



U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20207

Record of Commission Action  
Commissioners Voting by Ballot \*

Commissioners Voting: Chairman Ann Brown  
Commissioner Mary Sheila Gall  
Commissioner Thomas H. Moore

ITEM:

Final Rule for Multi-Purpose Lighters

DECISION:

The Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to issue a final rule to regulate the child resistance of multi-purpose lighters and approved with specified changes a draft Federal Register notice issuing the rule. The Commission also voted unanimously (3-0) to approve a Federal Register notice issuing a final rule to regulate the child resistance of multi-purpose lighters under the Consumer Product Safety Act. (Ref: staff briefing package dated November 19, 1999.)

For the Commission:

Sadye E. Dunn  
Secretary

\* Ballot due December 10, 1999

*Chairman Brown Statement w/press release, attached*

# NEWS from CPSC

## U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

Office of Information and Public Affairs

Washington, DC 20207

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 10, 1999

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Release # 00-029

### CPSC Issues Federal Safety Standard for Multi-Purpose Lighters

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) today voted unanimously (3 to 0) to issue a federal safety standard for multi-purpose lighters. The new standard will require multi-purpose lighters to be child-resistant. The new standard is intended to reduce the risk of injury and death associated with fires started by children under age 5 playing with multi-purpose lighters.

Multi-purpose lighters are generally butane-filled lighters commonly used to light charcoal and gas grills, pilot lights, camping stoves, candles and similar objects. They also are referred to as utility lighters, grill lighters, fireplace lighters, micro-torches or gas matches.

Since 1988, CPSC has identified 237 fires reportedly started by children under age 5 playing with multi-purpose lighters. These fires resulted in 45 deaths, including 28 deaths of children under 5 years old, and 103 injuries. Since these are only the number of incidents reported to CPSC, they are considered to be a conservative indication of the true extent of the problem.

"I believe today's decision by the Commission is a bold and responsible step in fulfilling our mission to protect American consumers, particularly children, from death and injury resulting from consumer products," said CPSC Chairman Ann Brown.

To meet the requirements of the new federal standard, a multi-purpose lighter must have the same level of child-resistance as required in the Safety Standard for Cigarette Lighters. The child-resistant mechanism must operate safely, function for the expected life of the lighter, and not be easy to deactivate. The child-resistant mechanism also must automatically reset after use.

To give firms sufficient time to design, test and produce child-resistant, multi-purpose lighters, the new standard takes effect one year after its publication in the Federal Register. CPSC is aware of at least two child-resistant, multi-purpose lighters already on the market, and a number of other such lighters are in the final stages of development and testing.

#### Statement by Chairman Ann Brown

Final Rule on Performance Requirements for Multi-Purpose Lighters December 10, 1999

I voted today to issue a final rule to require that multi-purpose lighters incorporate child-resistant

features to help prevent their operation by children under age five. The Commission approved this new rule because it believes that multi-purpose lighters create an unreasonable risk of injury and death from fires started by young children.

There have been far too many fires, deaths and injuries resulting from children, particularly under the age of five, starting fires with multi-purpose lighters. The most tragic incidents involve children under five years of age who ignited 237 fires, resulting in 45 deaths and 103 injuries. Twenty-eight of the 45 fatalities were children younger than age five. The injuries caused by these fires were especially severe. Some of the surviving children under five received burns over 70 percent of their bodies, requiring extensive long term treatment.

Some have argued that parents should bear sole responsibility for leaving these lighters where children can get at them. I agree that parents must exercise this responsibility. But I always come back to the basic question: is the price for a parent's or care givers neglect the life of a child? I think not.

Requiring these devices to have child-resistant features will reduce the number of fires and the tragic deaths and injuries associated with these lighters. I believe today's decision by the Commission is a bold and responsible step in fulfilling our mission to protect American consumers, particularly children, from death and injury resulting from consumer products.

I would like to commend the staff, particularly Barbara Jacobson, who worked tirelessly to resolve several thorny technical issues throughout the rulemaking process. The unanimous vote by the Commission and strong support of the final rule by the lighter industry is a testament to the spirit of cooperation embraced by all parties.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission protects the public from unreasonable risk of injury or death from 15,000 types of consumer products under the agency's jurisdiction. To report a dangerous product or a product-related injury and for information on CPSC's fax-on-demand service, call CPSC's hotline at (800) 638-2772 or CPSC's teletypewriter at (800) 638-8270. To order a press release through fax-on-demand, call (301) 504-0051 from the handset of your fax machine and enter the release number. Consumers can obtain this release and recall information or report product hazards to [info@cpsc.gov](mailto:info@cpsc.gov).

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