

PFAS Regulatory Updates

Relevant to New Zealand & Direct Selling

11 February 2026

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1. What Are PFAS and Why They Matter in NZ

PFAS (“forever chemicals”) are synthetic compounds used for water, grease, and stain resistance. They persist in the environment and accumulate in humans, with growing concerns about links to cancer, endocrine disruption, and liver damage. These chemicals are now recognised as a significant environmental and public health issue in Aotearoa New Zealand.

2. Key Regulatory Actions in New Zealand

A. PFAS Ban in Cosmetic Products (Effective 31 December 2026)

New Zealand will ban PFAS in all cosmetic products from the end of 2026. PFAS are sometimes found in foundations, mascaras, nail polish, shaving products, and lipsticks. The ban follows industry consultation and aims to reduce exposure to chemicals that persist in the environment and may pose health risks.

B. Phase-Out of PFAS Firefighting Foams (Complete by 3 December 2025)

NZ has already prohibited uncontained PFAS foam use (from 1 January 2023) and is now completing a full phase-out of all contained PFAS foam use by December 2025. Most suppliers have already transitioned to PFAS-free alternatives.

C. PFAS National Environmental Management Plan (NEMP) v3.0

NZ, alongside Australia, is consulting on updated national guidance for managing PFAS in soil, water, wastewater, biosolids, and waste streams—signalling ongoing regulatory tightening.

3. Implications for the Direct Selling Industry in New Zealand

A. Immediate Impact on Cosmetics and Personal Care

Direct selling companies must ensure **all cosmetic products imported or sold in NZ are PFAS-free by 31 December 2026**. This will require supplier audits, reformulation, and updated compliance documentation.

B. Packaging, Promotional Items & Household Goods Risk

PFAS may be present in packaging coatings, water-repellent fabrics, cleaning products, and other imported materials commonly used in kits, gifts, and merchandise. With NZ’s increasing scrutiny of PFAS contamination, these materials may face future restrictions.

C. Heightened Regulatory Oversight for Imported Goods

NZ EPA enforcement actions (including prosecutions for PFAS foam misuses) demonstrate strengthened oversight. Direct selling companies should expect more active monitoring of imported consumer products.

D. Reputation and Consumer Trust

PFAS awareness is rising among NZ consumers. Brands with wellness, clean-beauty, or natural positioning face elevated risk if PFAS are found in any product or packaging.

4. Recommended Next Steps for Direct Selling Companies

- **Audit all cosmetic SKUs** for PFAS ahead of the 2026 ban.
- **Obtain PFAS declarations** from all suppliers across cosmetics, packaging, household items, textiles, and promotional goods.
- **Prioritise reformulation** where PFAS are used for water-resistance, spreadability, durability, or texture.
- **Update compliance materials & marketing claims** to reflect PFAS-free status.
- **Monitor NEMP developments** to anticipate further NZ requirements.