



CANADIAN COSMETIC, TOILETRY  
AND FRAGRANCE ASSOCIATION

ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES COSMÉTIQUES,  
PRODUITS DE TOILETTE ET PARFUMS

## **STATEMENT**

MAY 12, 2010

### **Safety of Fragrance Ingredients** ***Environmental Group Misleads Consumers***

The highest priority of the cosmetic and personal care product industry is to ensure the health and safety of consumers through the marketing of products that are safe, effective and that do not damage our environment. CCTFA and its member companies have a long history of working with Health Canada and Environment Canada to promote and maintain consumer safety and confidence in the cosmetic and personal care product sector.

#### **Report on “Secret” Ingredients in Fragrances Released**

A new “report” alleging that a number of popular, brand-name perfumes contain “secret” ingredients that could cause harm to consumers was recently released by the US based organizations *Campaign for Safe Cosmetics* and *Environmental Working Group*, and the Canadian-based *Environmental Defense*. This “report” grossly misrepresents the science on fragrance ingredients and presents a distorted picture of how they are regulated and labeled. The release of the “report” titled, “Not So Sexy: The Health Risks of Secret Chemicals in Fragrance,” does a disservice to consumers who are looking for full and accurate information and trustworthy advice about the products they purchase.

#### **Study Missing Key Information**

The scientific validity of this report is seriously undermined by its failure to include quantitative measurements of the so called “secret” ingredients it purported to find. In the US version of the report, the vast majority of the substances mentioned were either included on the label (which is what these groups were looking for) or were identified as being found in such small quantities that they could not be or were not worth quantifying. Quantity is a fundamental element of toxicological risk assessments as the amount of a substance is important in determining potential risk.

#### **The Science & Safety of Fragrance Ingredients**

The report also erroneously alleges that many of the materials ‘revealed’ in their testing have not been assessed for safety. In fact, most of the ingredients have been the subject of a safety assessment by one or more authoritative bodies.

Internationally, standards for fragrance ingredients are based on the recommendations of a scientific panel of toxicologists, dermatologists, pathologists and environmental scientists that is overseen by the Research Institute for Fragrance Materials (RIFM), the research arm of the International Fragrance Association (IFRA). The RIFM database contains a significant volume of information on fragrance materials.

In Canada, as in most countries, it is illegal to sell personal care products and fragrances that could cause harm to human health and safety when used as intended. Ingredient suppliers and product manufacturers go to great lengths to ensure that the products they produce for consumers are safe when used as intended. Additionally, Health Canada regulates these products to ensure that safety and health standards are met. Consequently, Health Canada maintains a “Hotlist” of ingredients that are restricted or prohibited for use in cosmetic products including fragrances and it was noted in this “report” that none of the ingredients identified were on the “Hotlist”.

#### **Specific Health Concerns**

**Sensitivity:** With respect to allegations in the report of sensitization from fragrance ingredients, it has long been known that a certain percentage of individuals in the population are sensitive to some natural or synthetic materials in the environment. In fact, some of the strongest sensitizers are derived from natural sources such as peanuts.



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Fragrance materials and other cosmetic ingredients are tested for their potential to cause sensitization and allergic reactions. When these tests identify substances that may be sensitizing agents, manufacturers take the appropriate steps to formulate in a manner that minimizes the chances of sensitization and allergic reaction. Many of these substances have been used for decades, and much is known about them. The actual occurrence of sensitization in the marketplace is quite low.

For individuals who are extremely sensitive, products are labeled either with the individual ingredients in them or under the general heading of “fragrance.” This information helps consumers to select products that are safe and appropriate for them to use. Individuals who experience allergic reactions should consult their physician.

**Hormone Disruptors:** The assertions in the report that some fragrance ingredients could be hormone disruptors are based on incomplete assessments of available scientific data about potential hormone effects and do not take into account actual exposure in cosmetic products. The studies relied upon in the allegations are not directly relevant to human exposure, and many of the laboratory tests that have been done were completed under conditions that are not directly applicable to the use of these ingredients in cosmetic products. In some substances the hormone effects measured are tens of thousands of times less than what would be expected to cause effects in humans. The weight of evidence in hormone disruption science today does not support the conclusions presented in this report.

### **Labeling of Fragrance Ingredients**

Although the report alleges deficiencies in labeling laws for fragrances, virtually all countries, including the European Union, allow fragrance ingredients to be declared on product labels under the general term of “fragrance” or “parfum”. This is because fragrance components are made up of many substances, and it’s simply impossible to list them all on a product label. In addition, the listing of all fragrance materials would generally not be useful to all but expert chemists particularly given the very minute amounts that may be included. The practical approach chosen by regulatory authorities has been to require specific declarations or restrictions only when there is a clearly defined need.

### **Fragrances Are Safe**

Cosmetic and personal care product manufacturers take their safety responsibilities very seriously. Cosmetic ingredients are carefully selected for safety and suitability for their specific applications. Additionally, products are regulated by national health safety authorities such as Health Canada to further ensure product safety. Consumers can therefore be confident in the safety of their products.

### **Previous Experience with Similar Reports**

Over the past several years, a variety of similar reports or claims that personal care products are endangering consumers have been made by one or all of the organizations releasing this report. Upon examination, including by health authorities such as Health Canada, their claims were found to be inaccurate. Some examples include:

1. **Lead in Lipstick** – Health Canada followed up this accusation by testing a variety of lipsticks and found all to be safe.
2. **Mercury in Mascara** – Mercury is not allowed as a cosmetic ingredient in Canada and is not used in personal care products.
3. **Contaminates in Baby Shampoos** – Health Canada reviewed the Environmental Working Group’s data and concluded that a consumer would have to wash their hair 620 times per day, every day, to come within the range of potential risk. Baby shampoos are safe.

CCTFA is the national association representing the Canadian cosmetic, toiletry, and fragrance industry. CCTFA’s mission is “While playing a meaningful societal role, to encourage trust and confidence in the Canadian cosmetic, toiletry and fragrance industry and in the safety, efficacy and quality of its products.” CCTFA and its member companies promote achievement of these goals by encouraging a close working relationship with governments, health-care professionals, and the consumer.