



U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION  
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CHAIRMAN INEZ M. TENENBAUM

October 5, 2011

**STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN INEZ M. TENENBAUM ON THE COMMISSION  
DECISION TO ISSUE AN ADVANCE NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULEMAKING  
(ANPR) FOR PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS TO ADDRESS TABLE SAW  
BLADE CONTACT INJURIES**

Today's unanimous vote by the Commission to approve an advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPR) on table saw blade contact injuries should send a clear signal to consumers and the industry that the Consumer Product Safety Commission is determined to be part of the solution to reduce the serious number of preventable table saw injuries that occur each year. The unanimity of this vote powerfully reaffirms the Commission's original attempt to address this issue in 2006, when the Commission granted a petition to initiate federal rulemaking to prevent table saw blade contact injuries. Unfortunately, the Commission's original rulemaking effort stalled because of a procedural hurdle created by an initial 2-1 vote on the matter and the subsequent departure of former Chairman Hal Stratton, who had voted in favor of initiating the rulemaking.

Last year, I called on the table saw industry to address this hazard through the voluntary standards process and work to prevent the needless injuries that occur each and every day. Despite my public urging for the power tool industry to make progress voluntarily on preventing these injuries, no meaningful revisions to the voluntary standard were made. Therefore, when the first opportunity arose this past June to reinstate federal rulemaking through the CPSC's FY 2011 Mid-Year Review vote, I joined my colleague Commissioner Robert Adler's amendment, directing staff to prepare a briefing package with an ANPR by September 2011, to address table saw blade contact injuries. Although the Commission was urged by some to allow the voluntary standards process continue without initiating a rulemaking, the frequency and severity of the blade contact injuries associated with table saws demanded action via the ANPR.

Based on the injury data obtained in the 2007 and 2008 CPSC special study, our staff's injury cost model projected that consumers suffered approximately 67,300 medically treated blade contact injuries annually in 2007 and 2008—with an associated injury cost of \$2.36 billion dollars in each of those two years. I want to emphasize that the injuries resulting from the use of table saws are, in many cases, particularly gruesome. While these injuries typically involve a laceration wound ranging from a minor scratch to a serious gash, we also know, based on the estimates from staff's special studies that far more serious injuries are occurring all too often. Very serious injuries, including fractures and avulsions, as well as

amputations, have changed the lives of tens of thousands of consumers and impacted their families forever.

When the Commission first considered this issue in 2006, the injury statistics and disturbing natures of these life-altering, yet preventable injuries were unacceptable. They are even more unacceptable now. As I have stated many times before—and as is now reflected in the agency's new strategic plan—one of the CPSC's primary goals is a commitment to prevention. In other words, we believe in being proactive rather than reactive. Today we are taking a very positive step forward in committing ourselves to looking actively into the best method of preventing these kinds of injuries. I look forward to our staff's evaluation of the feedback we receive on this issue and hearing their future proposals on how to move forward to ensure that these preventable injuries are, in fact, prevented.

I also want to thank the consumer advocates and victims of table saw injuries who took the time to meet with me and the other Commissioners about this issue late this past spring. I was moved by what I heard from the victims of these injuries, whose lives were changed forever, due to one split-second miscalculation while using a table saw. To these victims and to all of the other victims who have suffered life-altering injuries from table saws, I want you to know that your efforts to improve the safety of these tools have made a difference. Moreover, this agency, under my leadership, is firmly committed to exploring how to prevent these kinds of injuries from continuing to occur.