

Office of Pesticide Programs Update Ion Generating Washing Machines

EPA has determined that the Samsung silver ion generating washing machine is subject to registration requirements under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). Some time ago, the Agency advised the manufacturer that the silver ion generating washing machine was a device and thus not required to be registered. The Agency has now reevaluated this issue. EPA has determined that the silver electrode in the Samsung washing machine is a pesticide because it is a substance (silver ion) released into the laundry for the purpose of killing microbial pests.

Under FIFRA, a product that uses physical or mechanical means to trap, destroy, repel, or mitigate a pest (including microbial pests) is a device and not required to be registered (though its labeling is regulated). If the product incorporates a substance or mixture of substances intended to prevent, destroy, repel, or mitigate pests, it is considered to be a pesticide and is required to be registered. Determinations as to whether a product is a device or pesticide are made on a case-by-case basis. Silver is already regulated as a pesticide in a number of products.

The Agency will issue a *Federal Register* Notice that will outline and clarify the Agency's position on the classification of silver ion generating washing machines. This notice is the vehicle by which other manufacturers will be notified of the Agency's position. The Agency will provide companies time to comply fully with this clarifying notice. We will work with the companies to identify data and other information needed for an application for registration.

Recent press articles have referred to the Samsung washing machine as a product of nanotechnology. However since we have not yet received an application for registration from Samsung, the Agency has not yet come to any conclusions about whether a washing machine that releases silver ions or any other similar product involves nanomaterial.

Whether the silver ions are considered to be nanomaterial or not, a pesticide product must be registered under the pesticide laws based on scientific data to show that it can be used safely and it will be required to meet the same safety standards as any other antimicrobial or conventional pesticide product.