



POSITION STATEMENT

June 8, 2007

SCIENCE PROVES THAT PLASTIC BOTTLED WATER CONTAINERS ARE SAFE UNDER A VARIETY OF CONDITIONS

FDA does not consider bottled water stored in elevated temperatures to be a safety concern

Claims that plastic bottled water containers stored in warm environments (e.g., a hot automobile) “leach” unnamed chemicals that cause breast cancer or other maladies are not based in science and are unsubstantiated. There are no studies, which prove this theory. These allegations have been perpetuated by viral emails and media hype and only serve to frighten and confuse consumers.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) comprehensively regulates the safety of foods and beverages, including bottled water. This includes a careful review of food and beverage packaging materials, including plastics, before allowing them on the market. With respect to leaving bottled water in a hot car, FDA has stated:

- “It is true that exposing the bottle to higher temperatures may imply a greater degree of migration of substances from the plastic to the water [*ed. note: or other beverages in similar containers*]. However, in its safety review, the FDA takes into account exposures to higher temperatures, such as during storage and transportation of bottled water prior to sale, in its estimates of potential levels of migration of substances from the plastic to the water.”
- “The levels of migration expected, including during periods of exposure to elevated temperatures in storage and transport (such as might be experienced in a closed vehicle in the sun) have, as discussed above, been determined by the agency to be well within the margin of safety. Therefore, the agency does not consider this situation to be a safety concern.”

For approved plastics, FDA has found that the levels of migration to food of the substances due to the use of the plastics in contact with food are well within the margin of safety based on information available to the agency (i.e., toxicological testing has demonstrated that the cumulative dietary concentration of these migrants resulting from the use of the plastic materials in food packaging is at least 100 to 1000 fold lower than the level at which no toxic effect was observed in animal studies.) This means no short or long term health effects are likely to occur, even from life-long, daily dietary exposure to these substances migrating from plastic food-contact materials.

The toxicological properties of polyethylene terephthalate (PET), a common plastic used for bottled water and beverage containers, and compounds that migrate under test conditions have been well studied. In its report on PET in food packaging applications, the International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI) summarizes the large body of test data that demonstrates the safety of PET resins and compounds from food and beverage containers.¹

¹ Packaging Materials: 1. Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) for Food Packaging Applications. International Life Sciences Institute; 2000, Washington, DC, p. 11-12.

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A wide variety of consumer packaging fabricated from plastic, not just bottled water containers. The International Bottled Water Association (IBWA) does urge consumers to handle and store bottled water containers with the same care and respect as they would any other food or beverage product.

For additional information FDA packaging standards, contact the FDA Press office at 301-827-6242.

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The International Bottled Water Association (IBWA) is the authoritative source of information about all types of bottled waters. Founded in 1958, IBWA's membership includes U.S. and international bottlers, distributors and suppliers. IBWA is committed to working with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which regulates bottled water as a packaged food product, and state governments to set stringent standards for safe, high quality bottled water products. In addition to FDA and state regulations, the Association requires member bottlers to adhere to the IBWA Bottled Water Code of Practice, which mandates additional standards and practices that in some cases are more stringent than federal and state regulations. A key feature of the IBWA Bottled Water Code of Practice is an annual, unannounced plant inspection by an independent, third party organization. Consumers can contact IBWA at 1-800-WATER-11 or log onto IBWA's web site (www.bottledwater.org) for more information about bottled water and a list of members' brands. Media inquiries can be directed to Manager of Communications Tom Gardner at 703-647-4607 or tgardner@bottledwater.org.