



# CONSUMERS ASSOCIATION OF SINGAPORE

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### For Immediate Release

20 July 2015

#### CASE finds nail care products safe but several lack mandatory ingredients list

The Consumers Association of Singapore (CASE) conducted a test on 30 different nail polish and nail polish remover products sold in Singapore to determine the amount of benzene and toluene in these nail products. The test showed that there were no benzene or excessive amounts of toluene found in the tested products (*see Annex A: Results of Test on Nail Care Products*). However, CASE noticed that out of the 30 products tested, 10 nail polish products and two nail polish remover products did not include an ingredients list on their product label as required in the labelling requirements stipulated under the Health Products (Cosmetic Products – ASEAN Cosmetic Directive) Regulations 2007.

#### Why is CASE testing nail care products?

Nail care products are popular and their use is widespread especially among female consumers. Such products may contain toxic chemicals like benzene and toluene, potentially exposing to risk a large proportion of consumers.

Benzene is classified as a carcinogen and long-term exposure can potentially cause leukaemia. Many of benzene's non-industrial applications have been limited by its carcinogenicity. Toluene is widely used as an industrial feedstock and as a solvent. Like other solvents, toluene is sometimes abused as an inhalant. This can cause severe neurological harm.

The Consumer Council (Hong Kong) conducted a test previously and found high levels of toxins in five types of nail polish and base coat products. Four samples were tested to contain benzene, which is not supposed to be included in cosmetic products. One was tested with toluene concentration exceeding the 25% limit set by the European Union (EU). **In view of this, CASE decided to commission a similar test to ensure that nail care products sold in Singapore are safe for use.**

#### How are substances in nail care products regulated in Singapore?

Nail care products are regulated under the Health Products (Cosmetic Products – ASEAN Cosmetic Directive) Regulations 2007. The Regulations are in line with the ASEAN Cosmetic Directive (ACD),

which adopts similar regulatory principles and agreements as the relevant European Union (EU) legislation on cosmetic products.

Companies supplying cosmetic products in Singapore are directly responsible for the safety of their products and for ensuring that the cosmetic products they supply comply with Singapore's regulatory requirements. They are required to notify the Health Sciences Authority (HSA) prior to putting them in the market so as to facilitate regulatory follow up if safety concerns arise. Product notification should not be misconstrued as product certification, registration or as a form of pre-market approval by HSA.

Benzene is not permitted for use in any cosmetic product, whereas only a maximum concentration of 25% of Toluene is permitted in nail care products.

In addition, under HSA's guidelines, proper labelling is required for all cosmetic products. Labels or labelling statements must include the full list of ingredients (**in English**) on the container or package and be **clearly legible**.

#### Conducting the tests

In March 2015, CASE officers purchased 30 different brands of nail polish and nail polish remover products from various departmental stores and neighbourhood retail outlets in Singapore.

The officers first checked the ingredients list of the samples to see if they included benzene or toluene. The samples were then sent to CASE's designated lab to be subjected to an assay test for their benzene and toluene content.

According to the test results, none of the nail polish and nail polish removal products contained toluene levels of more than 25%. Benzene was not detected in any of the samples.

Our Officers also found that 10 out of the 15 nail polish samples and two out of the 15 nail polish removers did not display an ingredients list in English. They noted that such information was not provided at the point of sale in the form of leaflets or otherwise. CASE has informed HSA of these findings and they will be sending a letter of advice to these companies to ensure proper labelling for their products placed in the market.

#### CASE's recommendations

While we were unable to test every nail polish and nail polish remover available in Singapore, the samples that were selected were representative of the common brands that can be found in pharmacies, departmental stores and neighbourhood retailers. Thus, we can conclude that the nail care products sold on the Singapore market are generally safe.

However, CASE would like to remind the distributors and retailers of cosmetic products of the importance of adhering to the labelling requirements of cosmetic products stipulated under the Health Products (Cosmetic Products – ASEAN Cosmetic Directive) Regulations 2007. It is in the interest of consumers to be aware of the ingredients that go into the cosmetic products that they use, so that they can make informed purchases and use them correctly.

CASE would like to advise consumers to stay updated on cosmetic products advisories and alerts. New research and tests may reveal previously unknown health hazards associated with products containing organic solvents. Consumers should only purchase products from reputable retailers and use them according to the directions provided by the manufacturers.

CASE is committed to protecting the interests of consumers and will continue to highlight any unfair or unsafe practices in the marketplace.

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**The Consumers Association of Singapore (CASE)**

The Consumers Association of Singapore (CASE) is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation that is committed towards protecting consumers' interest through information and education, and promoting an environment of fair and ethical trade practices. One of their key achievements is in lobbying for Consumer Protection (Fair Trading) Act (CPFTA), which came into effect on March 1, 2004.

## Annex A: Results of Test on Nail Care Products

### I. Results of Test on Nail Polish and Nail Polish Remover Products

The results of the test for the concentration of benzene and toluene are reproduced below. In the table, "ND" stands for "not detected." The availability of the ingredient list on the nail care products is also listed in the table below.

Nail Polish Products					
No.	Brand	Item	Benzene (%)	Toluene (%)	Ingredients list available (in English)
1	Arezia	Arezia Nail Color	ND	ND	No
2	Bourjois (Paris)	1 Seconde - Texture Silicone Gel	ND	ND	No
3	Cyber Colors	Cyber Colors Quick Dry Coat	ND	ND	Yes
4	Elenna	Elenna Nail Polish	ND	ND	No
5	Essence Effect	Sparkling Sugar	ND	ND	No
6	Etude House	Play	ND	ND	No
7	Flormar	Flormar Nail Enamel	ND	0.004	Yes
8	Models Own	HyperGel Gel Effect Polish	ND	ND	No
9	Mosaic Cosmetics	Mosaic Nail Polish	ND	8.86	No
10	O.P.I	O.P.I Nail Lacquer	ND	ND	Yes, list is found under label sticker
11	Revlon	Nail Enamel / Vernis	ND	0.003	Yes
12	Sally Hansen	Triple Shine	ND	ND	Yes
13	Sasatinnie	Super Dolly Fantasy Colour - Quick Dry	ND	ND	No
14	Skin Food	Skin Food Nail Vita	ND	0.006	No
15	The Face Shop	LM Nails 03 Top Coat	ND	ND	No

Nail Polish Remover Products						
No.	Brand	Item	Benzene (%)	Toluene (%)	Ingredients list available (in English)	
16	Bourjois	Magic Nail Polish Remover	ND	ND	Yes	
17	City Girl	City Girl Aloe Vera Nail Polish Remover	ND	ND	Yes	
18	Darkness	Darkness Essence Remover	ND	0.001	Yes	
19	Enesti	Nail Remover	ND	0.001	Yes	
20	Holiika Holiika	Healing Nails Remover	ND	0.002	Yes, but list is in Korean	
21	Kebiya	Clean Nail Polish Remover	ND	ND	No	
22	Mavala	Mild Nail Polish Remover	ND	ND	Yes	
23	Mode	Mode Nail Polish Remover	ND	ND	Yes	
24	Ottie	Ottie Nail Color Remover	ND	0.003	Yes	
25	Oversa	Nagellack Entferner	ND	0.001	Yes	
26	Pretty	Twist & Out Instant Nail Varnish Remover	ND	ND	Yes	
27	Sasatinnie	Lavender Nail Polish Remover	ND	ND	Yes	
28	Sheene	Sheene Nail Remover	ND	0.001	Yes	
29	Silky Girl	QuikClean Nail Polish Remover	ND	ND	Yes	
30	sOmang	D by D Pop Nails Remover	ND	ND	Yes	