

## **Lead in Jewelry**

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For the last 18 months or so we, as most buyers have been struggling with the lead in jewelry issue. We realize that producers are often at the mercy of the vendors who sell the components such as earring findings, and that without testing every batch it is difficult to be certain that everything is lead free. Here at Global Crafts we instigated a series of random tests on components. We do not test every design of every earring, which would be ideal, but we take pieces from each producer on a regular basis and test the components such as findings or the wire used in multiple designs. So far we have only had a couple of cases where the test has come back positive, and never in very high concentrates. Where lead is present we work with the producer on sourcing components to resolve the problems.

Producers have been surprised where we have discovered problems. The assumption that lead is a metal and it is only found in metal components. In our experience so far it is rubber components and paint surfaces that have proved the most problematic resulting in us having to change designs and materials on product designs. Even when producers were able to test products they often ignore non metal components, yet in reality these components are just as likely to contain lead as the metal. Perhaps the most confusing aspect of the lead in Jewelry law for producer partners is that we the buyers send mixed messages, while we are sharing a poor lead test result of a rubber component with a producer, another buyer will be telling them that rubber is excluded and it is not a problem. Clearly in this case the other buyer was misguided, but it is difficult for a producer to do right for a buyer when the messages are mixed and confused.

Buyers have a responsibility to be knowledgeable and consistent, and producers have a responsibility to work with us to ensure consumers safety. The unfortunate reality is that no matter how amazing the artisans work, if it contains lead and we can not find a solution, then we can not buy or sell the product. This issue is not going away. Buyers and producers need to get ahead of it.