

Vehicle Wheel Weights and Continuous Wheel Balancers

Covered Products:

Vehicle wheel weights and automatic/continuous wheel balancers.

Goal:

The goal of this specification is to set minimum environmental standards for the purchase of vehicle wheel weights and automatic/continuous wheel balancers.

Background:

Until recently most wheel weights used in New York State to balance vehicle wheels have been made of lead. New York State banned the use of lead wheel weights effective April 1st, 2011 due to potential environmental contamination. The Federal Environmental Protection Agency has learned that 1.6 million pounds of wheel weights fall off during normal driving conditions (e.g., hitting a pot hole). These wheel weights are susceptible to atmospheric corrosion allowing highly toxic lead to enter the environment. While there is a ban of lead wheel weights in New York State they are permitted for use in other states so there still exists the potential to purchase this item.

There are alternative technologies to balancing wheels other than using wheel weights including automatic or continuous wheel balancers. Some of the automatic or continuous wheel balancers contain mercury, a known neurotoxin. Mercury automatic/continuous wheel balancers have been promoted for use on recreational vehicles, motorcycles, and various sized trucks.

Definitions:

Lead - A main-group element with symbol Pb and atomic number 82. It is a soft, malleable metal, and regarded as a heavy metal. Common uses are in lead-acid batteries, bullets, and weights. Lead is poisonous to humans and animals and known to cause brain and nervous system disorders.

Mercury - Also known as Hydragyrum, it is the only metal that is liquid at room temperatures. The element has the atomic number 80 and the symbol Hg. It has been historically used in thermometers and barometers. Mercury poses a serious threat to humans and animals and is a known neurotoxin. Mercury also bio-accumulates in animals and moves up the food chain into humans.

Vehicle Wheel weight – a weight attached to a wheel that equalizes the weight of the combined tire and wheel assembly so that it spins smoothly at high speed. The weights can be on the inside or outside of the wheel and can be clipped, taped, or self-adhered to the wheel.

Automatic/continuous wheel balancers – a weighted donut shaped device placed between the hub and the wheel that equalizes the weight of the combined tire and wheel assembly so that it spins smoothly at high speed.

Standard Setting and Certification Programs:

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation – Lead Wheel Weight Law - Environmental Conservation Law 37-0113 - Lead Wheel Weight; Prohibited.

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation – Mercury-Added Consumer Products Law - Environmental Conservation Law 27-2103 and 27-2115 - Mercury-added consumer products sold or offered for sale in this state by a distributor or retailer shall be labeled. A product or product component shall not be offered for final sale, use or distributed for promotional purposes unless the manufacturer of the product or product component or a trade association representing manufacturers of the product or component has provided the appropriate information.

Specifications:

Affected entities shall not purchase vehicle wheel weights or automatic/continuous wheel balancers containing intentionally added lead. Refer to the Standard Setting and Certification Programs section.

Affected entities are encouraged not to purchase vehicle wheel weights or automatic/continuous wheel balancers containing intentionally added mercury. Refer to the Standard Setting and Certification Programs section.

Affected entities are encouraged to purchase wheel weights that have recycled content.

Packaging

Packaging shall comply with Environmental Conservation Law section 37-0205. Packaging shall not contain inks, dyes, pigments, adhesives, stabilizers, or any other additives to which any lead, cadmium, mercury or hexavalent chromium is intentionally added or contain incidental concentrations of lead, cadmium, mercury or hexavalent chromium which together are greater than 100 parts per million by weight (0.01%).

New York State encourages affected entities to adopt the following:

- The use of bulk packaging.
- The use of reusable packaging.
- The use of innovative packaging that reduces the weight of packaging, reduces packaging waste, or utilizes packaging that is a component of the product.
- That all packaging remain the property of the supplier and not become the property of the affected state entity under any circumstance or condition. In situations where packaging take back is sought, the vendor shall certify that

the packaging material will be reused, recycled, or composted, and managed in compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws.

- Packaging that maximizes recycled content and/or meets or exceeds the minimum post-consumer content level for packaging in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines.
- Packaging that is recyclable or compostable.