

Battery Associations from North America and Europe, the Middle East and Africa join forces to strengthen workers' protection

For Immediate Release

Date: June 19, 2013

Battery Council International (North America) and EUROBAT (Europe, Middle East and Africa – EMEA) announced today the update of their voluntary blood lead mitigation programmes for employees of all their member companies, representing 90% of lead-based battery production in North America and EMEA.

The members of both associations have today committed to reduce blood lead levels for all employees below 30 microgrammes per deciliter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{dl}$) by the end of 2016.

“This is well below the limits set by current European Union and U.S. legislation and shows that the battery industry is serious about continuously improving the protection of its workers. It also shows that industry can take its fair share of responsibility and ensure the controlled conditions of work on its own.” said Alfons Westgeest, Executive Director of EUROBAT.

“In the USA we embarked on a voluntary compliance program 20 years ago and have enjoyed a great deal of success. Europe adopted its own program in 2001. Today we’re going a step further by adopting the same objectives to ensure the same level of protection of workers on both sides of the Atlantic”, said Mark O. Thorsby, Executive Vice-President of Battery Council International.

In 2012, among the members of BCI and EUROBAT, there were approximately 17,000 employees under medical surveillance for blood lead levels in the United States, 11,250 in the European Union and 1,700 in the rest of Europe, Middle East and Africa. The new objectives for blood lead level reduction of both associations will apply to all these employees.

The United States Occupational Safety and Health Administration requires that employees of lead-based battery manufacturing companies be removed from their jobs if their blood lead levels exceed 50 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dl}$. The BCI’s current voluntary removal level of employees is 40 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dl}$ and today’s announcement will lower that level to 30 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dl}$ at the end of 2016.

The European Union’s binding Biological Limit Value for Lead in Blood is 70 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dl}$, while the Derived-No-Effect Level set by industry under the EU’s REACH legislation is of 40 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dl}$. In the

rest of Europe, the Middle East and Africa limits can vary per country. With today's announcement, EUROBAT members commit to go well below this latter limit in the European Union by the end of 2016, as well as in all EMEA.

The major step today in improving the protection of workers is made possible by evolutions in technology, manufacturing processes and education efforts towards employees and the industry in general.

"Beyond the commitment toward our employees, it is worth mentioning that lead is one of the most controlled substances in the world. Both in the United States and in Europe more than 95% of lead-based batteries are recycled to produce new batteries, placing them among the most recycled articles in the world. This is a key step to avoiding releases of substances into the environment and also contributes to a closed-loop economy and lowers the requirements for raw materials" stated Thorsby.

"In addition to that, lead-based batteries also play a great role in mitigating CO2 emissions from transport. Already today 75% of new cars in Europe are equipped with (lead-based) start-stop technology, resulting in major fuel savings – which is good for consumers - and thus in lower CO2 emissions, which is good for the environment" added Westgeest.

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About Battery Council International

Battery Council International is the North American trade association representing the lead based manufacturing, supply, recycling and distribution companies – a total of approximately 250 companies and 35,000 employees.

For more information on the association: <http://batteryCouncil.org/>

About EUROBAT

EUROBAT represents the manufacturers of automotive and industrial batteries from Europe, the Middle-East and Africa. Our members produces batteries of all technologies (Lead, Nickel, Lithium and Sodium-based). In total, EUROBAT members employ around 30,000 people in the European Union and produce batteries for a total turnover of around 6 billion EUR per annum (of which 5 billion EUR relate to the manufacturing of lead-based batteries).

For more information on the association: www.eurobat.org