European consumer product recalls drop by 37%

*Sedgwick brand protection releases latest European product recall index report for Q2 2022*

**LONDON, 12 September 2022** – Sedgwick brand protection published their latest European product recall index report for Q2. Across all consumer product sectors, the total number of recall events in the UK and the EU fell by 37% in Q2 to 440 events, compared to 700 in the previous quarter. European toys fell by 33%, consumer electronics dropped by 43%, whilst clothing fell by 28%. This data follows numerous regulatory bodies introducing tighter rules on sustainability, penalties and surprise investigations for large scale manufacturers.

This spring, the UK strived to update regulation for advanced consumer safety whilst accelerating its journey to net zero. The UK Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) updated the Code of Practice for Supporting Better Product Recalls (PAS 7100) to inform a widening second-hand product market. The OPSS report highlighted the public’s exposure to certain chemicals and allergens, which is crucial as Sedgwick data confirms that ‘chemical risk’ was by far the leading cause of recalls, linked to 46% (203) of all consumer recall activity.

To limit the nation’s general reliance on unsustainable materials, the UK’s new tax on plastic packaging is now in effect, applying to businesses producing 10 tonnes of plastic annually that isn’t at least 30% recycled. Producers and retailers have been advised to review their exposure and ensure all packaging materials comply with the new rules.

In April, the UK government announced that the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) will be given new sweeping enforcement powers as part of a broader set of policy reforms. Once finalised, they would receive direct enforcement power including the ability to award compensation to consumers and impose penalties for breaches of consumer protection law directly instead of relying on court decisions. The potential amounts of penalties are substantial, including up to 10% of global turnover for consumer protection breaches or a penalty of up to £300,000 on individuals.

Clothing manufacturers are under close scrutiny after data revealed that a quarter of complaints received by the CMA over ‘green-washing’ or misleading environmental claims, came from the fashion sector between 20 September 2021 and 4 April 2022 according to research by law firm RPC. In May, the European Commission started unannounced inspections at fashion companies in several EU Member States over concerns that the firms may have violated cartel prohibition laws.

To download the latest report, visit [European product recall index report](#).
Q2 Consumer product recall highlights per sector:

Toys

- The number of toy recalls across the UK and EU dropped by 33% to 122 in the second quarter of 2022. While it is a decrease from the previous quarter, it is still significantly higher than the 81 recalls in Q2 of 2021.
- Chemical risk with the most common reason for toy recalls in Q2 with 49 events. In second place was choking risk, linked to 39 recalls, which reflects a 17% decrease compared to Q1. Environmental risk accounted for nine Q2 toy recalls.
- There were 22 recalls for toy slime, a significant change from only three recalls in Q1. Plastic dolls were cited in 10 recalls in Q2, almost half of the number reported last quarter. Battery-operated toys were the third most common product recalled, linked to nine events.
- Poland had the most notifications with 37, a 68% increase from the last quarter. Austria was second with 16 and Lithuania issued 15 recall notification for toys in Q2. There were six toy recalls in the UK in Q2.
- Of all toy recalls, two were known to be counterfeit products. An additional 78 events listed counterfeit status as “unknown.”

Consumer electronics

- Consumer electronics recalls fell 43% between Q1 and Q2, with 79 events this quarter. This is on par with the 81 recalls from Q2 2021.
- The most common risk was electric shock, which was linked to 36 recalls as a standalone risk. When other factors such as burn and fire were included, the total jumps to 56 events. As a single cause, environmental risk was the second most common reason for consumer electronics recalls with 11 events. Burn risks were only named in two recalls as a single cause, but when other factors such as fire and injuries are included, the number of events increases to 21.
- Lighting chains were the most recalled product, cited in 20 events in Q2. Power supplies, plug-in energy-saving devices, electric hot water pouches and USB chargers were all linked to four events each. This represents a 50% drop in recalls for USB chargers compared to Q1.
- Hungary was the leading country of notification with 22 events, followed by the UK with 12 (a 73% decline from the 44 raised in Q1). Poland was third with nine.

Clothing

- Clothing recalls across the EU and UK fell 28% this quarter, from 75 in Q1 to 54. This figure is comparable to the 57 clothing recalls we saw in Q2 2021.
- Children’s apparel, including dresses, jackets and trousers, accounted for 23 of all clothing recalls in the second quarter, or 43%. False nails were cited in 22 recalls, all linked to chemical risk. Chemicals was the most cited hazard in Q2, accounting for a total of 30 events (or 56%) across the sector.
- Injuries were the second most common reason for clothing recalls, linked to nine events. Seven recalls were tied to strangulation risk making it the third most common cause for Q2.
- In terms of notifications, Romania issued more than any other country with 39. Belgium was a distance second with five notifications and Germany with four. The UK issued only a single clothing recall notification in Q2, a dramatic shift from 22 last quarter.
- None of the clothing recalls were designated as counterfeit, though the status of 41 events was listed as unknown.

“Although Q2 consumer product recalls dropped by almost half, manufacturers must note the new host of regulation they will now be subject to,” said Chris Occleshaw, international product recall consultant at Sedgwick.

“This past quarter, European authorities and regulators have cracked down on plastic and chemical use alongside anti-greenwashing efforts. This should encourage consumer brands to improve supply chain transparency and due diligence, to avoid criminally unsubstantiated green claims that result in hefty fines,” Occleshaw added.

The recall index is the industry’s leading research and analysis produced quarterly by Sedgwick’s experts in best practice product recall and remediation solutions. It is an essential reference for manufacturers and retailers seeking impartial and reliable perspective on past, present and future recall data and product safety trends.

For more information on Sedgwick brand protection, visit https://www.sedgwick.com/brandprotection

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