

GLOBAL STANDARD

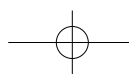
FOR CONSUMER PRODUCTS ISSUE 2A

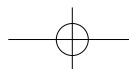


October 2008

British Retail Consortium

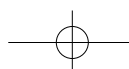
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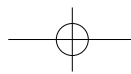




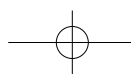
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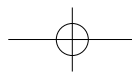
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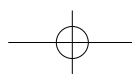
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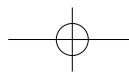




SECTION I

INTRODUCTION





Section I

Introduction

Welcome to Issue 2A of the Global Standard for Consumer Products. BRC originally published a Standard for Consumer Products in 2003 in response to growing retailer concerns about consumer product safety. This publication was extensively revised and improved to create Issue 2 of the Standard, published in October 2006. This current Standard does not include any major changes from Issue 2 and the requirements for certification remain the same as those of Issue 2.

Issue 2A has been published to allow corrections to be made, to reflect more closely the international nature of consumer products and to update some of the worked examples in the light of updated legislation and greater experience in the assessment of products.

1 Background

Retailers are obliged to supply safe and legal products to their consumers and must take all reasonable precautions to ensure this happens. They need to be able to demonstrate legal compliance of the products in all countries or regions into which they are supplied in order to avoid failure of this duty, whether in the development, manufacture, distribution, advertising or sale of products.

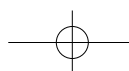
This obligation, in the context of retailer-branded products, involves a number of activities, one of which is the verification of the technical competence of the products' suppliers. For many years, retailers undertook this activity themselves, verifying competence and performance against their own individual, internally developed standards, or they used third-party inspection bodies. However, with increasing legal obligations and in particular the EU General Product Safety Directive 2001/95, the BRC brought together stakeholder groups to establish the basis for an updated technical standard for consumer products to serve retailers in the global marketplace.

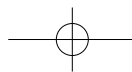
With the increasing demand for retailer-branded products and also a need to ensure that manufacturers and importers of branded products are fulfilling their responsibilities, the Global Standard for Consumer Products will help to ensure that products consistently meet consumers' needs and expectations with respect to quality, safety and legality and give retailers confidence in their suppliers' capabilities. Although the Standard does not apply directly to importers, they have a duty to ensure that the products they import are safe and legal. Requesting that their suppliers meet the requirements of the Standard is a way of demonstrating that these aspects have been addressed.

2 BRC and the Global Standard for Consumer Products

The BRC (British Retail Consortium) is a trade organisation representing the interests of its members. The membership comprises a very large proportion of the UK retail trade and it also has Associate Members from companies that offer various support functions to the retailers.

The concept of the Global Standard for Consumer Products was originally devised by the BRC to support its members. The development of the Standard was coordinated by BRC Trading Ltd with a much wider participation from a variety of stakeholder groups and a number of international retailers. The Standard may be recommended for use or used by anyone, anywhere who needs to assure themselves about the safety and legality of their products whether they be retailers, specifiers or manufacturers. There is no requirement to be a member of the BRC and in fact such membership is not available to companies who are not part of the retail trade or associated services.





3 Global Standard for Consumer Products

The Standard was developed to assist retailers as well as producers of branded consumer goods in their fulfilment of legal obligations and protection of the consumer, by providing a common basis for the certification of companies producing consumer products. The 'due diligence' obligation placed upon retailers is such that they would wish to promote best practice across the supply chain.

The Standard encompasses fundamental principles for the manufacture of safe and legal products with the required quality characteristics. It is not intended to replace the requirements of any legislation, and where any specific legal statutes regarding product safety or quality exist for an industry sector or product type, these shall also apply and an assessment of the knowledge of such requirements is part of the audit protocol.

A technical audit of a production premises forms only part of the quality and safety measures necessary to be taken in the supply chain to demonstrate compliance with legal measures, and the decision to have a company supply product rests with the individual retailer or customer.

The Standard will be reviewed on a regular basis by the BRC technical advisory committee and revised to reflect the requirements of stakeholder groups.

The Standard requires:

- the adoption of a hazard and risk management system and the establishment of appropriate controls
- a documented and effective quality management system
- the effective control of the site environment, product, process and personnel.

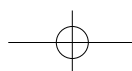
4 The Scope of the Global Standard for Consumer Products (Issue 2A)

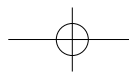
The Global Standard for Consumer Products (Issue 2A) sets out the requirements for the supply of safe and legal consumer products of consistent quality (see the glossary for a definition of 'quality'). The products may be retailer own-label, branded, or be for use by other organisations.

The Standard has been developed to promote product safety, legality and quality, but does not encompass requirements in relation to staff workplace health and safety, environmental or ethical issues.

The scope of the Global Standard for Consumer Products (Issue 2A) is intended to cover those manufactured products (both fabricated and formulated) placed on the market – i.e. sold or given to consumers – which come under the scope of the EU General Product Safety Directive 2001/95. The scope of this European Directive is broadly similar to definitions of consumer products commonly applied in other territories; for example, the Trade Practices Act of Australia or the USA Consumer Products Safety Act. Specific exclusions to the scope of the Standard shall be:

- products or activities covered by the current issues of other Standards in the series:
 - Global Standard for Food Safety
 - BRC/IoP Global Standard for Packaging and Packaging Materials. Note that companies producing packaging materials solely for sale directly to the consumer are covered by this Standard. Packaging used in other circumstances or for dual consumer/trade use is covered by the Global Standard for Packaging and Packaging Materials
 - Global Standard – Storage and Distribution
- motor vehicles except those intended for use as toys or sports equipment and not used on the public highway
- fuels dispensed in bulk, or sold in refillable containers
- services (insurance, banking, etc.)
- pharmaceuticals which are supplied only by prescription from a medical practitioner





- vitamins, minerals and herbal supplements
- horticultural growing practice covering live plants, flowers and seeds or the cultivation of plants and flowers
- live animals and pets
- the Standard shall be applied at the point of manufacture and subsequent storage and distribution prior to delivery to the retailer or customer. Specific activities excluded from the scope of the Standard are:
 - wholesale
 - importation
 - distribution or storage (outside the direct control of the production premises). This is covered by the Global Standard – Storage and Distribution.

5 The Format of the Global Standard for Consumer Products

The requirements of the Global Standard for Consumer Products are defined for four product groups.

Some product groups have more applicable requirements than others but each section of the Standard has some requirements that all companies must comply with in order to gain certification. **The numbering of the requirements is such that any given clause has the same number in all product groups. The audit requirements of the higher product groups always cover the requirements in lower product groups but in some clauses the exact wording or requirement for the clause is not identical for each group. The requirements are listed within each product group section of the Standard but some clauses are omitted from lower product groups.**

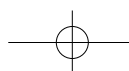
6 Benefits of the Global Standard for Consumer Products

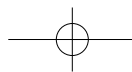
There are a number of benefits arising from the use of the Global Standard for Consumer Products:

- It provides a single generic standard and protocol that allows an audit by an accredited, BRC approved third-party certification body. Certification bodies shall be accredited to an international Standard (ISO/IEC Guide 65 or EN 45011. Note that a new standard ISO 17065 on the same subject may be published soon and used as a basis for accreditation).
- Single verification commissioned by the supplier, in line with an agreed audit frequency, will allow suppliers to report upon their status to their customers and other organisations of their choosing.
- The Standard is comprehensive in scope, covering areas of product safety, legality and quality.
- The Standard addresses part of the 'due diligence' requirements of the supplier and their customers. This means it assists suppliers and their customers to demonstrate they have carried out their responsibilities with regard to product safety.
- Within the associated protocol, there is a requirement for ongoing surveillance and confirmation of the follow-up of corrective actions on non-conformance to the Standard, thus ensuring that a self-improving quality and product safety system is established.
- Recognition of accredited Certification Bodies in many of the countries where the product is sourced allows for the availability of local auditors and provides an efficient, controlled and cost-effective audit.

7 Relationship with Other Standards

The Global Standard for Consumer Products will be used by certification bodies as a Standard in its own right, without addition or amendment to format or content.





The BRC would, however, encourage evaluators to be aware of the existence of other Standards that may be in place, and to bear in mind that during the audit process reference should be made to systems such as ISO 9001:2000; although where there is deemed to be conflicting information or evidence the requirements of the Standard will take precedence.

8 Codes of Practice/Specific Guidelines

The BRC will continue to encourage cooperation between stakeholders to agree industry codes of practice and specific guidelines for individual product categories as required. Where BRC has established that suitable third-party documents exist, it will endeavour to publish details on the BRC website (www.brcglobalstandards.com). BRC also aims to produce supplementary sector guidelines when needed. Such materials will supplement the Standard as guidance for both auditors and companies hoping to obtain certification. The guidelines aim to augment the general requirements of the Standard and will present information that is necessary to take into consideration in order for factories to operate in accordance with the Standard. There may, however, be other means to achieve compliance with the Standard than those quoted in the guideline documents and so any such documents should be treated as best practice guidelines and supplementary information, and will not be additional requirements.

9 Product Group Determination

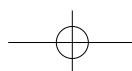
- **Product Group 1:** Products with specific legal safety and hygiene requirements and/or the potential to cause serious injury or death if they fail during normal use.
- **Product Group 2:** Products with specific legal safety requirements and/or the potential to cause serious injury or death if they fail during normal use.
- **Product Group 3:** Products that have some product-specific legal requirements and /or which may cause slight injury if they fail in normal use.
- **Product Group 4:** Very low-risk products that have no product-specific legal requirements.

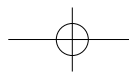
The product group by which the manufacturer or assembly packer is evaluated is determined by using the appropriate **product group decision tree**, which is illustrated in Figures 1 and 2.

The company must determine whether it is a manufacturer or assembly packer by referring to the definitions in the glossary prior to using the decision tree to determine the product group. If the manufacturer applying for certification has no specific retail customer and has determined the product group, this needs to be verified and agreed by the certification body that will carry out the audit. If the company has a specific retail customer, it is recommended that the product group also be verified with the customer before the audit takes place.

If agreement on the correct product group cannot be achieved between parties then they should consult the product group assessment guidelines on the BRC Global Standards website. The following issues should also be taken into account:

- Sometimes a specific product can be demonstrated by means of a risk analysis and following the decision tree to be in a lower group than that which would usually be expected. In such a case, the reason for such a decision should be recorded on the certificate.
- It is not acceptable, in any circumstances, for a company to be audited to a lower product group than that into which the product falls when the risk analysis has been carried out. For example, a company cannot choose to have a toy (which would normally fall into Product Group 2) audited to the requirements of Product Group 4.
- There are occasions when companies may decide to be audited to the requirements of a higher product group than the one defined as a result of the risk analysis. This is acceptable, although not encouraged. If this approach is taken then the certificate must show both the product group to which





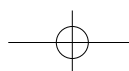
the factory was audited and the product group resulting from the risk analysis. This is so that the product group assigned via the risk analysis can be listed on the BRC Directory in order to help maintain consistency.

In the case of a novel product type, the product group will be agreed through the BRC referral process and added to the website. In cases of disagreement about the appropriate product group, the Certification Body should refer the item to the BRC who will present it to the Technical Advisory Committee for adjudication. In urgent cases BRC will determine the product group and then refer to the Technical Advisory Committee for subsequent use.

10 Guidelines for the Use of the Product Group Decision Tree for the Manufacture of Consumer Products

The purpose of the decision tree is to enable the user to determine the product group of any product in the scope of the Standard. It is important to note that the product group is based on the risk to the consumer for whom the finished product is intended. When using the decision tree, sources of contamination or other factors that could be introduced during the production and distribution process, and which could potentially affect the safety, legality and quality of the finished product, shall also be considered.

For each product manufactured or assembled, each question is answered sequentially from the beginning, until a 'yes' answer is reached. The first 'yes' determines the product group. Questions should be answered for risks and the legislation in the market where the finished product is sold to the consumer.



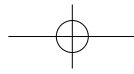
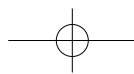
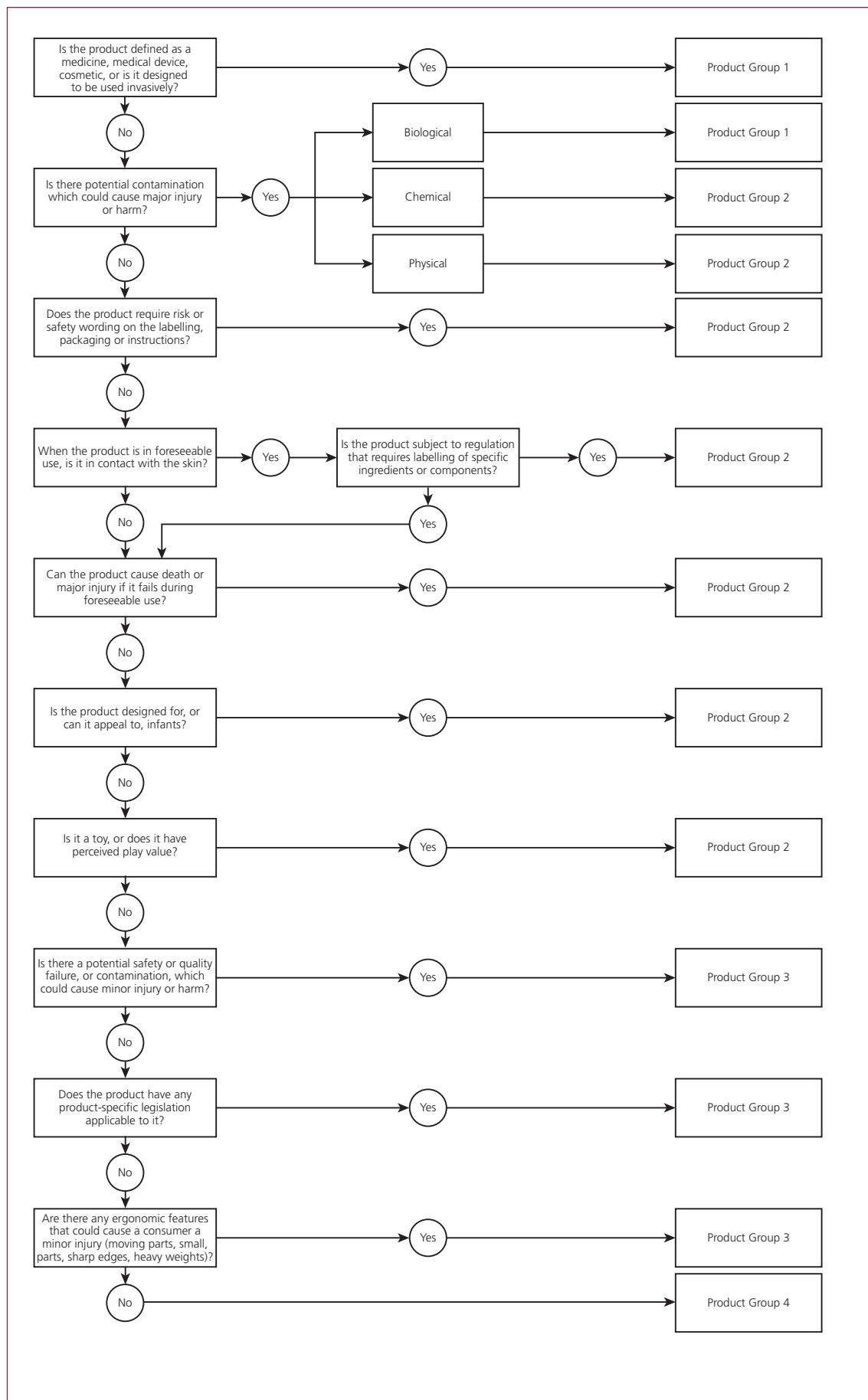


Figure 1

Product group decision tree – manufacturer



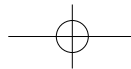
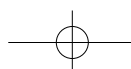
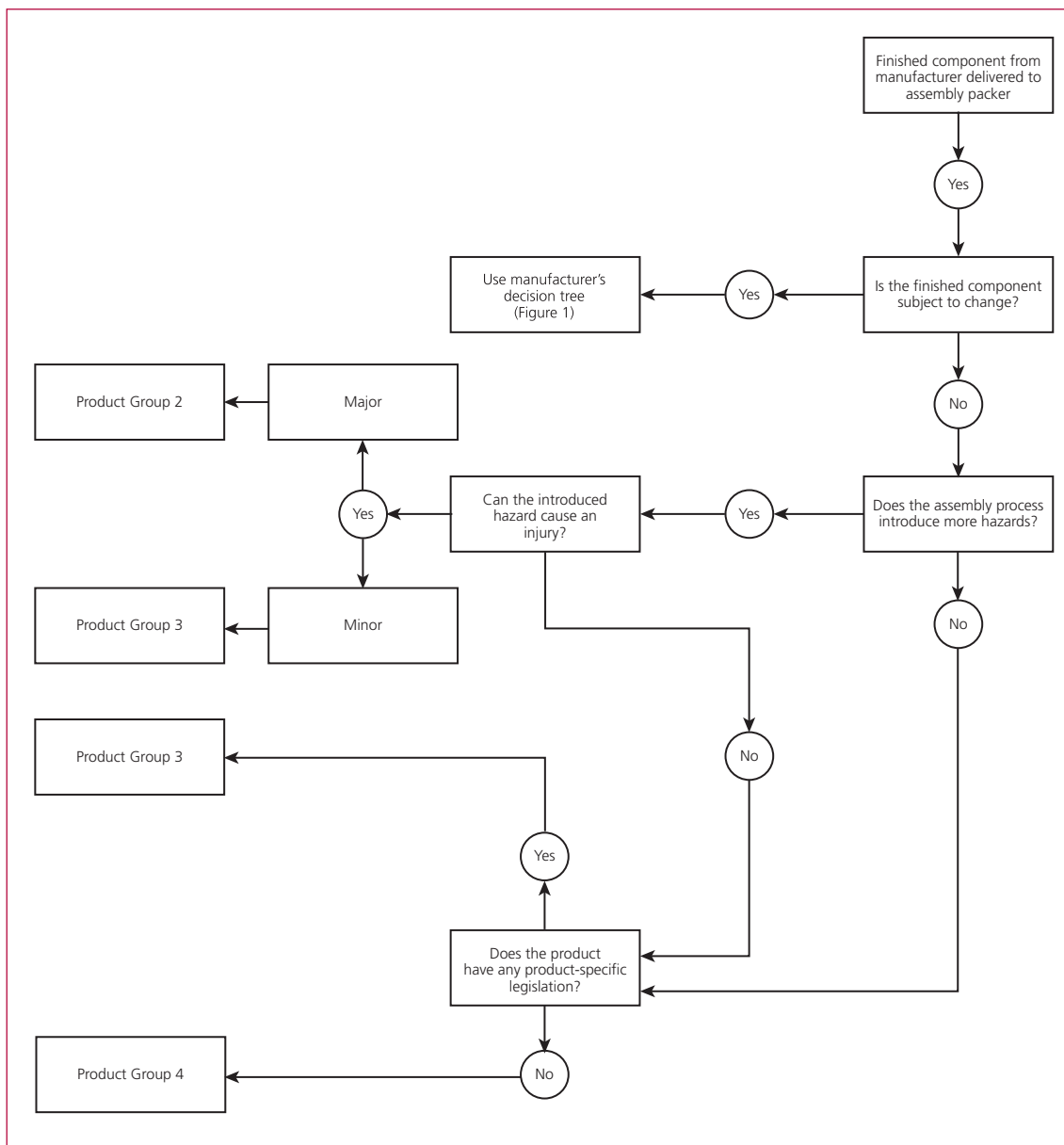
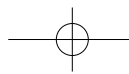


Figure 2

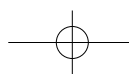
Product group decision tree – assembly packer

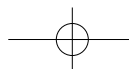




SECTION II

REQUIREMENTS



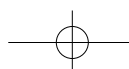


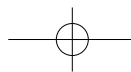
Section II

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