

# THE CARICOM RAPID ALERT SYSTEM FOR THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ON DANGEROUS (NON-FOOD) CONSUMER GOODS – CARREX

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The **CARICOM Rapid Alert System for the Exchange of Information on Dangerous (non-food) Consumer Goods - CARREX** functions as a **rapid information exchange mechanism** between Member States and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat on **preventive and restrictive measures taken by Member States** on consumer products **posing a serious risk to the health and safety of consumers**.

CARREX is used to **inform Member States and the CARICOM Secretariat of action taken** by Member States on consumer products posing a serious risk to the health and safety of consumers and on **the conclusions of follow-up action taken** by **Member States** regarding these products. The CARREX National Contact Point (NCP) in Member States, which is the relevant Ministry with responsibility for consumer protection, is **able to transmit 'Alerts' and 'Information Only' Notifications on goods** that pose a serious risk to the health and safety of consumers in the community.

This information enables the Member States through their CARREX National Network (CNN) **to act immediately** where a serious and immediate danger has been registered and to take action if the goods are identified in their market.

A **CARREX Alert** is launched when –

- ✚ a Member State decides to take urgent measures to **prevent, limit or impose** conditions on the **marketing or potential utilization of a product or a batch of products** because of **the serious risk it poses** to the health and safety of its citizens/consumers;
- ✚ the Member State is then required to **inform the CARICOM Secretariat** of the **measure adopted**, or before adopting the measure, **of the existence of the risk**;
- ✚ CARICOM then **passes on the information** to other Member States through the system.

A **CARREX Alert is activated** when these **three (3) conditions** are met:

- ✚ A serious risk **requiring immediate action is identified**;
- ✚ Risk is posed by a **non-food consumer product**;
  - Risk leads the market surveillance authorities of at least one CARICOM Member State **to adopt or decide to adopt measures to limit the circulation of the**

**product** in its jurisdiction (obligatory measures); **or a market surveillance authority is made aware of voluntary action** by economic operators such as a manufacturer, producer, importer or distributor/supplier.

CARREX was designed to assist in:

- ✚ **monitoring dangerous consumer goods** - excluding food, animal feed and pharmaceuticals;
- ✚ **preventing the importation** of dangerous goods once detected elsewhere in the Community;
- ✚ **the recall and/or withdrawal** of dangerous products on the national and regional markets;
- ✚ **restricting** the supply to consumers of dangerous goods;
- ✚ **monitoring** the effectiveness and consistency of market surveillance and enforcement activities in Member States;
- ✚ **providing a basis for identifying** the need for action at the Community level e.g. policy and at national and regional levels;
- ✚ **enabling consistent enforcement** of the product **safety requirements, consumer protection legislation, standards, market surveillance.**

CARREX was endorsed by the Thirty-second Council on Trade and Economic Development (COTED) and operationalized by the Thirty-third COTED, which requested the development of a cooperation agreement on CARREX. The legal framework on CARREX provides the basis for Member States to take action to operationalise the system and was approved by Forty-third COTED. It included a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to be used by Member States to conclude their internal cooperation arrangements with the relevant Ministries and national authorities with responsibility for consumer protection, to facilitate the implementation of CARREX.