

Mineral Oils in Food Packaging and Stora Enso Consumer Board Products

Food packaging materials based on virgin fibres are not sources for mineral oils like recycled materials. Purity and safety of fibre based materials are reliably controlled in virgin pulping as well as paper and board making process. Origin of all virgin raw materials and chemical additives is well known. Stora Enso Consumer Board mills use only food contact approved chemicals and raw materials in the production of food contact materials.

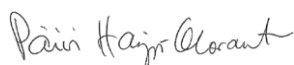
EU Commission has published the Commission Recommendation (EU) 2017/84 on the monitoring of mineral oil hydrocarbons (MOH) in food and in materials and articles intended to come into contact with food Mineral Oils. Member States should ensure the availability of suitable analytical equipment and gain sufficient experience in the analysis of MOH both in food and in food contact materials before generating analytical results. Currently there is no EU Guidance on monitoring and testing of MOH. Main focus in this Commission Recommendation is in MOH compounds in food and pre-packed food.

Mineral oil hydrocarbons (MOH) are chemical compounds derived mainly from crude oil, but also produced synthetically from coal, natural gas and biomass. EU Commission Recommendation says that where MOH are detected in food, Member States should carry out further investigations in the food business establishments in order to determine the possible sources. The investigations should, wherever possible, cover the systems operated by the food business operator that could affect or control contamination.

The German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) has presented a 4th draft on Mineral Oil Regulation in February 2017. The draft is focusing on recycled fibres in food packaging, Mineral Oil Aromatic Hydrocarbons (MOAH) and migration of MOAH from packaging into packed food. Fresh fibre paper and board and Mineral Oil Saturated Hydrocarbons (MOSH) are excluded from the scope of the German Regulation. The Regulation sets maximum migration value into food, that is 0,5 mg/kg MOAH (C16-C35).

Stora Enso Consumer Board mills have sent representative paperboard samples for analysis on MOSH and MOAH. These analyses are performed by external laboratories. Based on our experiences, MOSH and MOAH test results can vary a lot depending on the laboratory, the test methods and skills to interpret chromatograms. Currently there is no harmonized methodology and EU guidance to analyse MOH. Because the MOH analytics and interpretation of results still vary a lot, we hesitate to communicate product specific results. But Stora Enso is ready to support our customers with mineral oil knowledge. We are also preparing own analytics of MOH compounds.

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