



Behind the ban

bisphenols in food contact materials



The EU banned BPA in materials that touch food and built the rule so its close chemical cousins can't step in as replacements. Here's what drove that shift and what it means for you.

Quick summary

When the EU banned bisphenol A (BPA) in paper receipts, manufacturers largely switched to a close chemical cousin. So when the EU banned BPA in food contact materials, from can linings to kitchenware, it built the rule to catch the cousins too. Regulation (EU) 2024/3190 took effect in January 2025 and phases in through 2029.

Who this affects

Makers of food contact plastics, coatings, inks, adhesives, rubber, and silicones; packaging and can makers; food and drink brands; importers and retailers; and users of professional food production equipment.

About the author

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The thin coating inside a can of tomatoes does an important job, stopping the metal from corroding and the food from reacting with it. Until recently, many of those coatings were made with bisphenol A (BPA). So was polycarbonate, the hard, clear plastic in water cooler bottles and food storage boxes. The trouble is that small amounts of BPA can move from these materials into food and drink. Evidence from animal data and support from human observational studies identified the immune system as most sensitive to BPA exposure.

The EU decided that risk was no longer worth taking.

20,000x

In 2023, EU food safety scientists set a new tolerable daily intake for BPA that was 20,000 times lower than the old one.

The ban

Adopted in December 2024, [Commission Regulation \(EU\) 2024/3190](#) banned BPA from most materials made to touch food, from factory equipment to kitchen cupboards. It took effect on 20 January 2025.

What does that mean in everyday terms? Can linings and jar lids, reusable bottles and kitchenware, and the molds, seals, and pumps used in food factories. The legal list covers plastics, coatings, inks, adhesives, rubber, silicones, and ion-exchange resins. Paper and board are outside its scope.

BPA belongs to a family of chemicals called bisphenols. The regulation also brings BPA's most hazardous relatives, including bisphenol S (BPS), under tighter control. Unlike BPA, these aren't banned outright. The BPA ban phases in between 2026 and 2029, depending on the product. The timeline below has the dates.

Behind the ban

The hazards of BPA were well known long before the ban. The EU classifies it as toxic to reproduction. ECHA added it to its list of substances of very high concern in January 2017, and later that year extended the listing to cover its hormone-disrupting effects on humans. By then, the EU had already begun restricting it step by step, starting with baby bottles and later tightening how much could migrate from can coatings under Regulation (EU) 2018/213.

The turning point came in April 2023, when the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) [re-evaluated BPA](#). Reversing its 2015 view, it concluded that the BPA people take in through their diet was a health concern for all age groups. It lowered the tolerable daily intake (TDI), the amount considered safe to consume every day over a lifetime, from a temporary level of 4 micrograms per kilogram of body weight per day to 0.2 nanograms per kilogram. That's a cut of around 20,000 times.

Not everyone agreed. Germany's Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) [proposed a TDI](#) around 1,000 times higher than EFSA's, but the Commission based its ban on [EFSA's findings](#).

An earlier ban on BPA in paper receipts

The EU had seen before what happens when one chemical is restricted on its own. In 2016, it restricted [BPA in thermal paper](#), the paper used for receipts, under REACH. The rule applied from 2 January 2020 and covered BPA only.

Manufacturers then switched to BPS, a close chemical cousin. ECHA found that [BPS overtook BPA](#) as the main chemical used to make receipt print appear in 2019. BPS has since been classified as toxic to reproduction too.

That pattern has a name: regrettable substitution. A restricted chemical is swapped for a close relative with similar hazards.

Closing the loophole

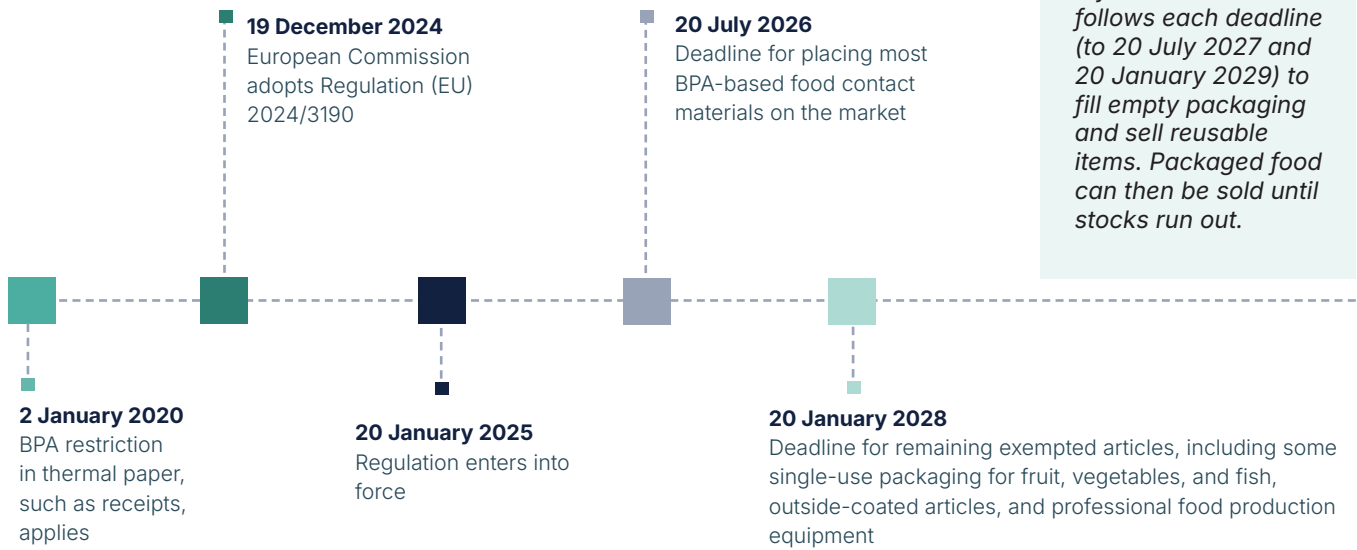
The Commission's [first draft](#), in February 2024, already restricted BPA's hazardous relatives in coatings, inks, adhesives, and rubber, but left plastics made with BPS outside its scope. By the time the ban was adopted in December 2024, those plastics were covered too. [A 2025 study](#) later backed that approach, finding that many of the 26 BPA alternatives it tested were regrettable substitutes.

Industry pushed back. Trade associations [criticized the regulation](#) for short transition periods, what they saw as insufficient impact assessment, and no exemptions for some uses, such as polycarbonate chocolate molds. And because the BPS change came after the public consultation, [industry had no chance to comment on it](#).



Why the list isn't fixed The rules don't name every bisphenol. They're tied to EU hazard classifications, so when another bisphenol is classified, it falls under the rules without a new law.

Timeline



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Expert take

The EU learned from its own history. The paper receipts restriction showed that banning one chemical can simply move the market to its closest relative. This time, the regulation looks past BPA to the whole family, part of a wider shift toward regulating groups of substances. For most businesses, the hard part isn't dropping BPA. It's knowing what replaced it, and whether that substitute could be classified next. Treat the substitute as part of the compliance question, not the answer to it.

What it means for you

The ban reaches the whole food contact supply chain, including businesses outside the EU that sell into it. Imports follow the same rules as EU-made products.

If you supply food contact materials

- **Making materials:** once the transition ends, BPA can't be used to make coatings, resins, inks, or adhesives, apart from two narrow exceptions. These are polysulfone filtration membranes used in food processing, and liquid epoxy resins for coating large containers, such as tanks over 1,000 liters.
- **Materials that still need processing:** there's no extra time to sell these off, so leave converters time to meet each deadline.
- **Paperwork:** every covered material needs a declaration of compliance listing every bisphenol used, even if no BPA was.
- **Switching chemicals:** if you switch to one of BPA's relatives, the finished material must contain no detectable BPA.

If you use or sell food contact materials

- **Food and drink brands and retailers:** empty packaging supplied within its transition period can be filled for a year, then sold until stocks run out. Keep declarations of compliance on file, though you don't need to pass them on to shoppers.
- **Equipment owners:** reusable equipment you own, such as chocolate molds, can stay in use until replaced, but can't be sold, leased, or passed on.

Keep an eye on substitutes

BPS and BPA's other hazardous relatives are still on the market for now. Once EFSA publishes guidance on how they'll be assessed, businesses get nine months to apply for authorization. Without one, affected materials can no longer be supplied in the EU.

How does this restriction affect your materials and products?

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