

Official Information Act Request

Requester's details

Date: 22 December 2021

Name: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]@gmail.com

Reference number: ENQ-43089-N7H2L2

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request for information, which we received on 4 December 2021. You have asked, "... if any procedures are in place in regards to 1,2-distearoyl-sn-glycero-3-phosphocholine (DSCP) and Chloroform?"

You have specifically enquired about these substances in the context of their use in the covid-19 Comirnaty vaccine. Human medicines – including vaccines – are exempt from the hazardous substances provisions of the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 (HSNO Act), as per clause 6 of the Hazardous Substances (Hazard Classification) Notice 2020, and as such are not regulated by the EPA: https://gazette.govt.nz/assets/pdf-cache/2020/2020-au4842.pdf?2020-12-17_22%3A50%3A42=.

With regard to the specific substances you have named, most hazardous substances that are used domestically and in the workplace (except for pesticides, timber treatment chemicals and vertebrate toxic agents) are approved under the EPA group standards. Depending on the intended use, chloroform is likely to be covered under one or more group standard approvals. For more information on group standards see: <https://www.epa.govt.nz/industry-areas/hazardous-substances/group-standards/types-of-group-standards/>

Chloroform also has a historical individual approval with associated controls. See: <https://www.epa.govt.nz/database-search/approved-hazardous-substances-with-controls/view/74E1567E-1937-4DB8-8FBB-B0D34247847B> for further information. Anyone importing (or manufacturing) chloroform under this approval must comply with all controls, including any applicable use restrictions and the EPA Notices. It is also subject to Health and Safety at Work (HSW) Regulations administered by WorkSafe.

DSCP does not have an individual approval under the HSNO Act, which means it is not approved as a chemical in its own right. This does not mean it is not used in New Zealand, only that it has not been a component in any substance that has required an EPA approval. Therefore, it may still be present in substances not regulated by the EPA, such as medicines – including vaccines.

I hope this information is helpful. You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. You can contact the Ombudsman on 0800 802 602, or by email at info@ombudsman.parliament.nz.

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact us via ministerials@epa.govt.nz.

We may publish your request and our response on our website, www.epa.govt.nz. We make OIA responses available so others can read more about the work we do and the questions we are asked. Any information that might identify you will be removed to protect your privacy.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Hill". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr Christopher Hill
General Manager, Hazardous Substances and New Organisms