

**Evaluation of**  
**Benzyl Salicylate**  
**For Use as an Ingredient in**  
**Tobacco Products**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Benzyl salicylate (CAS # 118-58-1) is currently used worldwide at levels below **5 ppm** in selected brands of tobacco products manufactured and/or distributed by Philip Morris International, including cigarettes and fine-cut tobacco. This document is a review of the published toxicology information on benzyl salicylate abstracted from online toxicity databases.

### ***Overview<sup>a</sup>***

The following information was generated from the MICROMEDEX database system <http://csi.micromedex.com> on February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2009, unless otherwise indicated.

Benzyl salicylate has a faint floral odour, and a currant-like taste. It is synthesised by esterification of salicylic acid with benzyl alcohol. It has also been reported to occur naturally in small amounts in carnation oil (*Dianthus caryophyllus* L.) and in larger amounts in the oil of *Primula auricular*. It is also found in American cranberry, clove bud, peppermint oil and buckwheat<sup>[1]</sup>. Benzyl salicylate is also a common cosmetic ingredient.

As a food flavouring additive, the material has been assessed under the provisions of the *Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, section 201 (s)*, by the Expert Committee of the USA Flavour and Extract Manufacturers Association (FEMA), to be generally recognised as safe (GRAS) under current conditions of use.

The Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives has assessed benzyl salicylate as presenting no safety concerns at current levels of intake when used as a flavouring agent. The daily intake is estimated at 29 µg/day in the USA and 30 µg/day in Europe<sup>[2]</sup>. It has also been defined as a flavouring substance which may be used as foodstuffs by the *Council of Europe* Committee of Experts on Flavouring Substances at an upper level of 2 mg/kg in foods.

The use of this ingredient on tobacco products is regulated in several countries worldwide. It is approved for use in tobacco products as an additive or flavouring in several countries with Tobacco Product Regulations, including e.g. Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Macedonia, Romania, Slovak Republic, Spain, and Switzerland. Apart from countries that approve its use, there is no country, regardless of the extent to which tobacco products are regulated therein, that affirmatively prohibits the use of this ingredient on tobacco products.

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<sup>a</sup> **Note:** Philip Morris International shares the concerns of regulators and the public health community about the proliferation of certain cigarette brands that have a predominantly candy-like or fruity flavour and are particularly appealing to minors, and we support legislation that would ban such cigarettes. However, there is currently no consistent terminology used by regulators and the public health community to describe such cigarettes. This can lead to confusion and potential for misinterpretation. In this document, any references to flavours or "smoke aroma" or flavour perceptions such as "sweet", "fruity", etc. are not meant to describe a flavour, taste or aroma that would dominate the taste of the final product, let alone dominate it in a way that is appealing to minors. Rather, such references are only used to explain the differences and nuances between the various flavours described in this and related documents.

## **TOXICITY DATA ON UNBURNT MATERIAL**

### ***Health Hazard Data***

The following information was generated from the RTECS – Registry of Toxic Effects of Chemical Substances (last revision February 2006), a database of MICROMEDEX Systems (<http://csi.micromedex.com>) on February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2009.

#### ***Acute Toxicity***

LD50/LC50 - LETHAL DOSE/CONC 50% KILL

##### ***Rat***

LD50 - ROUTE: Oral; DOSE: 2227 mg/kg [Food and Cosmetics Toxicology. (London, UK) V.1-19, 1963-81. For publisher information, see FCTOD7. (11,1029,1973)]

## **TOXICITY DATA ON BURNT MATERIAL**

Data on the toxicity of benzyl salicylate as a cigarette ingredient has been evaluated in a series of studies. The results of these studies may be found in the following references:

Carmines E.L., 2002, "Evaluation of the Potential Effects of Ingredients Added to Cigarettes. Part I: Cigarette Design, Testing Approach and Review of Results," Food and Chemical Toxicology, 40:77-91. \*\*PEER REVIEWED\*\*

Rustemeier K. *et al.* 2002, "Evaluation of the Potential Effects of Ingredients Added to Cigarettes Part II. Chemical Smoke Composition," Food and Chemical Toxicology, 40:93-104. \*\*PEER REVIEWED\*\*

Roemer E. *et al.* 2002, "Evaluation of the Potential Effects of Flavor Ingredients Added to Cigarettes. Part 3. In Vitro Genotoxicity and Cytotoxicity," Food and Chemical Toxicology, 40:105-111. \*\*PEER REVIEWED\*\*

Vanscheeuwijck P.M. *et al.* 2002, "Toxicological Evaluation of Cigarettes without and with the Addition of Flavor Ingredients to the Tobacco. Part 4. Subchronic Inhalation Toxicity," Food and Chemical Toxicology, 40:113-131. \*\*PEER REVIEWED\*\*

## **CONCLUSION**

Smoking causes lung cancer, heart disease, emphysema and other serious diseases in smokers. Smokers are far more likely to develop serious diseases, like lung cancer, than non-smokers. There is no "safe" cigarette. Government health warnings about smoking apply to all cigarettes, regardless of the ingredients added, including those containing only tobacco and paper.

While Philip Morris International has not conducted human studies on the health effects of ingredients used in cigarette manufacture, studies have been conducted by Philip Morris International and/or others using scientifically accepted *in vitro* and *in vivo* toxicity assays with various ingredient mixtures. These studies show there is no meaningful difference in the composition or toxicity of smoke when the smoke from cigarettes with the added ingredient is compared to the smoke from cigarettes without this added ingredient. Based on a review of current published toxicological information, it is our scientific judgement that the addition of benzyl salicylate as an ingredient, at the levels used in our brands, does not increase the overall toxicity of tobacco smoke.

## References

1. Burdock, G. A. *Fenaroli's Handbook of Flavor Ingredients*. CRC Press, (2005).
2. JECFA. *WHO Food Additives Series 48: Safety Evaluation of Certain Food Additives and Contaminants: Hydroxy- and Alkoxy-Substituted Benzyl Derivatives*. **2001**.