NATCP National Authority for Trade and Consumer Protection

PRESS RELEASE

26 October 2026, Budapest

Almost nothing but salt instead of washing powder? The NATCP's laboratory tests have produced surprising results

The laboratory of the National Authority for Trade and Consumer Protection (NATCP) carried out a comparative test on liquid and powder washing detergents. The inspection covered the active ingredient content, the accuracy of the information on the labels, and the integrity of the packaging. The experts identified various shortcomings in nearly half of the products tested.

In the comparative study, the authority assessed liquid detergents and washing powders on the basis of their measured surfactant content. The results showed that liquid formulations generally have a higher concentration of surfactants. These ingredients play an important role in cleaning, including the removal of greasy stains. Some washing powders also contain oxygen-based bleaching agents, which can help remove coloured stains from bleachable fabrics.

However, the measurement results alone are not sufficient to make a general conclusion as to whether liquid or powder detergents are more effective. When choosing the right product, it is worth taking into account the type of fabric, the nature of the soiling and the composition of the stain. The results of the comparative test are available on the NATCP website (https://nkfh.gov.hu/en).

During the inspection, the authority identified several shortcomings. The problems stemmed primarily from inaccuracies in the dosage instructions, discrepancies between the information on the label and the measured values, and the composition of the products. For several washing powders, the weight-based and volume-based dosage recommendations were inconsistent with one another, whilst in two products the washing powder spilled out even before the packaging was opened. In some products, no active oxygen could be detected, even though its presence was stated on the label.

During the investigation, products with exceptionally high levels of table salt were also found. In one washing powder, for example, a table salt content of 94 percent was measured, whilst the active ingredient content was less than 1 percent. Neither EU nor domestic legislation sets an upper limit for the table salt content of detergents, nor does it stipulate a minimum active ingredient content. Therefore, these two values alone do not constitute grounds for regulatory action. However, the claim regarding high effectiveness was questionable, and the washing dose instructions were also incorrect; consequently, proceedings were initiated in relation to the product.

The NATCP advises consumers that when making a purchase, it is worth checking the ingredients listed on the label, the dosage instructions and the number of washes stated on the packaging. The latter is based on the dosage specified by the manufacturer; therefore, using more than is necessary may reduce the number of washes that can be carried out with a single pack and does not necessarily result in better cleaning performance. The dosage should always be adjusted to the quantity and soiling level of the laundry, as well as the water hardness.

The authority emphasises that a higher price does not necessarily mean better quality. Comparing the composition of products, dosage recommendations and test results can help consumers make informed purchasing decisions.

26 October 2026

National Authority for Trade and Consumer Protection