



Choosing and using cosmetics with care

August 2018

We set the rules so that you can be confident that the cosmetics and toiletries you buy will not harm you.

Setting the standard

You may not know this, but some cosmetics and toiletries can contain ingredients that are classed as hazardous. This means they could contain chemicals that are flammable, that irritate the skin or other parts of the body, or are toxic.

To make sure cosmetics are safe to use, in New Zealand there are rules for cosmetics that contain hazardous substances. They must meet certain standards which are there to help protect you from potentially harmful ingredients. This ensures that you can trust the products you buy to be safe to use. We, the EPA, manage these standards.

Manufacturers and importers have a responsibility to follow the rules and to make sure that the products they sell in New Zealand are safe to use.

What is covered

Cosmetics include products for cleaning yourself and your family, to make you smell nice, for changing your appearance, for protecting parts of the body or keeping it in good condition, and for correcting body odours.

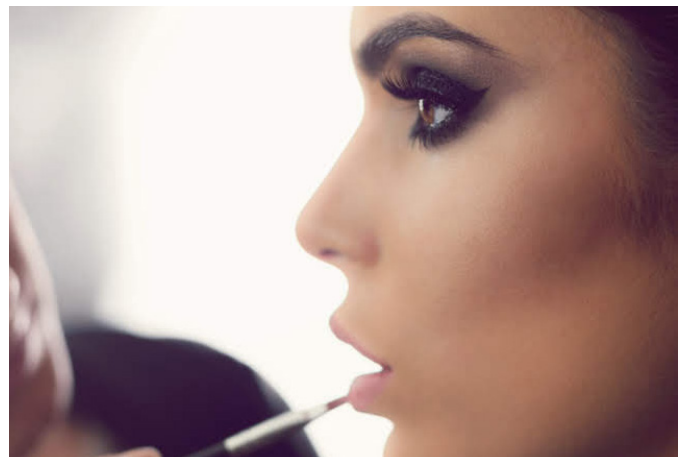
Cosmetics are soaps, shampoos, toothpastes, shaving products, deodorants and other toiletries, perfumes, hair colouring products, insect repellents, sunscreens, self-tanning products and make-up. The rules also cover children's 'toy' cosmetics and face paint.

Ensuring safety

The rules for the safety of cosmetics cover any product that is used on the outside of your body, including your hair and nails, is used on your teeth or in your mouth, whether it is rinsed off quickly after application, or is designed to be left on for some time.

The most important rules for importers and manufacturers of cosmetic products are:

- ensure products don't harm people when the product is in normal use,
- don't use certain ingredients,
- make sure the labelling and packaging has all of the information that you need, and,
- ensure the packaging is safe.



Read the label

The label should give you information about using the product safely – some products may advise against allowing the products to get into your eyes, or mouth, and may advise you to check the product on a small area of your skin first in case of an allergic reaction (a patch test). Other products may be flammable, and you may be advised to use them in a well-ventilated area away from naked flames.

If the label is not in English, then it does not meet the rules for selling cosmetics in New Zealand.

Labels must also:

- be durable and easy to read
- list all hazards and tell you how to use the product safely
- list all of the ingredients in the product from the highest concentration to the lowest
- provide enough information so the New Zealand importer or manufacturer can be contacted
- provide a batch code (this allows manufacturers and suppliers to identify when and where the product was made, so that they know if it is too old to sell)
- include recommendations about how to dispose of the product and packaging
- identify any 'nanomaterials' (tiny microscopic particles) in the products by using the 'nano' in brackets after the ingredient

Sometimes, if the label of a product is very small this information may be provided on a separate leaflet inside the packaging, or in a separate factsheet when you buy the product.

Packaging

There are rules to make sure cosmetics are packaged safely. The container must not leak when you first buy it, or after you used some of the contents and the container is reclosed. The chemicals in the product must not react with the materials in the packaging to weaken the container.



Stay safe

- Always buy cosmetics from reputable retailers
- Be careful if you are shopping overseas or over the internet. Products bought elsewhere may not meet New Zealand safety rules
- If you are in any doubt about the safety of a product, don't buy it or use it
- If the label isn't in English, doesn't list the ingredients, the batch code and New Zealand importer and manufacturer details, then the product doesn't meet the rules
- Always read the label and follow the instructions about how to use the product. They are for your safety
- Store cosmetics out of reach of small children. Even if the labelling says the product is non-toxic or 'natural', it could still be dangerous if it were swallowed.

If you have an allergic or other reaction to a cosmetic product, stop using it immediately. If the reaction is severe, get medical advice from your doctor or speak with a registered nurse on Healthline on 0800 611 116.

For emergencies, call 111 immediately for an ambulance.

Keep connected.

For more information

Visit www.epa.govt.nz/saferhomes

Facebook @EPAGovtNZ



Safer Homes
Kāinga Haumarū

A programme by the
Environmental Protection Authority