

# ***Read the label!***

**What you need to know to ensure safe use of detergents and cleaning products in the home**



- **New warning labels** will soon be appearing on household cleaning products.
- Some of the **symbols** and **safety information** you may be used to seeing **will change**.
- This does not mean the product itself is different, and **not all products are affected**.
- This leaflet explains the changes to help you make sure you **keep using these products safely**.

**AS ALWAYS:**

**PLEASE READ THE LABEL.**

**FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS PROVIDED.**

## Read the label

Detergents and cleaning products are key in delivering cleanliness and hygiene in the home. But using some products incorrectly can lead to accidents, so it is important to read the label and understand the symbols and information printed on it.

New warning labels will soon be appearing on household cleaning products. The changes are coming gradually so that, for a while, you may see both old and new symbols. By 2017, all product labels will have to carry the new symbols.

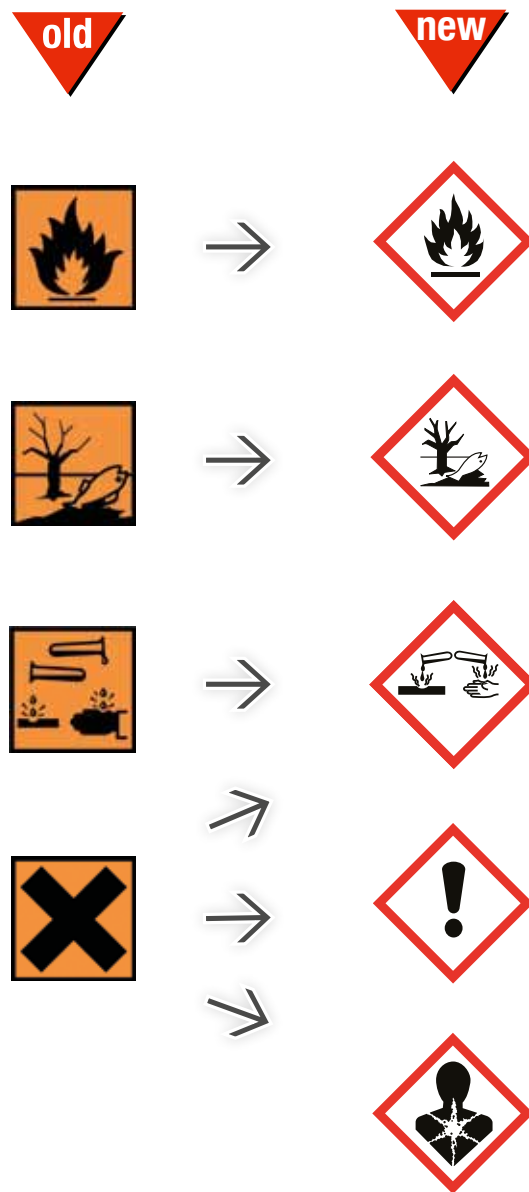
**Only one part of the label is changing – the regulatory safety information.**

## New symbols

You are probably already familiar with the black and orange hazard symbols that appear on some detergents and cleaning products.

These symbols and the accompanying statements help you to know that the products you are using might be, oxidising, highly or extremely flammable, toxic, harmful, irritant, corrosive, or dangerous for the environment.

One of the first things you may notice is that the new symbols are often similar to the old ones except with a different shape and colour.



There are other new symbols which are not relevant for detergents and cleaning products.

## New symbols (continued)

Two completely new symbols are being introduced that you should know about:



This new symbol indicates health hazards like skin irritation or sensitisation, serious eye irritation, or that a product could be harmful if swallowed.



This new symbol indicates more severe health hazards.



You may see these new symbols where you used to see the old St Andrew's Cross symbol, which is being phased out.

## New signal words

You will also notice new wording to accompany these symbols.

- **Warning** (indicating less severe hazard); or
- **Danger** (indicating more severe hazard).

These will be followed by one or more:

- **Hazard statements**  
(eg «Causes skin irritation»);
- **Precautionary statements**  
(eg «Keep out of reach of children»), providing you with safe use advice to help prevent accidents.

## Here's an example

Here is the old type of label followed by the new one, for the same product – e.g. an all purpose cleaner.

old



(Trade name) Cleaning Product

Irritating to eyes

Avoid contact with eyes.

In case of contact with eyes, rinse immediately with plenty of water and seek medical advice.

If swallowed seek medical advice immediately and show this container or label.

Keep out of the reach of children.

2KG

The ABC Specialty Company, Old Street, New Town, City Y  
Tel 01 234 567 89

new



(Trade name) Cleaning Product

Warning

Causes serious eye irritation.

Keep out of reach of children.

Wear eye/face protection.

IF IN EYES: Rinse cautiously with water for several minutes. Remove contact lenses if present and easy to do. Continue rinsing.

If eye irritation persists: Get medical advice/attention.

If medical advice is needed, have product container or label at hand.

Wash hands thoroughly after handling.

2KG

The ABC Specialty Company, Old Street, New Town, City Y  
Tel 01 234 567 89

**NB:** Examples above are provided for illustrative purpose only. Size of pictograms and label are subject to specific requirements for use on pack.

## Did you know?



- The European Union is implementing a new system developed by the United Nations to ensure that chemicals and products containing them are classified and labelled in the same way worldwide. In the past, product X could be classified as toxic in one country but not in another. Different symbols were used to indicate the same hazard and some countries did not have any system at all.
- It is possible that a product not requiring any hazard symbol under the old system, will show one under the new system. This does not mean the product itself has changed or is any less safe to use.
- The symbols and wording are there to draw your attention to hazardous substances present in a product and highlight what those hazards are. But that does not necessarily mean that you are at risk from those hazards when you use the product following the instructions provided on the label.
- A chemical's 'hazard' is its intrinsic ability to cause adverse effects. The 'risk' is the likelihood that those effects will occur in the applications in which the chemical is used. So, for example, crossing a road is hazardous but if you cross at a crosswalk and look both ways, the risk is very low.

## What can you do?



There are many things you can do to minimise the risk of chemical hazards causing any harm. But the most important piece of advice is also the simplest:

### ✓ Always read the label before using a product

The label is full of important information. To use a product safely, follow these steps:

*Look at the label*

*Are there hazards (as indicated by symbols and statements)?*

*Read it carefully – and follow the advice.*

*Is this the right product for the job?*

*Are there precautions I should take, like wearing gloves?*

### ✓ Use the product as instructed

Many household products will also carry other symbols, different from the hazard symbols explained here. These were devised as a voluntary initiative by manufacturers in Europe and help you to see, at a glance, how to use a product safely. Here they are:

### SAFE USE - ICONS


<p>Keep away from children.</p>	<p>Rinse hands after use.</p>	<p>Do not ingest. If product is ingested then seek medical advice.</p>	<p>Do not mix with other products</p>
<p>Keep away from eyes. If product gets into eyes rinse thoroughly with water.</p>	<p>People with sensitive or damaged skin should avoid prolonged contact with the product.</p>	<p>Do not change container to store contents.</p>	<p>Ventilate the room after use.</p>

Transfer refill content in the original container only.

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A blurred background image of a person's hand holding a green cleaning product bottle in a store aisle. The shelves are filled with various cleaning products in different colors and sizes.

**MORE INFORMATION ON HOW TO MINIMISE RISK AND  
ENSURE SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF CLEANING  
PRODUCTS CAN BE FOUND AT: [WWW.CLEANRIGHT.EU](http://WWW.CLEANRIGHT.EU)**

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**International Association for Soaps, Detergents and Maintenance products**

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