

# Law restricts aerosol usage

By SUSAN TAUBER KLEIN

The Michigan Department of Public Health has good news for those of you who enjoy using aerosol cans. The news is that the new Michigan law which will ban the sale of hazardous aerosols as of Jan. 1, 1979, will not ban all aerosol cans.

The harmful substances in aerosol sprays are chlorofluorocarbons, commonly known as freon, but not all aerosol propellents contain these gases, according to James Barrett, deputy chief of the Bureau of Environmental and Occupational Health, Department of Public Health.

"The new law will reduce the amount of chlorofluorocarbons which will rise to the ozone and destroy it, thus allowing more ultraviolet light to filter down into the atmosphere," Barrett said.

Studies have proven that the freons are destructive to the ozone and that ultraviolet light is associated with skin cancer, he added.

Before the Michigan law bans any aerosols from the market, several steps must first be taken, said Shirley Gray, administrative assistant for State Rep. Joseph Forbes (D-Oak Park).

BY JUNE 1, the Department of Public Health must give a comprehensive report to the governor and legislature on the status and progress of its research on the extent of the dangers of the propellant compounds to public health and the environment.

"We must also report on our research on safe and effective substitutes for the aerosol compounds," explained Barrett.

By Jan. 1, 1978, the department is required by the new law to promulgate rules on labeling aerosols used under specific restrictions.

Finally, by Jan. 1, 1979, the department must promulgate rules prohibiting the distribution and sale of hazardous aerosols and on the restrictive use of nonhazardous aerosol sprays.

The Michigan law will be effective until the federal government passes a law on freon sprays. "We are in weekly contact with federal agencies who are researching, laying ground work and establishing definitions for a federal law," Barrett said.

"The Department of Public Health will hold public hearings on banning the aerosol compounds no sooner than the middle of the summer," he said.

Barrett explained that part of the rule-making procedure in Michigan requires the department to hold public hearings throughout the state.

"But first we will appoint an advisory committee," he said.

Michigan is one of the first states to pass a law to ban hazardous aerosol spray cans. Oregon passed a similar law and New York has one under consideration.

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