that are eliminating or reducing its PVC products and packaging. Wal-Mart just reached its two-year deadline to eliminate PVC from the packaging of its private brand products.

Recent reports indicate that the world stock of PVC in use contains 3.2 million tons of lead. Previous testing has detected lead in a broad range of PVC consumer products including toys, lunchboxes, baby bibs, jewelry, garden hoses, mini blinds, Christmas trees, and electronics. In September, Clean Water Action Alliance of Massachusetts tested over 50 toys and found that one in five was contaminated with lead. Ten of the 11 leaded toys were made out of vinyl. Wal-Mart has recalled PVC baby bibs and lunchboxes containing lead, and more recently Toys R Us recalled PVC baby bibs containing lead.

Over ninety percent of phthalates, reproductive toxicants commonly found in children's toys, are used in the manufacture of PVC. Last month California joined the European Union and fourteen countries in banning the use of phthalates in children's and infant's products. Legislation to establish a national ban in the U.S. was just introduced in Congress and six other states including NY introduced similar bills over the past year.

Target has told CHEJ it is committed to systematically reducing PVC beginning with their owned brands. In addition to addressing their owned brands, they are collaborating with a variety of vendors and will also work with other suppliers whose products are sold at Target. The company is taking the following steps in their owned brands:

- Eliminating PVC from a number of infant products and toys. Target children's eating utensils and lunchboxes are now PVC-free. Target baby bibs will be PVC-free by

January 2008. The company is phasing out phthalates in most of their toys by Fall 2008. They are also eliminating phthalates in baby changing tables by January 2008.

- Replacing many PVC/Vinyl shower curtains with a safer PVC-free plastic, ethylene vinyl acetate (EVA). Target expects 88% of its shower curtains to be PVC free by this coming spring. Researchers at the EPA have reported that a new vinyl shower curtain, “can cause elevated indoor air toxics concentrations...for more than a month.” Customers have repeatedly complained on Target’s website about strong chemical odors being released from vinyl shower curtains purchased at Target.
- Target will be 96% PVC-free in their placemat and table linen categories by Spring 2008.
- Target soft-sided coolers are now PVC-free.
- Reducing PVC in packaging. Target is reducing PVC packaging in the company’s Target brand dinnerware, travel accessories, toys and sporting goods. For food packaging, Target has a requirement in place to avoid the use of PVC when possible. In the media category (clamshells/blisters in electronics), Target is replacing the PVC clamshell with a modified paperboard/plastic packaging. For instance, iPod carrying cases sold at Target are being packaged in PVC-free packaging. The company is also asking their vendors to reduce the amount of packaging on their products and use materials that are easily recyclable.
- Target has engaged their merchandiser buyers through the development and distribution of a new Sustainable Products Guide, which includes a specific section on issues surrounding PVC.

“Since millions of toxic toys were recalled, parents are now looking for safer products for their children. Companies should ensure that customers are not rolling the dice with their families’ health in the check out aisle. Target is doing the right thing by moving away from PVC and switching to safer alternatives,” said **Lois Gibbs, Executive Director of the Center for Health, Environment and Justice**. Gibbs founded CHEJ after winning the nation’s first community relocation of 900 families due to a leaking toxic waste dump in Love Canal, New York.

Over the course of the campaign, CHEJ and partner organizations held over 230 press conferences, protests, and flyering events at Target stores across the country. Two events featured a 25-foot rubber ducky outside stores in CA and NY. CHEJ’s online humorous animated video “Sam Suds” was seen over 50,000 times in the first month it was released.

On the day of Target’s 2007 annual shareholder meeting, CHEJ ran an advertisement in *USA Today* calling on the company to “stop ducking the truth about the dangers of PVC” and organized a protest with Ohio Citizen Action outside of Target’s shareholder meeting in Cleveland. Representatives of CHEJ, the Sierra Club, and Ohio Citizen Action attended the shareholder meeting, addressing the CEO and senior executives during the Q&A session. Petitions signed by over 10,000 Target customers were delivered to the CEO inside. To date, Target has been contacted by over 40,000 customers and concerned individuals about PVC.

Target’s mainstream investors have also expressed their concerns about PVC. A coalition of 16 institutional investors, coordinated by the As You Sow Foundation, sent Target a letter about the legal, financial, and reputational risks associated with their sale of PVC products and packaging. “We congratulate Target for taking these important steps in reducing the use of PVC”, said **Michael Passoff, associate director of As You Sow**. “These efforts will help protect both consumer health and shareholder value.”

Among the health effects of phthalates, found in many PVC products, are premature birth delivery, early puberty in girls, impaired sperm quality and sperm damage in men, genital defects and reduced testosterone production in boys.

“Study after study have found that chemicals in vinyl can cause health problems in children and adults,” said **Dr. Peter Orris, Professor and Chief of Service at the University of Illinois Medical Center Chicago**. “While using PVC products, people may be exposed toxic additives like phthalates and lead and when incinerated, PVC is a major contributor to dioxin.”

The hazards of PVC are not limited to its use by consumers: it creates toxic pollution during its manufacture, harming workers and community members near PVC plants such as in Mossville, Louisiana. When thrown away, toxic additives like lead and phthalates can leach into the ground and nearby drinking water sources. When burned in incinerators, PVC produces dioxins and furans, chemicals that can cause cancer and are considered to be among the most toxic environmental contaminants known to man. PVC packaging can not be effectively recycled, and can contaminate an entire batch of 100,000 recyclable bottles.

In October 2005, Wal-Mart announced plans to phase out PVC packaging in its private brands by October 2007. Wal-Mart also stopped selling PVC lunch boxes and baby bibs over concerns that those products may contain lead. The company also supports an industry-wide standard to remove PVC from all products intended for kids, and is exploring PVC free materials for its buildings. Wal-Mart stated in a 2007 press kit that, “more and more studies show that PVC has toxins that can pose long-term health and environmental risks.”

Target Corporation has approximately 1,500 stores in 47 states.

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