

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

Log of Meeting

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SUBJECT: WCMA Technical Meeting on window covering cords

DATE OF MEETING: January 27, 2005

LOG ENTRY SOURCE: Caroleene Paul c.p.

DATE OF LOG ENTRY: February 8, 2005

LOCATION: Renaissance Los Angeles Airport, Los Angeles, CA

CPSC ATTENDEE(S): Caroleene Paul, ESME

NON-CPSC ATTENDEE(S):

Awaiting WCMA attendee list

SUMMARY OF MEETING:

Tom Marusak presented a review of 19 fatal window covering cord incidents that occurred in 2003 (16 incidents) and 2004 (3 completed reports so far). The original assessment and conclusions of the data analysis (of incidents from 1996 to 2002) essentially remains the same. The 3 main hazard scenarios associated with cords involve: 1) continuous cord or bead loop that does not have a tensioner, 2) inner cords, and 3) loops formed by manipulation of the cord (knots, tying the cord up, etc.). In addition, there was one incident in 2003 where the loop in the inner cord was formed by pulling **up** on the inner cord and lifting the bottom rail.

There is an incident that occurred in 2004 that is still under investigation. *When that report is finalized, CPSC will forward a copy to WCMA task group for review and inclusion in updated analysis study which will be presented at next technical meeting.*

Joe Jankowski and Caroleene Paul emphasized that voluntary standard action will affect future products but will not affect the millions of products that are currently in consumer use. It is essential that efforts to increase consumer awareness regarding the hazards and the available retrofits be continued.

Carolynn Jennings questioned if the blind cord safety information on CPSC's website is consistent with the current pictorials and information on the Window Covering Safety Council's (WCSC) website. *Caroleene Paul will verify the information provided on the CPSC website is consistent with that on the WCSC website.*

Tom Marusak presented draft wording for test parameters that would ensure that all possible configurations of a multiple cord break away device are tested. Rory McNeil presented a sample of a multiple cord break away device. *Manufacturers of break away devices will review the proposed requirements and comment at the next meeting.*

John Morris presented a modified warning label for use on shorter width horizontal blinds where labeling that meets the text requirements of the current standard will not physically fit on the bottom rail. *John Morris will draft a requirement in the standard that provides for this warning label exception.*

The Glossary of terms in the voluntary standard was reviewed. The definition for "inner cord" from the analysis study will be added to the voluntary standard.

The draft requirements for the adjustment of inner cord stop devices were reviewed. It was noted that there are no requirements for all products to even have installation instructions, let alone instructions for inner cord stop devices. The proposal will be modified to require "stock" products with inner cord stop devices to include installation and adjustment instructions.

Tom Marusak presented draft wording for a requirement that continuous cord loop products be made at least partially inoperable if the loop is not secured in a tension device. *CPSC staff will review the proposed requirement.* Tom presented a prototype spring loaded tension device that pinches the cord loop unless the device is secured under tension. If the user does not install the tension device, the device will remain attached to the cord loop and eventually hit the headrail during operation of the cords.

A different technology was also presented where equal pressure on the continuous loop (pressure on both sides of the continuous loop) causes the loop and clutch mechanism to detach from the headrail. Pulling the continuous cord in either direction will operate the product, but when a child places his/her head in the loop and applies pressure, the clutch and loop will detach. It was decided that the current wording for cord release devices can be modified to include this type of technology.

Section 4 thru 6 of the voluntary standard was reviewed and edits were made to clarify and/or simplify the existing wording and arrangement of requirements.

Caroleene Paul requested that the WCMA address the fact that current instructions with "stock" products contain outdated information such as suggesting that the consumer tie up the cords to keep them out of children's reach. A requirement will be added to the standard that information in product instructions be consistent with the most current standard. *C. Paul will pursue formal contact between CPSC and those companies that are currently providing outdated information in their product instructions.*

CPSC action items:

- provide report of last fatal blind cord incident in 2004 to WCMA for review
- review information on CPSC website to ensure agreement with information on the WCSC website
- review proposed requirement for tension devices
- pursue contact with known companies who publish outdated information in their product instructions

Next Meeting:

1st week in April at the EXPO meeting in Atlanta, GA