

## Purpose:

- To guide the laundry products industry on appropriate labelling, packaging and design measures to help reduce the likelihood of child exposure to the contents of liquid laundry capsules.

## Background:

- In November 2012, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) Product Safety Branch contacted Accord to alert the industry to Poisons Information Centre reports of child exposure to the contents of liquid laundry capsules. Following this, Accord, ACCC and relevant companies commenced a dialogue to consider relevant information from here and overseas, as well as possible measures to address the issue.
- On 6 February 2013, ACCC issued a public safety alert on laundry capsules. Accord also issued a supporting media statement alerting parents to keep capsules out of reach of children and advising of industry's commitment to develop an Industry Guideline to address the issue.

## Guiding Principles:

*The Accord Industry Guideline is:*

- **targeted at measures likely to be most effective** for reducing child exposure incidents relating to the consumer use of liquid laundry capsules in the Australian context,
- **voluntary**, but supported by leading laundry detergent companies on the Australian market and open to all companies including non-members of Accord,
- **consistent, where possible and relevant, with similar initiatives or actions in other leading markets** (such as the EU and USA),
- **flexible and outcomes-based** rather than prescriptive and inflexible, but acting as an industry 'benchmark' for safety purposes; and,
- **not intended to preclude companies from adopting additional safety measures**, should they wish to do so.

**Accord's mission, as the national voice for the hygiene, cosmetic and specialty products industry, is to promote the safe, effective and beneficial use of industry products.**

### Liquid laundry capsules...

... are a relatively recent innovation in household laundry products. The detergent ingredients are concentrated and enclosed in single-dose water soluble capsules.

This offers the advantages of:

- simple, convenient, no-mess laundry dosing,
- environmental benefits of not overdosing the wash plus a reduced environmental footprint in transport due to concentration of the product; and,
- benefits of easy dosing of the wash for some people in the community who may have difficulties with measuring powder or liquid products, including the elderly and disabled.



**These Packaging & Labelling Guidelines aim to reduce the incidence of child exposure by:**

- reducing *visibility* of liquid laundry capsules to young children
- reducing the *accessibility* of liquid laundry capsules for young children
- ensuring parents and caregivers are provided with appropriate *label warnings and other advice*

## Industry Guidelines for liquid laundry capsules

Companies following these guidelines commit to progressive implementation of the following measures:

- **Reducing the visibility of liquid laundry capsules via obscure or opaque packaging or any equivalent measure.**
- **Rendering access to liquid laundry capsules difficult by a pack closure design which discourages, delays, or otherwise impedes the ability of young children to open the pack.**
- **On-pack communication in a prominent place on the pack & label which reinforces the need to\*:**
  - *Not let children handle liquid laundry capsules*
  - *Keep liquid laundry capsules tightly closed in their original container*
  - *Keep liquid laundry capsules well out of reach and out of sight of children*
  - *Keep liquid laundry capsules, when not in use, away from moisture and avoid handling them with wet hands*
  - *Call the Poisons Information Centre (13 11 26) if the capsule contents are swallowed or get in the eye.*
- **In the period while these measures are being progressively implemented, participating companies commit to promoting the safe storage, handling and use of liquid laundry capsules.**
- **The industry body, Accord, will aid in promotion of the general safety message for liquid laundry capsules and other household cleaning products.**
- **Participating companies also commit to ongoing cooperative liaison with relevant agencies, including the ACCC Product Safety Branch in addressing liquid laundry capsule safety.**

\* The actual wording (and look of) the label warnings will depend in part on the origin of the liquid laundry capsule product. Product supplied from the EU market would most likely follow the AISE industry guidelines and, in keeping with the approach for the multilingual EU market, may include pictograms to reinforce the written warnings. Product supplied from the USA is likewise expected to follow approaches agreed in that market with the CPSC. If writing label or pack warnings to Australian approaches, care needs to be taken to avoid inconsistency or confusion with the mandatory Signal Headers used for Scheduled substances, as regulated under state and territory poisons laws. Accord can provide guidance.

### Other information sources relating to the safety of liquid laundry capsules:

- ACCC - <http://www.productsafety.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/999447> & <http://www.productsafety.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/998653/fromItemId/999447>
- CPSC (USA) - <http://www.cpsc.gov//PageFiles/132488/390%20Laundry%20Packets.pdf>
- Accord - [http://www.accord.asn.au/public\\_information\\_submission/children\\_and\\_safe\\_storage](http://www.accord.asn.au/public_information_submission/children_and_safe_storage)
- AISE (Europe) - <http://www.aise.eu/go.php?pid=44122&topics=1>
- ACI (USA) - [http://www.cleaninginstitute.org/important\\_safety\\_alert\\_safe\\_use\\_of\\_single-load\\_liquid\\_laundry\\_packets/](http://www.cleaninginstitute.org/important_safety_alert_safe_use_of_single-load_liquid_laundry_packets/)



## Safety Advice to Parents and Caregivers

To prevent exposure of children to the contents of liquid laundry capsules, the following steps are recommended:

- Do not let children handle the laundry capsules
- Keep liquid laundry capsules in their original pack
- Keep the pack containing the capsules closed and dry
- Store out of sight of children and well out of their reach
- Capsules quickly dissolve upon contact with water, wet hands, or saliva
- Ensure your hands are dry before using liquid laundry capsules, and wash and dry your hands after each use
- If the capsule or its contents are swallowed, or get in the eye:
  - immediately call the Poisons Information Centre on: **13 11 26**
  - if swallowed, rinse as much of the detergent as possible from the mouth
  - if detergent gets in the eye, flush the eye with clean water for at least 15 minutes

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