

Statement concerning printing inks and associated varnishes, the HACCP concept, den BRC/loP standard and the IFS 6 (International Food Standard)

- The HACCP concept (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) is a system used to identify, evaluate and control significant hygiene risks when manufacturing, handling, processing, transporting, stocking and selling food-related products.
- The BRC/loP standard is a guideline for manufactures of food packaging for own-brand products, which was created by the British Retail Consortium (BRC) in co-operation with the Institute of Packaging (IoP) and which increasingly is being adopted by the food industry.
- The IFS 6 (International Food Standard) lays down criteria for management systems of the food industry. It combines ISO Standard 9001:2008, Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and the HACCP concept, to ensure safety, quality, and legal compliance of food products. The current Version 6 sets the focus on food packaging and on possible contamination of food by packaging materials.

The keynote of these concepts is a company-based risk assessment. This assessment seeks to eliminate significant risk to the consumer arising from microbiological, physical and chemical contamination of the packaged foodstuff.

As a printing ink manufacturer we are part of the packaging chain but not as direct suppliers to the food industry. RUCO printing inks and varnishes are intended for outer or sandwich application and not for direct contact with food. Further information can be found in the leaflet "Printing Inks for Food Packaging" issued by EuPIA, the European Printing Ink Association (www.eupia.org).

To assist our customers in the assessment of contamination risks from our products we offer the following comments:

Warehouse and manufacturing facilities

All products supplied by RUCO are manufactured according to general industrial hygiene principles. These include no eating, drinking or smoking in manufacturing areas, clean work areas, separate washing facilities and changing rooms, regular change of work clothes etc.

Ink and varnish raw materials and finished product storage and production areas are not especially attractive for insects, rodents or other pests.

Chemical risks

All our products are formulated in accordance with the "EuPIA Exclusion List for Printing Inks and Related Products" (www.eupia.org). This list excludes the usage of raw materials classified as very toxic, toxic, carcinogenic, mutagenic or toxic for reproduction.

Provided that our printing inks are correctly processed, they are suitable for printing onto the non-contact side of food packaging, in compliance with the legal requirements for end products (Article 3 of Framework Regulation (EC) No. 1935/2004 and Plastic Directive (EU) No. 10/2011).

Microbiological risks

For solvent-borne inks and associated varnishes microbiological contamination is not possible due to the high organic solvent content which prevents microbial growth / microbiological contamination.

For water-borne inks and varnishes controlled additions of in-can, wet-state microbiological preservatives are used as an intentional part of the formulation to maintain the shelf-life of unopened packs.

During printing, both solvent and water based systems are dried by the use of forced air and elevated temperatures.

The UV-curable polymers used in UV inks and associated varnishes are not suitable media for the growth of micro-organisms, furthermore the curing process involves exposure to the UV light, itself used in other applications to destroy microbes.

Physical risks

Physical contamination (e.g. metal, wood or glass fragments) is very unlikely, as product manufacture is typically carried out within closed systems. Furthermore, products are typically filtered as the last step immediately prior to being placed into the supply container (tins, pails, hobbicks etc.).

All containers, mixing and print equipment must be maintained in such a state as to avoid external contamination immediately before and during printing.