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County of San Francisco

**01/21/2025**  
Clerk of the Court  
BY: SAHAR ENAYATI  
Deputy Clerk

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SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

**CGC-25-621604**

GABRIEL ESPINOZA,

Plaintiff,

vs.

WORLDWIDE GOLF SHOPS LLC,

Defendant.

Case No.:

**COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES AND  
INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**

**(Violation of Health & Safety Code § 25249.5 et  
seq.)**

Plaintiff Gabriel Espinoza ("Plaintiff"), by and through his attorneys, alleges the following cause of action in the public interest of the citizens of the State of California.

**BACKGROUND OF THE CASE**

1. Plaintiff brings this representative action on behalf of all California citizens to enforce relevant portions of Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, codified at the Health and Safety Code § 25249.5 et seq ("Proposition 65"), which reads, in relevant part, "[n]o person in the course of doing business shall knowingly and intentionally expose any individual to a chemical known to the state to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity without first giving clear and reasonable warning to such individual ...". Health & Safety Code § 25249.6.

2. This complaint is a representative action brought by Plaintiff in the public interest of the citizens of the State of California to enforce the People's right to be informed of the health hazards caused by exposure to chromium (hexavalent compounds) ("chromium (VI)"), a toxic

1 chemical found in Mizuno Elite golf gloves, sold and/or distributed by defendant Worldwide Golf  
2 Shops LLC (“Worldwide Golf” or “Defendant”) in California.

3 3. Chromium (VI) is a harmful chemical known to the State of California to cause  
4 cancer and birth defects or other reproductive harm. On February 27, 1987, the State of California  
5 listed chromium (VI) as a chemical known to the State to cause cancer and it has come under the  
6 purview of Proposition 65 regulations since that time. Cal. Code Regs. Tit. 27, § 27001(c); Health  
7 & Safety Code §§ 25249.8 & 25249.10(b). On December 19, 2008, the State of California listed  
8 chromium (VI) as a chemical known to cause birth defects or other reproductive harm.

9 4. Proposition 65 requires all businesses with ten (10) or more employees that operate  
10 within California or sell products therein to comply with Proposition 65 regulations. Included in  
11 such regulations is the requirement that businesses must label any product containing a Proposition  
12 65-listed chemical that will create an exposure above safe harbor levels with a “clear and  
13 reasonable” warning before “knowingly and intentionally” exposing any person to any such listed  
14 chemical.

15 5. Proposition 65 allows for civil penalties of up to \$2,500.00 per day per violation  
16 for up to 365 days (up to a maximum civil penalty amount per violation of \$912,000.00) to be  
17 imposed upon defendants in a civil action for violations of Proposition 65. Health & Safety Code  
18 § 25249.7(b). Proposition 65 also allows for any court of competent jurisdiction to enjoin the  
19 actions of a defendant which “violate or threaten to violate” the statute. Health & Safety Code §  
20 25249.7.

21 6. Plaintiff alleges that Defendant distributes and/or offers for sale in California,  
22 without a requisite exposure warning, Mizuno Elite golf gloves (the “Products”) that expose  
23 persons to chromium (VI) when used for their intended purpose.

24 7. Defendant’s failure to warn consumers and other individuals in California of the  
25 health hazards associated with exposure to chromium (VI) in conjunction with the sale and/or  
26 distribution of the Products is a violation of Proposition 65 and subjects Defendant to the  
27 enjoinder and civil penalties described herein.

8. Plaintiff seeks civil penalties against Defendant for its violations of Proposition 65 in accordance with Health and Safety Code § 25249.7(b).

9. Plaintiff also seeks injunctive relief, preliminarily and permanently, requiring Defendant to provide purchasers or users of the Products with required warnings related to the dangers and health hazards associated with exposure to chromium (VI) pursuant to Health and Safety Code § 25249.7(a).

10. Plaintiff further seeks a reasonable award of attorney's fees and costs.

## PARTIES

11. Plaintiff is a citizen of the State of California acting in the interest of the general public to promote awareness of exposures to toxic chemicals in products sold in California and to improve human health by reducing hazardous substances contained in such items. He brings this action in the public interest pursuant to Health and Safety Code § 25249.7(d).

12. Defendant Worldwide Golf Shops LLC, through its business, effectively imports, distributes, sells, and/or offers the Products for sale or use in the State of California, or it implies by its conduct that it imports, distributes, sells, and/or offers the Products for sale or use in the State of California.

13. Plaintiff alleges that defendant Worldwide Golf Shops LLC is a “person” in the course of doing business within the meaning of Health & Safety Code sections 25249.6 and 25249.11.

## VENUE AND JURISDICTION

14. Venue is proper in the County of San Francisco because one or more of the instances of wrongful conduct occurred and continue to occur in this county and/or because Defendant conducted, and continues to conduct, business in the County of San Francisco with respect to the Products.

15. This Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to California Constitution Article VI, § 10, which grants the Superior Court original jurisdiction in all causes except those given by statute to other trial courts. Health and Safety Code § 25249.7 allows for the enforcement

1 of violations of Proposition 65 in any Court of competent jurisdiction; therefore, this Court has  
2 jurisdiction over this lawsuit.

3 16. This Court has jurisdiction over Defendant because Defendant is either a citizen of  
4 the State of California, has sufficient minimum contacts with the State of California, is registered  
5 with the California Secretary of State as foreign corporations authorized to do business in the State  
6 of California, and/or has otherwise purposefully availed itself of the California market. Such  
7 purposeful availment has rendered the exercise of jurisdiction by California courts consistent and  
8 permissible with traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice.

### 9 **STATUTORY BACKGROUND**

10 17. The people of the State of California declared in Proposition 65 their right “[t]o be  
11 informed about exposures to chemicals that cause cancer, birth defects, or other reproductive  
12 harm.” (Section 1(b) of Initiative Measure, Proposition 65.)

13 18. To effect this goal, Proposition 65 requires that individuals be provided with a  
14 “clear and reasonable warning” before being exposed to substances listed by the State of California  
15 as causing cancer and/or birth defects or other reproductive harm. H&S Code § 25249.6 states, in  
16 pertinent part:

17 No person in the course of doing business shall knowingly and intentionally expose any  
18 individual to a chemical known to the state to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity without  
first giving clear and reasonable warning to such individual...

19 19. An exposure to a chemical in a consumer product is one “which results from a  
20 person’s acquisition, purchase, storage, consumption or other reasonably foreseeable use of a  
21 consumer good, or any exposure that results from receiving a consumer service.” (27 CCR §  
22 25602, para (b).) H&S Code § 25603(c) states that “a person in the course of doing business ...  
23 shall provide a warning to any person to whom the product is sold or transferred unless the product  
24 is packaged or labeled with a clear and reasonable warning.”



1 known to cause birth defects or other reproductive harm. In summary, chromium (VI) was listed  
2 under Proposition 65 as a chemical known to the State to cause cancer and birth defects or other  
3 reproductive harm.

4 23. The exposures that are the subject of the Notice result from the purchase,  
5 acquisition, handling and recommended use of the Products. Increased duration of contact with the  
6 Products, natural aging of the Products, temperature, light exposure, and contact of the Products  
7 with oxidizing agents and alkaline solutions will result in increased conversion of chromium (III)  
8 to chromium (VI) in the Products and thus increased dermal exposure to chromium (VI). Direct  
9 mouthing of the Products and indirect hand to mouth exposure to chromium (VI) will occur by  
10 touching the Products with subsequent touching of the user's hand to mouth.

11 24. Defendant has manufactured, processed, marketed, distributed, offered to sell  
12 and/or sold the Products in California since at least August 1, 2024. The Products continue to be  
13 distributed and sold in California without the requisite warning information.

14 25. At all times relevant to this action, Defendant has knowingly and intentionally  
15 exposed users, consumers and/or patients to the Products and the chromium (VI) without first  
16 giving a clear and reasonable exposure warning to such individuals.

17 26. As a proximate result of acts by Defendant, as a person in the course of doing  
18 business within the meaning of H&S Code § 25249.11, individuals throughout the State of  
19 California, including in San Francisco County, have been exposed to chromium (VI) without a  
20 clear and reasonable warning on the Products. The individuals subject to the violative exposures  
21 include normal and foreseeable users, consumers and patients that use the Products, as well as all  
22 others exposed to the Products.

23 **SATISFACTION OF NOTICE REQUIREMENTS**

24 27. On June 9, 2024, Plaintiff purchased the Product from Worldwide Golf. At the time  
25 of purchase, Defendant did not provide a Proposition 65 exposure warning for chromium (VI) or  
26 any other Proposition 65 listed chemical in a manner consistent with H&S Code § 25603.1 as  
27 described *supra*.  
28

1           28.     On July 10, 2024, the Product was sent to a testing laboratory to determine the  
2 chromium (VI) content of the Products.

3           29.     On July 19, 2024, the laboratory provided the results of its analysis. Results of this  
4 test determined the Product exposes users to chromium (VI) (the “Chemical Test Report”).

5           30.     Plaintiff provided the Chemical Test Report and Product to an analytical chemist  
6 to determine if, based on the findings of the Chemical Test Report and the reasonable and  
7 foreseeable use of the Product, exposure to chromium (VI) will occur at levels that require  
8 Proposition 65 warnings under the Clear and Reasonable Warnings section 25601 of Title 27 of  
9 the California Code of Regulations.

10          31.     On August 1, 2024, Plaintiff received from the analytical chemist an exposure  
11 assessment report which concluded that persons in California who use the Products will be exposed  
12 to levels of chromium (VI) that require a Proposition 65 exposure warning.

13          32.     On August 1, 2024, Plaintiff gave notice of alleged violation of Health and Safety  
14 Code § 25249.6 (the “Notice”) to Defendant concerning the exposure of California citizens to  
15 chromium (VI) contained in the Products without proper warning, subject to a private action to  
16 Defendant and to the California Attorney General’s office and the offices of the County District  
17 attorneys and City Attorneys for each city with a population greater than 750,000 persons wherein  
18 the herein violations allegedly occurred.

19          33.     The Notice complied with all procedural requirements of Proposition 65 including  
20 the attachment of a Certificate of Merit affirming that Plaintiff’s counsel had consulted with at  
21 least one person with relevant and appropriate expertise who reviewed relevant data regarding  
22 chromium (VI) exposure, and that counsel believed there was meritorious and reasonable cause  
23 for a private action.

24          34.     After receiving the Notice, and to Plaintiff’s best information and belief, none of  
25 the noticed appropriate public enforcement agencies have commenced and diligently prosecuted a  
26 cause of action against Defendant under Proposition 65 to enforce the alleged violations which are  
27 the subject of the Notice.

35. Plaintiff is commencing this action more than sixty (60) days from the date of the Notice to Defendant, as required by law.

### FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

**(By Plaintiff against Defendant for the Violation of Proposition 65)**

36. Plaintiff hereby repeats and incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 35 of this Complaint as though fully set forth herein.

37. Defendant has, at all times mentioned herein, acted as distributor, and/or retailer of the Products.

38. Use of the Products will expose users and consumers thereof to chromium (VI), a hazardous chemical found on the Proposition 65 list of chemicals known to be hazardous to human health.

39. The Products do not comply with the Proposition 65 warning requirements.

40. Plaintiff, based on his best information and belief, avers that at all relevant times herein, and at least since August 1, 2024, continuing until the present, that Defendant has continued to knowingly and intentionally expose California users and consumers of the Products to chromium (VI) without providing required warnings under Proposition 65.

41. The exposures that are the subject of the Notice result from the purchase, acquisition, handling and recommended use of the Products. Consequently, the primary route of exposure to these chemicals is through dermal exposure. Increased duration of contact with the Products, natural aging of the Products, temperature, light exposure, and contact of the Products with oxidizing agents and alkaline solutions will result in increased conversion of chromium (III) to chromium (VI) in the Products and thus increased dermal exposure to chromium (VI). Direct mouthing of the Products and indirect hand to mouth exposure to chromium (VI) will occur by touching the Products with subsequent touching of the user's hand to mouth.

42. Plaintiff, based on his best information and belief, avers that such exposures will continue every day until clear and reasonable warnings are provided to purchasers and users or until this known toxic chemical is removed from the Products.



