

Softwood Books is a multi-award-winning publishing services provider established in 2017. At the forefront of cost-effective book production, distribution, and marketing, they empower authors to retain their independence while making publishing work for them.



Softwood Books

Helping authors distribute to the EU

General Product Safety Regulations

REGULATION (EU) 2023/988

Valid from December 13th 2024

Updated 16/12/24



Maddy Glenn

Director, Softwood Books

What are the new safety regulations concerning books?

As of December 13th 2024, publishers wanting to distribute books to the EU need to be compliant with the new General Product Safety Regulation.

Please note the information here has been collated after receiving advice from Softwood's EU authorised representative, [ARC](#), and our print partners at [Ingram](#), and [CPI](#), Europe's leading book printing company.

What is GPSR?

From 13th December 2024, book manufacturers have an obligation to ensure that books of every kind are a designated "safe product". The full GPSR document can be read [here](#)

The regulation defines "manufacturers" of products as *"Any natural or legal person who manufactures a product or has a product designed or manufactured and markets that product under that person's name or trademark"*.

Therefore, the publisher (or individual if self-publishing) is the "manufacturer" and has an obligation to ensure that their product (book) is a "safe product", defined as:

"Any product which, under normal or reasonably foreseeable conditions of use, including the actual duration of use, does not present any risk or only the minimum risks compatible with the product's use, considered acceptable and consistent with a high level of protection of the health and safety of consumers".

It is our understanding of the regulations that self-published authors will be defined as "manufacturers", as they "have a product designed" and usually market "that product under that person's name".

Many self-published authors use publishers such as Softwood Books to distribute their books, whilst others use Ingram or Amazon directly, or both. Products placed on the EU market (including the European Economic Area and Northern Ireland) must have the contact details of both Manufacturer/Brand owner and the EU Responsible person present on the packaging. Since books are not supplied in packaging, this information must be contained in their imprint/copyright pages.

If publishers, and therefore self-published authors, wish to distribute their books to an EU market and are based outside the EU, then they must appoint an authorised EU representative who will act on their behalf in matters of compliance and communication with the regulatory authorities.

Self-published/independent authors only need to comply with GPSR if they ARE distributing or selling to the EU.

Do print-on-demand distributors offer GPSR compliance?

Over December, more information has been released by major printers and distributors regarding compliance. Some companies will be able to provide GPSR compliance, others cannot, so authors will need to clarify with their printers if not using the likes of Ingram or Amazon. CPI cannot offer GPSR compliance, for example.

It is our current understanding that if an ISBN is printed exclusively by Lightning Source (Ingram), there is a compliance URL available that provides contact info for Lightning Source to serve as the EU Authorized Representative. If Lightning Source is not the exclusive printer, LS cannot be the EU Authorized Representative, but the same URL can be used by the publisher's designated EU AR if queries arise about a physical book that is printed via LS POD.

Currently, the guidance from Amazon is unclear (see statement [here](#)) so we would recommend that authors who publish on both Ingram and Amazon KDP and/or a printed stock, and want to sell to the EU, seek their own compliance.

Tell us about your book! Contact us on hello@softwoodbooks.com

Seeking compliance?

IMPORTANT: If books are not to be sold in the EU there is no need to seek compliance.

Softwood Books has met compliance with REGULATION (EU) 2023/988 and has in place the following:

- A risk assessment for physical books, eBooks and audiobooks, updated annually.
- Safety certificates from our supply chain, updated annually.
- An appointed EU representative, declared on all imprint pages.
- Updated product safety declarations on imprint pages including contact information for both publisher and EU representative.
- Current Certificate of Publishing Insurance
- Updated Website statement confirming compliance.

How can Softwood distribute independent/self-published authors to the EU?



If you have used Softwood to produce a book BEFORE December 13th 2024

Authors who have been through the production process with Softwood will already be covered by our GPSR compliance. However in some cases an updated imprint page will be necessary in 2025 (subject to small fee*).



If you are to produce your book with Softwood AFTER December 13th 2024

Authors who work with Softwood on production and distribution will be automatically compliant.



If you are currently self-published and responsible for your own distribution

Books distributed by Ingram will need to be moved across to our server so that we might take responsibility for the listing and GPSR compliance. Titles solely distributed via Amazon will be subject to the same compliance fee and new imprint page.*

**Tell us about your book!
Contact us on
hello@softwoodbooks.com**

IMPORTANT: In order to meet compliance, all authors will be required to have an imprint page provided by Softwood Books that contains relevant safety information and a conformity declaration. **This does NOT affect an author's independence. Ownership of the book and all profits remain the property of the author.**

*This is our current understanding as of December 2024. Please contact us for more information.

All titles are subject to a publishing & upload fee along with an annual hosting charge. Please contact us for latest prices.

WHAT DO OUR CLIENTS SAY?

“One challenge I faced as a self-published author is working out the best ways to promote my books on social media. I recently turned this challenge over to Nathan at Softwood Books and he has done a wonderful job at writing posts and boosting my profile on X, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. It has made a world of difference. I absolutely highly recommend them.”

Brad Borkan

“With super advice, and the ability to offer services such as print on demand, designing, and social media help I've found them all to be unbelievably helpful, friendly and caring.”

Gloria Barnett

As a children’s author, I couldn’t be happier with my experience working with Softwood Books! I approached them for help reformatting my book files for global print-on-demand distribution, and they handled everything smoothly and quickly. Their author-centered approach was clear from the start—they listened carefully to my needs, kept me informed at every stage, and were incredibly responsive to my questions. Beyond just the technical aspects, Softwood connected me with local retailers and shared marketing opportunities I hadn’t considered, which was invaluable. I’m especially grateful for the chance to meet their team in person at their office; it truly felt like they were as invested in my book’s success as I was. Highly recommend them!

Rev. Dr. Karen Smith



100% 5-star reviews



www.softwoodbooks.com