



FACT SHEET

This fact sheet provides information about the relevance of the plastics industry to NICNAS requirements. These notes also give a guide to help you estimate the total value of introduction (ie. import and/or manufacture) of industrial chemicals.

PLASTICS

NICNAS regulates plastics

Plastics such as nylon, silicones, polystyrene, polyethylene, polyesters, polyurethane, epoxies, acrylics, polypropylene, etc. are made up of industrial chemicals; they are subject to certain requirements under the *Industrial Chemicals (Notification and Assessment) Act 1989* (the Act), including NICNAS registration requirements.

These requirements apply to you if you:

- import plastics (non articles¹);
- import chemicals which will be used in the making of plastics as articles); and/or,
- manufacture plastics or chemicals which are then used in the making of plastics.

Relevance to the plastics industry

Plastics are subject to NICNAS regulatory requirements unless they are considered as articles under the Act. Examples of imported chemicals used in plastics are resins, plasticisers, fillers, pigments, antioxidants, minerals, dyes, stabilisers, fibres, processing aids, flame retardants, antistats, ultraviolet absorbers, synthetic rubbers or other additives. In general, plastics (such as nylon, silicones, polystyrene, polyethylene, polyesters, polyurethane, epoxies, acrylic, polypropylene, etc.) are considered to be industrial chemicals within the scope of NICNAS registration (ie. relevant industrial chemicals). However, in the case of imported plastics, this depends on the form in which the plastics are imported. As a general guide, finished consumer goods (eg. garden chairs, garbage bins, and children's toys), sheets, films and filaments, would be considered as articles. Articles are not defined as chemicals in the Act.

An item is considered an article if it is deliberately formed to a specific shape or design during manufacture and has an end use function wholly or partly dependent on its shape. An article undergoes no change of chemical composition during end use, except as an intrinsic part of that end use. Fluids, particles, granules and powders are not normally considered to be articles regardless of shape or design.

For more information on which chemicals are within the scope of NICNAS registration refer to the Fact Sheet on [Relevant Industrial Chemicals](#).

¹ Articles are considered outside the meaning of chemicals under section 6 of the Act.

NICNAS registration

NICNAS registration requirements apply to persons/companies importing and/or manufacturing relevant industrial chemicals or products containing relevant industrial chemicals.

All importers and/or manufacturers of relevant industrial chemicals for commercial purposes must register with NICNAS, regardless of the amount of industrial chemicals imported or manufactured in that registration year. A registration year runs from 1 September to 31 August in the following year.

There are three levels of registration. Your registration level, and hence registration cost, is based on the total value of relevant industrial chemicals imported and/or manufactured each year. [Further details such as fees and charges can be found in the NICNAS Registration brochure.](#)

If you import plastics, they will be subject to NICNAS registration requirements unless they are considered articles under the Act, in which case they are excluded.

The import value of any plastics which do not meet the definition of an article should be included in assessing your NICNAS registration estimates. The import value is the customs value in Australian dollars, plus the duty paid and the cost of insurance and freight.

If you manufacture plastic articles, the value of your finished products are not required to be considered in your NICNAS registration estimates. However, if you import any of the ingredients used in the manufacturing process (such as resins, plasticisers, fillers, pigments, antioxidants, minerals, dyes, stabilisers, fibres, processing aids, flame retardants, antistats, ultraviolet absorbers, synthetic rubbers or other additives), you must include these in your registration estimates.

If you manufacture plastics (non-articles) or resins, the value of the final finished product is the relevant value for registration purposes.

The raw materials used in the making of resins, (eg. anhydrides, glycerol, acrylates, melamine, butanol, alcohols, acids, vinyl monomers, pre-polymers, isocyanates and olefins) are relevant industrial chemicals ie. within the scope of NICNAS registration. The resulting resins formed from these raw materials are also relevant industrial chemicals and are subject to NICNAS registration requirements.

If you blend or compound plastic raw materials and additives, this would generally not be counted as manufacture.

Using the example of resin manufacturing, the cost of manufacturing the resins should be taken as the manufactured chemical value. This would include all your raw materials, **regardless** of where you source them. However, you should not double dip. If you import the raw materials for resin manufacture **and** you have already taken these into account (in the value of imported chemicals) in your registration calculations, then you should exclude this value from the cost of your manufacture. The costs of locally purchased ingredients are included.

Australian Inventory of Chemical Substances (AICS)

AICS is the legal instrument which lists chemicals available for use in Australia without notification and assessment by NICNAS. Some chemicals may only be available for specified/conditional use. It is important that you are aware of any conditions or restrictions that may apply to chemicals you import and/or manufacture or plan to export.

An industrial chemical is considered to be a new industrial chemical if it is not listed on AICS. By law, all new industrial chemicals must be notified and assessed by NICNAS before they can be imported or manufactured in Australia. If you introduce (that is, import or manufacture) a chemical or chemical product, you need to ensure the chemical, or all the ingredients in the product, are listed on the AICS.

AICS is composed of two sections: non confidential and confidential section. To find out if a chemical is listed on the non confidential section of AICS, you can search AICS online available at www.nicnas.gov.au or request NICNAS to carry out the search for you. A service charge applies only to requests for NICNAS to search the non confidential section.

For further information about notification and assessment requirements, please refer to the *Handbook for Notifiers* available at www.nicnas.gov.au/publications/handbook/

If you have any queries about assessment, and NICNAS registration requirements for plastics, please contact NICNAS on 1800 638 528 or 02 8577 8800 or email to info@nicnas.gov.au.