



RWANDA FDA
Rwanda Food and Drugs Authority

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Kigali on, 10/08/2020

Ref. N°: DIS/1655 /FDA/2020

Importers of pharmaceutical products

Importers of chemicals (all)

Retailers of alcohol (All)

General public

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Circular on importation, distribution and use of Methanol in Rwanda

Reference is made to the law N°: 003/2018 of 09/02/2018 establishing the Rwanda Food and Drugs Authority (Rwanda FDA) mainly in its article 8, Paragraph 13,

Reference is also made to the circular N°: DIS/CRC/011/Rwanda FDA /2020 dated 5th June 2020 warning on dangers of methanol;

More reference is made to the Rwanda FDA Guidelines N° DIS/GDL/026 on preparation of alcohol based hand sanitizers. Further reference is made to the findings from inspections conducted by Rwanda FDA where methanol was found being misused and sold by non-authorised company or people; the Authority wants to inform the following:

IMPORTATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF METHANOL

- Only the importers and distributors licensed by Rwanda FDA are allowed to import and distribute Methanol;
- Methanol is imported after obtaining the import license from Rwanda FDA;
- Methanol shall be sold to clients with proof that they use it properly for particular appropriate functions;
- Importers and distributors must record identification and address of clients to whom methanol was sold;
- Importers and distributors of methanol shall keep all records including invoices, distribution list and other related documents.

USE AND HANDLING OF METHANOL

- Methanol is a nondrinking type of alcohol mostly used as an industrial solvent for inks, resins, adhesives, and dyes;
- Methanol is also used for food warming, antifreeze
- Methanol is a colorless, polar, volatile and flammable liquid
- When handling methanol, it is best to avoid direct exposure as much as possible.
- When handling methanol, it is imperative that safety gear be worn, especially those that cover the face, eyes and skin.

PROHIBITION FOR METHANOL USE

- Never use Methanol for production of hand sanitizers, always use ethanol or Isopropyl alcohol at recommended percentage as stated in Rwanda FDA Guidelines N^o DIS/GDL/026 on preparation of alcohol based hand sanitizers (<http://www.rwandafda.gov.rw/web/fileadmin/HANDSAN.pdf>).
- It is strictly prohibited to use Methanol in beauty salon as it can damage skin instead you can use Ethanol 70%-80%;
- It is strictly prohibited to use Methanol for production of alcohol based beverages;
- Manufacturers of alcoholic beverages shall meticulously follow manufacturing processes and all parameters during fermentation in order to avoid any Methanol formation and contamination in alcohol based drinks.

LABELLING OF METHANOL

The importer, disturber and user shall ensure that Methanol is well labelled and it shall contain at least the following information on the label:

- Product description and concentration (%) eg: Methanol ((CH_3OH) or Methyl alcohol;
- Name of the manufacturer and address;
- Hazardous sign/Danger : Methanol is highly flammable;



- Batch Number, Manufacturing and expiry date.

PACKAGING AND STORAGE

- Being highly flammable chemical, Methanol should be **stored** in well-ventilated areas away from direct sunlight and moisture;
- Methyl alcohol should be transported only in its original container fully labeled and stored properly within the vehicle to prevent shifting, spillage, or breakage.

CONSEQUENCES ASSOCIATED TO METHANOL EXPOSURE

- When Methanol is used in manufacturing of alcoholic beverage and when ingested, it can cause:
 - ✓ Blindness
 - ✓ Death
 - ✓ Damage your stomach
- Acute exposure of humans to methanol by inhalation or ingestion may result in visual disturbances, such as blurred or dimness of vision, leading to blindness and or neurological damage, specifically permanent motor dysfunction;
- Methanol can damage your skin, respiratory system once swallowed or inhaled;
- Methanol is flammable and can cause fire incidents in case it is not properly stored.

Note: For more information or report misuse of product please call: **0789 19 35 29**

Thank you for your cooperation.

Dr. KARANGWA Charles
Ag. Director General

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