

RESTRICTION ON SYNTHETIC POLYMER MICROPARTICLES

Industry interpretation regarding film-forming products such as floor polish and wax products

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The microplastic restriction in REACH Annex XVII (entry 78 ¹) excludes polish products or waxes that contain only polymers in liquid form from the scope of the restriction, as well as those containing only natural polymers (provided they have not been chemically modified after extraction).

However, regarding solid microparticles, the microplastic restriction in REACH Annex XVII includes both a derogation for synthetic polymer microparticles that are permanently modified (paragraph 5.b), for instance film forming products, as well as a transition period for the ban on microparticles in polish products and waxes (6.e). Therefore, there is a need for an industry guidance to clarify the scope of the two different parts of the restriction.

Film forming polishes and waxes are examples of products that are in scope of paragraph 5.b since the polymer microparticle content will be permanently modified during intended end use when applied to the surface. The same principle applies to other products that contain solid polymer microparticles and are film forming and permanently modified during intended end use, for instance different kinds of paints and coatings.

Film forming floor polishes and waxes add to the sustainability of a large majority of public surfaces, such as floors in airports, offices, public transportation means and hospitals. Professional floor polish products are used to maintain the surface structure and properties so that the surfaces will continue to be easily cleaned with minimal resources and to make sure the floors and surfaces last as long as possible. Other polishes and waxes may also be film forming or permanently modified when applied, such as polishes for furniture or footwear or products for the prevention of graffiti in public areas.

REACH Annex XVII microplastic restriction	Examples of products that are permanently modified during the intended end use
5. Paragraph 1 shall not apply to the placing on the market of the following synthetic polymer microparticles, as substances on their own or in mixtures: ... b) synthetic polymer microparticles the physical properties of which are permanently modified during intended end use in such a way that the polymer no longer falls within the scope of this entry; ...	Film-forming synthetic polishes and waxes - for floor, furniture, footwear, and other surfaces such as products for the prevention of graffiti, etc.

¹ Published as [Commission Regulation \(EU\) 2023/2055 of 25 September 2023](#)

