

Fair-Rite Products' Position on RoHS Compliance

Fair-Rite Products, a leading supplier to the electronic components market, and a strong advocate for a clean environment, is committed to achieving total compliance with the EU Directives on Restriction of Hazardous Substances. It is our goal to complete the transition to compliant status by 1st Qtr. 2005.

Our RoHS efforts are concentrated in two areas:

1. Elimination of all lead from cores supplied with plated termination
2. Elimination of Penta-PBDEs from the plastic cases used in our cable bead assemblies.

Lead-Free Status

Currently, we offer all of our multi-layer chip suppressor beads and chip inductors with either a standard tin/lead termination, or a lead-free tin/silver/copper alternative. This lead-free option is universally accepted for multi-layer chip components, and is both forward and backwards compatible with soldering process requirements.

The balance of our products that use wire terminations will offer a lead-free plating of 100% matte tin with a nickel undercoating. This combination will also achieve both forward and backwards compatibility with standard soldering processes, while offering maximum protection against "tin whiskering".

Since the lead-free termination will be our standard beginning 1/1/05, we have elected not to change part numbers. Instead, beginning Jan. 1, all existing part numbers will simply reflect lead-free plating. To satisfy part identification requirements, Fair-Rite will indicate "RoHS Compliant" on all acknowledgements, invoices, shipping labels, shipping boxes, bag and reel labels of lead-free parts. In addition, the lot numbers on the labels of compliant parts will have an "LF" prefix. Finally, Fair-Rite Products utilizes a serialization process for all product in inventory which provides further traceability to guarantee compliant or non-compliant lots. In this way, there can be no question whether the product supplied is lead-free, even at the assembly process.

Fair-Rite Products recognizes that there will be customers whose applications will continue to demand a tin/lead termination. We will make this option available even after the transition to lead-free is complete. However, on Jan. 1, 2005, these products will be considered non-standard, and could involve additional lead time, and increased costs. All parts containing lead will have an "L" suffix added to the existing part number.

Our system will determine termination requirements based on customer part numbers, so it is essential that our data files be accurate. This will be accomplished as follows:

All customers who currently supply part prints to Fair-Rite will need to submit an updated print with a new revision level indicating lead or lead-free.

For all customers having a part number but no print, Fair-Rite will link their part number to the appropriate Fair-Rite part number indicating with lead, or lead-free.

For all customers not having a part number, Fair-Rite will assign a part number, which will be the corresponding Fair-Rite part number with lead or lead-free.

Penta-PBDEs

We are currently using a Penta - Polybrominated diphenyl ether (PBDE) in several of the plastic cases used in cable core assemblies. The PBDE is a flame retardant, which allows the product to achieve its UL V-0 Flammability rating.

We have tested a substitute material that appears to have satisfied all requirements, and are in the process of purging all existing stock of non-compliant cases and replacing it with RoHS compliant material. Again, our goal is to complete this transition in the 1st Qtr of 2005.

The new compliant case material will not affect form, fit or function, and the change will be transparent to the end user. There will be no part number change necessary in the transition process. All compliant product labels will have "RoHS" prominently displayed and serial numbers will be traceable to compliant product.

Despite the amount of planning that has taken place to date, it is inevitable that the transition to RoHS compliant product will create some confusion worldwide. It is also certain that the upcoming months will prove to be a challenge to the logistics abilities of us all. However, with the cooperation of all involved parties, we should overcome all obstacles, and move toward a cleaner environment with a minimum of disruption.

Addendum: Product discontinued: multi-layer devices with tin/lead plating.

October 17, 2005

Valued Customers,

Since taking the first steps to comply with the RoHS Directive, Fair-Rite Products has maintained that it would continue to supply products with tin/lead termination as long as possible.

We have recently re-evaluated our position with regards to our "multi-layer chip" devices with tin/lead plating. This is due to a contamination problem, which continues to occur in the plating tanks when switching between the dominantly higher volume line of lead-free plated cores, and the low volume tin/lead plated products.

There is not a sufficient volume to justify separate equipment, and so effectively immediately, Fair-Rite Products will discontinue sales of multi-layer chip products with tin/lead termination. This decision affects the 25-product class Chip Beads and the 22- product class Chip Inductor part numbers ending with an L suffix.

We will continue filling existing orders until our current inventory of parts with tin/lead finish is depleted. At that point, we will regrettably be unable to take new orders for these parts.

Our present plans are to continue supplying tin/lead plating on all other board level components. They include the product families beginning with 27 and 29, and include Bead-on-leads, SM Beads, PC Beads and Wound Beads.

We sincerely regret any inconvenience this turn of events may cause.

Sincerely, Frank Babic
Product Manager
Board Level / Cable EMI Components
Fair Rite Products