



UK Code of Practice for Tampon Manufacturers & Distributors

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ahpma
ABSORBENT HYGIENE PRODUCTS MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION

Product Safety

AHPMA members take their responsibilities as manufacturers and distributors of menstrual tampons extremely seriously. The safety in use of AHPMA member's products is their number one priority. In Europe tampons are currently regulated by the General Product Safety Directive (EEC Directive 2001/95/EC). In order to meet the requirements of the Directive all AHPMA members have procedures and processes in place to evaluate the safety of both the raw materials and the biocompatibility of the finished tampons as well as ensuring that the user is provided with comprehensive instructions for use. Documentation relating to the safety of menstrual tampons is held by each AHPMA member and can be made available to Trading Standards, the Department Business Enterprise & Regulatory Reform as necessary.

1. Tampon Categories

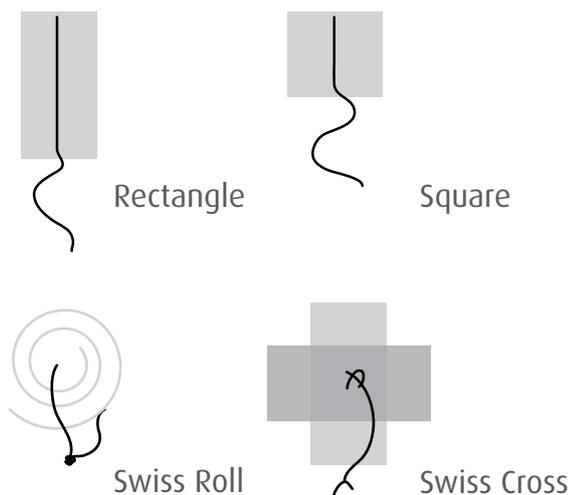
The tampon is used for internally absorbing menstrual flow during the period. A range of absorbencies are available designed to manage various menstrual flows which differ not only from woman to woman, but also during a woman's menstrual life and during each period. For further details please refer to section 4.

The UK tampon market is clearly divided between applicator and non-applicator tampons with minimal crossover by consumers between the two i.e. having made a choice of applicator or non-applicator early in her menstrual life a user is very unlikely to change.



2. Construction

There are a number of different constructions, see diagram, which are currently being used for tampons throughout the world, including the U.K:



1. **Swiss Roll**: The fibrous fleece is rolled up like a Swiss roll and then compressed to produce a tampon which expands in the width-wise direction.

2. **Rectangular or Square Pad**: The fibrous fleece is in the form of a rectangular or square pad which is compressed in both length and width directions. This tampon expands in both length and width, but predominantly in the length direction.

3. **Swiss Cross**: The fibrous fleece is in the form of two rectangular pads placed on top of each other at an angle of 90 degrees. A cord is centrally placed between the pads and the tampon is folded from the centre and compressed radially. Upon expansion the tampon opens in a similar way to that of a flower opening.

Most tampon brands have an additional non-woven layer or coverstock attached to the surface of the tampon, which can aid insertion and can help reduce fibre migration. Some tampons may also contain a lubricant or fragrance/scent.

The fibrous web used as the absorbent material in a tampon is formed from ECF, i.e. elemental chlorine free bleached viscose rayon or cotton fibres or a mixture of these two fibres.

Tampons should include provision for withdrawal with a suitably attached withdrawal cord to ensure safe and complete tampon removal.

3. Presentation & Packaging of the Individual Tampons

There are two methods of presenting the tampon.

1. Digital or Non-Applicator: The woman uses the finger to insert the tampon into the vagina. The finished tampon is usually over wrapped in a cellophane or polymeric 'sleeve' which may include a tear tape for ease of opening the product.

2. Applicator: The tampon is inserted into the vagina using an applicator. The applicators are made from an outer and inner tube with the latter fitting inside the outer tube. Applicators are made from cardboard / paper or plastic, sometimes in a compact form. The combined applicator and tampon are over wrapped in a cellophane / paper / polymeric 'sleeve'.



4. Absorbency classification and Droplet scheme

Tampons are designed to absorb menstrual fluid and the *in-vitro* measure of this absorption is through the Syngina test method. The apparatus and test method is detailed in the recommended EDANA test method [weblink](#) (WSP 350.1.05).

The categories and classification of absorbency are divided into primary and secondary descriptors:

Absorbency	Droplet	Primary Descriptor	Secondary Descriptor
<6g		Lite(s)/Light(s)	"very light to light flow"
6-9g		Regular/Slender/Mini/Normal	"light to medium flow"
9-12g		Super	"medium to heavy flow"
12-15g		Super Plus	"heavy flow"
15-18g		Super Plus Extra	"very heavy flow"

5. Instruction Leaflet

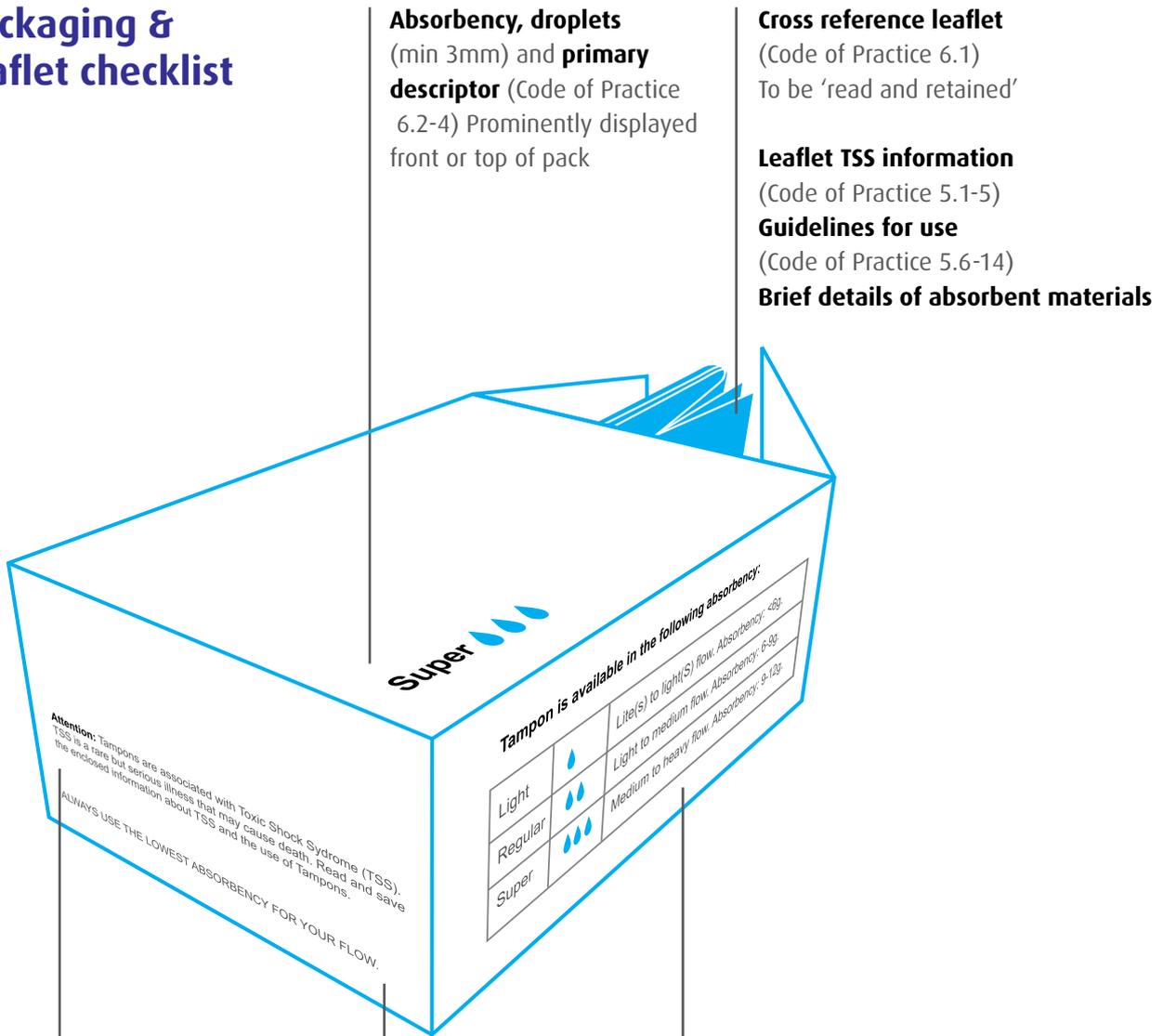
Each tampon pack must be provided with an instruction leaflet which gives clear advice and guidance on the use of tampons. The insert leaflet must include the following:-

1. To inform consumers about Toxic Shock Syndrome.
2. To provide a full description of the symptoms of TSS to include the following; a sudden high fever usually over 39°C, vomiting, diarrhoea, muscle aches, a sun burn like rash, sore throat, dizziness and/or fainting. Optional to include: severe flu-like feeling.
3. To inform the user that not all the symptoms of TSS may occur simultaneously.
4. To instruct the user that if symptoms of TSS occur, to remove the tampon, consult a doctor urgently and inform him or her that a tampon has been used.
5. To inform the user in the TSS statement that the illness can be fatal.
6. To provide a frequency of use statement e.g.: Regardless of when you use them, day or night, you should change your tampon every 4 to 8 hours or more often if needed.
7. In the case of night time use, a statement is required to advise the user to insert a fresh tampon before going to sleep and to replace the tampon first thing in the morning.
8. To instruct the user to use the lowest absorbency to suit their flow.
9. Full description of all absorbencies available within the particular brand, linking them to the menstrual flow e.g: Regular for light to medium flow; Super for medium to heavy flow.
10. To advise the user to alternate between tampons and towels / pant liners from time to time during their period.
11. To emphasise the importance of personal hygiene, particularly the washing of hands before and after inserting a tampon.
12. To inform the consumer to only use tampons during menstruation, one tampon at any time, and to ensure the removal of the last tampon once menstruation has finished.
13. To instruct the user on the method for insertion and withdrawal.
14. To include brief details of the absorbent materials used in the manufacture of the product.
15. To advise the user on methods for tampon disposal. Tampons may be flushed down the toilet if a disposal bin is not available. They may be flushed subject to an appropriate test method such as ASPM Test 1 [weblink](#) (which is a flushability test designed between the AHPMA – formerly ASPM – and the Drainage Research Group, Brunel University). Advice should be provided as to the preferred method of disposal of applicator tubes and the outer wrapper.

6. Each tampon pack must display the following:

1. Clear wording to notify the consumer that tampons are associated with Toxic Shock Syndrome. The notice should cross reference the consumer 'to read and retain the instruction leaflet within the pack'. An example of the TSS wording on pack is as follows, "Tampons are associated with Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS). TSS is a rare but serious illness that may be fatal". This statement on standard packets of tampons will have a minimum size equivalent to 'Arial 7' (or an alternative font equivalent in size to Arial 7).
2. The appropriate number of droplets to denote the range of Syngina absorbency.
3. Droplets should be displayed in a prominent position either on the front or top of the pack. The droplets will have a minimum size of 3 mm for the smallest packs and will be scaled up as appropriate for larger packs.
4. Each set of droplet symbols represents a range of 3g of Syngina absorbency and there are five classes in total. The Syngina absorbency of the five classes is given in section 4.
5. Give details of the range of absorbencies available within the particular brand, including primary and secondary descriptors and the appropriate droplets.
6. Advise the consumer to use the lowest absorbency for her needs.

Packaging & leaflet checklist



Absorbency, droplets
(min 3mm) and **primary descriptor** (Code of Practice 6.2-4) Prominently displayed front or top of pack

Cross reference leaflet
(Code of Practice 6.1)
To be 'read and retained'

Leaflet TSS information
(Code of Practice 5.1-5)
Guidelines for use
(Code of Practice 5.6-14)
Brief details of absorbent materials

TSS Health Warning
(Code of Practice 6.1)
Min font size equivalent to Arial 7

Absorbency advice
(Code of Practice 6.6)
i.e. use lowest absorbency necessary

Table showing available brand range of absorbencies with droplets and primary descriptors
(Code of Practice 6.5)

This document may be subject to change from time to time in accordance with product innovation and will be reviewed as standard on an annual basis.

The Absorbent Hygiene Products Manufacturers Association (AHPMA) is the UK trade association for the UK manufacturers of feminine hygiene products, disposable infant nappies and continence care products.

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