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## FDRA And TÜV SÜD Update Global Footwear Product Safety Guide

The Footwear Distributors and Retailers of America (FDRA), America's largest footwear trade association, and Munich-based TÜV SÜD have updated the Global Footwear Product Safety Guide. The guide covers both chemical and physical testing requirements and proposed protocols for footwear.

The guide provides a concise and step-by-step approach to understanding exactly what chemicals are used in the manufacture of footwear and where these chemicals are regulated worldwide. The guide also includes robust and tiered physical test guidelines to ensure that companies understand all the different physical test requirements that are either required by law or required to ensure the continued production of high-quality footwear for consumers. The update has made the guide available online and searchable at <http://globalfootweartesting.com>.

"This tool gives companies large and small the ability to bring clarity to their safety strategies. It provides clear direction on how to manage testing standards that comply with global legislation all the way down to the state level," said Josue Solano, president and chief operating officer at BBC International and chairman of the FDRA's Product Safety Enhancement Committee. The committee worked with several company executives and managers to gather input and insights about their views on product safety management. This collaboration and TÜV SÜD's technical expertise have led FDRA to publish this important update.

"Thanks to TÜV SÜD and our product safety experts like Josue, this continues to be the ideal guide for the footwear industry," said FDRA president and CEO Matt Priest. "Our strategic partnership with TÜV SÜD continues to offer high added value to all FDRA members. This includes an ever-growing comprehensive product safety program that includes in-depth products and services to help the industry better understand changing product safety regulations."

"TÜV SÜD is honored to be part of the Global Footwear Product Safety Guide project, and we believe this guide will be a useful and indispensable tool for companies navigating through international product safety regulations and trying to meet safety standards for their footwear. We look forward to continuing to serve the footwear industry," said Kapil Bansal, senior vice president of product service business for TÜV SÜD, who is also a member of the FDRA Board.

TÜV SÜD has a global network of roughly 30 testing laboratories for leather and textiles. The services offered comprise physical tests as well as chemical analyses. In addition to product testing, TÜV SÜD's experts carry out pre-shipment inspections on site in factories and offer auditing and certification in accordance with all major national and international standards. "By offering these services, TÜV SÜD supports manufacturers and exporters in meeting the quality and safety standards of all major markets and assists purchasing agents in global sourcing activities. Many of these information FDRA members find within the web-based database," explains Kapil Bansal.

### Increasing awareness of quality and sustainability

The footwear industry produces around 23 billion pairs of shoes each year, spanning all styles from high heels to sneakers and functional work boots, and involving a wide range of materials including leather, rope, textiles or synthetics. Frequently, these materials have been treated with chemicals that can be hazardous to health. However, as consumer awareness of product quality, safety and sustainability rises, jurisdictions are increasingly restricting the use of potentially hazardous materials. The shoe industry must comply with complex requirements, including the European Chemical Regulation, REACH, and the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA) in the USA.

## **Chemical data management system (CDMS)**

The CDMS solution is closely related to the chemical management service provided by TÜV SÜD which allows businesses to significantly save time, money and minimise risks. With this solution, businesses can compile and analyse product safety and quality data to increase the efficacy of their testing programme. It also provides an overview of the entire supply chain, from design to distribution.

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### **About FDRA**

FDRA is governed and directed by footwear executives and is the only trade organization focused solely on the footwear industry. Serving the full footwear supply chain, it boosts its members' bottom lines through innovative products, training, consulting on footwear design and development, sourcing and compliance, trade and customs, advocacy, and consumer and sales trend analysis for shoe retailers around the world. FDRA supports 500 companies and brands worldwide, representing 95% of the total U.S. footwear industry. Learn more: [\*\*fdra.org\*\*](http://fdra.org)