Name	Di (2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP) Also known as Di-octyl phthalate (DOP)
CAS number	117-81-7
EINECS number	204-211-0
What is DEHP?	DEHP is a substance that is used as a plasticiser to make PVC plastic soft and flexible. It is a colourless and odourless organic chemical.
Where is it used?	DEHP is used in a wide range of soft PVC products ranging from lifesaving medical devices such as medical tubing and blood bags, to footwear, electrical cables, packaging, tarpaulins for lorries, flooring, stationery and roofing.
Why is it used?	Plasticisers are essential to make PVC flexible. PVC is rigid by nature but plasticisers give it similar properties to rubber: it becomes flexible and expandable, whilst retaining its shape. There are many different plasticisers available but a manufacturer of PVC will make what they believe to be the best choice for their particular products. DEHP is widely used because for many years it has provided particularly good processing and end product performance which in many cases cannot be matched by alternatives.
Is it safe?	The use of DEHP has been carefully considered by EU scientists and it is already well regulated by European legislation relating to toys and childcare articles, cosmetics, food contact materials and medical devices. Indeed, DEHP has been used for more than 50 years without a single known case of anyone having been harmed as a result. DEHP is not classified as a human carcinogen or mutagen and it does not accumulate in humans or in the environment
Why is DEHP on the REACH Candidate List?	Substances are placed on the Candidate List for authorisation based on their *potential* to cause harm (their hazard) rather than on any *actual* risk they may pose. In the case of DEHP, it has been put on the candidate list due to reproductive effects that have been seen during tests on rodents. However, as these effects are only seen at levels much higher than humans are usually exposed to, there is no danger from its use in most everyday PVC products.
Where can I find more information?	The DEHP Information Centre: www.dehp-facts.com