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Don't get caught out now EU ROHS is law, warns Premier Farnell

The ever-changing demands of the EU RoHS legislation are creating many areas of uncertainty for Chinese exporters into Europe – exemptions outside scope of RoHS is just one of the potential minefields.

Currently 29 exemptions have been adopted with a further 11 recommendations under consideration. Further applications are currently under review.

As the scope of the legislation is ever-changing, it is essential for engineers to keep on top of the products that are under review for exemption. A recent example of this is Semiconductor Evaluation Boards. Distributors and manufacturers alike believed these to be out of scope but the UK, has decided they're in, subject to status.

While not an exemption as such one other area to impact the design engineer is likely to be around Categories 8 and 9, which cover medical devices and monitoring and control instruments. A report on whether these categories should be included in the scope of RoHS was submitted to the European Commission in late July and this is now under review. Whilst it is unlikely that any implementation will be before 2010, electronic design engineers within these sectors should be aware.

It is essential for Chinese exporters to keep on top of changes to the EU legislation, to ensure that future designs do not contain non-compliant components. The web is playing an important role in educating the electronics industry on RoHS and is paramount to the uptake of the new legislation. Substantial commitment has been made by many organisations at the heart of the electronics industry, including distributors like Premier Farnell, to develop value-adding online content. www.chinarohs.info, for example, provides a wealth of information on the new legislation, due diligence and part numbers, in one single source saving huge amounts of time for the busy design engineers.

With changes looking set to continue and the introduction of China RoHS in March, never has it been more important for engineers to keep up to date with the latest information, product availability and news.