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Brief summary of the Volatile Organic Compounds Directive

The VOC Directive (**V**olatile **O**rganic **C**ompounds) or, more exactly, the 31st Ordinance on Implementation of the German Federal Immission Control Act (31. **BIMschV** - 31. *Verordnung zur Durchführung des Bundes-Immissionsschutzgesetzes*) is in force since 25 August 2001 and implements the EU Solvents Emissions Directive (1999/13/EC) in German law. It must be implemented by 2007. It defines requirements for the reduction of emissions of volatile organic solvents in both industrial and craft enterprises. It affects certain systems in which volatile organic compounds are released to a relevant degree. The directive stipulates up to what volume of solvents may be used in certain industries and tasks.

Annex I to the 31st Ordinance (31. *BIMschV*) lists a total of 19 tasks / plants which are governed by this directive, including

- Item 2 Cleaning of surfaces
- Item 6 Coil coating
- Item 8 Coating of other metal or plastic surfaces

These three items may also affect non-cutting metalworking, as substances such as evaporating stamping and drawing oils, anti-corrosion media containing solvents and organic degreasers (cleaners) are used here.

All 19 tasks / plants are assigned so-called threshold values for annual solvent consumption, and exceeding these thresholds forces users to implement measures to reduce emissions (reduction of solvents). The measures may involve afterburning, adsorption and also use of substitute products low in solvents (see **RAZIOL CLF 12 series**).

Users of additives containing solvents need to obtain an overview of all products utilised by the company that are affected by this directive. A balance sheet can then be compiled for solvents and a comparison made with the threshold values based on the results.

Although the 31st Ordinance for the Implementation of the German Federal Immission Control Act (31. *BIMschV*) is a federal act, individual federal states are charged with monitoring compliance, with different authorities in these being charged with this task. In North Rhine-Westphalia, for example, responsibility for this task is borne by the state environmental offices of individual districts. A general contact point can therefore not be specified. However, the competent chamber of industry and commerce will certainly be able to provide assistance.

The website below is a good introduction to the topic

https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/bimschv_31/