

PRESS RELEASE, 20 June 2006

## RUBBER GRANULATE FROM RECYCLED CAR TYRES IS SAFE FOR PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

**Recent reports in the media have created uncertainty about the risks to health and the environment associated with the use of rubber granulate (tiles) on sports fields and playgrounds. However, new and existing studies conducted by various independent institutes show that rubber granulate used as infill material does meet the statutory requirements for health and the environment. This should dispel any doubts sportspeople and parents may have about health risks.**

For years, tyres used all over the world have been recycled into rubber granulate and used in all kinds of products such as rubber playground tiles, in athletics tracks and as infill material for artificial turf fields and lawns. These applications help prevent unnecessary injuries.

In recent months, INTRON Certificatie B.V has carried out research into the risks to health and the environment associated with the use of rubber granulate in artificial turf sports fields. The research was commissioned by the builders of sports fields and DSM and set up under the supervision of a committee on which the VACO Association also had a seat. The research programme comprised both experimental studies of the chemical composition and leaching of rubber granulate, and literature studies of existing reports and articles on risks to health and the environment. The experimental research included an assessment of the leaching out of substances over a period of 100 years, in accordance with the guidelines of the Building Materials Decree.

The main conclusions of INTRON's research are:

- The rubber granulate meets the Building Materials Decree requirements regarding chemical composition and the leaching out of substances. This assumes the layer thickness of 2 to 3 cm applied in practice. It should be noted, however, that the Building Materials Decree does not cover rubber granulate but only stony building materials.
- The rubber granulate meets the standards set for heavy metals and the Toys Decree.
- On the basis of the available literature, it can be concluded that no health risks are posed by breathing in or brief skin contact.

Although the VACO Association is satisfied with these conclusions, it believes that the INTRON research does not provide sufficient information on the possible risks of young children eating rubber, prolonged skin contact with rubber and the possible toxicological effects of substances leaching into the environment. As a result, the VACO Association commissioned additional literature research of scientifically substantiated toxicological studies on the subject. No studies showing that rubber granulate poses a risk to health and the environment were unearthed. However, two studies were found that concluded the following:

- [the use of rubber granulate in playgrounds forms no relevant risk to children or the environment](#). This study also looked at the dangers of eating rubber granulate, University of Alberta, 2003.
- [prolonged daily skin contact with rubber tyres does not pose any relevant health risk](#), Danish Technology Institute 2005, commissioned by the Danish Ministry of the Environment.  
*NB! It may take some time to download this file (8.09 MB)*

On the basis of INTRON's research and the recent research information produced by the independent scientific studies conducted in Canada and Denmark, the VACO Association is convinced that the products made of recycled car tyres by its members in the Netherlands are safe for people and the environment.

The VACO Association would like to emphasise that the use of rubber granulate in sports fields and the use of rubber tiles on playgrounds make a significant contribution to the prevention of unnecessary injuries among sportspeople and children.

The Dutch government is also extremely positive about the recycling of tyres and the use of rubber granulate as infill for artificial turf. The Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM) would like to see at least 20 per cent of the car tyres that are collected recycled into high-quality granulate. Since last year, VROM has classified rubber granulate for artificial turf fields that meet the ISA-M37.a standard as a non-waste product. Use of rubber granulate in artificial turf sports fields and rubber tiles on playgrounds are high-quality applications that make a positive contribution to Dutch environmental policy.

Jointly responsible for the environment-friendly collection and recycling of used car tyres, the VACO Association, the Dutch industrial branch association for the tyre and wheel industry ([www.vaco.nl](http://www.vaco.nl)) and the Tyre & the Environment Association, the association of manufacturers and importers of car tyres ([www.bandenmilieu.nl](http://www.bandenmilieu.nl)), are delighted with these conclusions. To sum up, the use of rubber granulates and rubber tiles poses no threat to people or the environment and make a positive contribution to safety on sports fields and playgrounds. Both organisations believe that this new research really opens up the way for the use of rubber granulates as infill material on artificial turf fields. Recycling tyres and using them as a raw material spares the environment and ensures the responsible use of scarce raw materials. The use of rubber granulates is safe for the surroundings, sportspeople and spectators.

#### **Note for the editors - not for publication**

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