

More Is Less

Wal-Mart's Preferred Substances for Chemical-Intensive Products

Wal-Mart Stores Inc. has adopted "preferred chemical principles" to establish a set of preferred chemical characteristics for product ingredients. The company hopes these principles will encourage suppliers to develop product formulations that will be better for their customers and the environment. The company is giving suppliers a period of time to identify products that use certain "priority chemicals" as ingredients and then to develop an action plan to deal with those chemicals. Wal-Mart is beginning implementation of the program by addressing the use of three priority chemicals but plans to extend its efforts to 17 chemicals over the next two years. "We are excited about how this set of principles will help move us toward more sustainable products for mother, child, and the environment," says John Westling, senior vice president and general merchandise manager of Wal-Mart's Merchandise Division. The first three chemicals are propoxur and permethrin, two pesticides found in household insect control products, and nonyl phenol ethoxylates used in some cleaning products.

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