

Are soda fountains toxic?

Soda fountains and similar drink dispensers that are found in fast food restaurants, cafes and the like, have suddenly become the focus of interest in the Danish news. It is suspected that the soda fountains liberate substances that may be harmful to human health. In Denmark the soda fountains require an official approval, what is popularly known as a VA approval.

VA is an abbreviation for the Danish words for water (vand) and outlet (afløb). VA approvals concern all installations that are connected to the water supply network and include water taps, fittings, mixer taps, ice cube machines, etc. In addition the VA approval is required in connection with soda fountains as these are also connected to the water supply network.



What is a VA approval?

VA approvals are issued to products that do not affect the drinking water quality and that do not contain substances harmful to human health. This means that the product must not affect the taste or smell of the drinking water or liberate substances that affect the water turbidity. Substances that affect the drinking water can be part of water installation components and include phthalates (a common plastic softener), metals, phenols, and colorants.

How to obtain a VA approval

To obtain a VA approval the soda fountain must be tested. To begin with it must be ascertained if the product contains problematic substances. This is done by

examining the product composition of parts that are in direct contact with drinking water. If they contain any problematic substances the product must be tested at a test laboratory. If the test results are satisfactory then the VA approval is issued by ETA-Denmark (by authorization of the Danish Enterprise and Construction Authority).



Must I have a VA approval?

VA approvals are only issued for products that are connected to the water supply network, which includes many soda fountains and drink dispensers. However, if the soda fountain is not connected to the water supply network, it is not covered by the VA approval system but by the EU legislation on food contact materials. Whether the soda fountain is covered by the VA system or by the food legislation, the fountain must not liberate substances that are harmful to human health.

In any case, parts coming into contact with soda water, syrup or beer must fulfil the requirements in the EU food contact material legislation.

At DHI we have extensive experience in VA approvals and food contact material legislation as well as thorough knowledge of test reports. Ask one of our consultants if you are in doubt.

Contact: Hanne Sørensen

•+45 4516 9159

•hso@dhiigroup.com

DHI, Agern Allé 5, 2970 Hørsholm, Denmark