

# SAFE HANDLING OF DETERGENTS

## LABELLING OF HOME-MADE REMEDIES

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**A.I.S.E. warns against inappropriate and potentially unsafe use of so-called home-made solutions for detergent and cleaning products, and highlights the importance of proper usage instructions and precautionary advice that is provided to the consumer in order to ensure safe use of detergent and cleaning products.**

The last few years have seen an increase of a “Do-It-Yourself”/ “home-made” trend for detergents and cleaning products, which are manufactured by consumers using ingredients found around the house. These “home-made” solutions may be considered by the general public as cheaper and “safer” to them and the environment as they are based on commonly known “natural” ingredients (ie, vinegar, alcohols, natural oils, etc). However, whilst these ingredients are safe for their common intended use, they are not designed for cleaning, especially when used in combination. The example of mixing acids with bleach is a perfect example of what not to do, as it risks the formation of chlorine gas.



Furthermore, these “home-made” solutions do not display the appropriate consumer information on pack for cleaning purposes. This could therefore lead to inappropriate and/or unsafe use. The absence of labelling of hazardous properties and safe-use instructions on these household remedies is problematic, as well as the lack of labelling requirement about their content or potential dangerous properties that could lead consumers to conclude they are safe. AISE companies design detergent and cleaning products with the consumer in mind, to ensure that the cleaning job is achieved in a satisfactory way. Consumer safety and safety to the environment is built-in into these products. The industry approach is based on well-established and well-recognised scientific criteria which comply with legislation such as safety assessment principles, and life cycle analysis thinking for the environmental safety assessment. The consumer is instructed on how to use the product safely via on-pack labelling, including certain cautionary warnings.

Safety, in addition to the performance of industry products is incomparable with home-made solutions, in addition to being cheaper compared to the manufacturing of small volumes of home-made remedies. AISE is committed to appropriately informing consumers about safe handling of detergents and maintenance products. Additional information on safe use can be found on [www.aise.eu](http://www.aise.eu).




## ANNEX I

If “natural alternatives” were to be labelled, they would need to follow the same requirements as traditional detergents. Concentrated vinegar used in food may contain up to 25-30% of acetic acid, which should be labelled with the same exclamation mark pictogram, additional warnings and P-phrases, as if similar concentrations were used for detergents. Similarly, the peel of bitter oranges contain 85-90% of limonene which would have to be classified as hazardous for the

	<p><b>Warning:</b></p> <p><b>Very toxic for aquatic life</b></p>	
		<p><u>Peel for bitter oranges:</u> 1,2 to 3,0 % essential oil, containing 85 to 90 % limonene.</p>

aquatic environment in detergents (see hereby). This demonstrates that using vinegar, alcohol, and natural alternatives (ie. food-based) should not be perceived as being any safer than the detergents’ industry products, with the additional drawback that no appropriate labelling/instructions is communicated for home-made remedies .

A.I.S.E. also compared the labelling of a traditional homecare cleaner from citric acid (10% aqueous solution) with its “natural” alternative. The outcome demonstrates that the alternative solution would need to comply with the following legal requirements:

	<p><b>Warning</b></p>	<p>H319 Causes serious eye irritation</p> <p>P102 Keep out of reach of children.</p> <p>P305 + P351 + P338 IF IN EYES: Rinse cautiously with water for several minutes. Remove contact lenses, if present and easy to do. Continue rinsing.</p> <p>P337 + P313 If eye irritation persists: Get medical advice/attention.</p>	<p>Packaging:</p> <p>No specific measures</p>
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Note: The German Federal Environmental Agency (Umweltbundesamt, UBA) does not advise using “home-made remedies” such as ethanol (“spiritus” which is intended as a carburant) or acetic acid for cleaning purposes because of the emission of volatile organic substances into indoor air or the risk of destroying home plumbing e. g. water taps in sinks and showers<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/themen/vier-mittel-fuer-den-fruehjahrsputz>, second paragraph