

United States
CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION
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MEMORANDUM

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SUBJECT: Data Summary on Halogen Torchiere-Style Floor Lamps

This memorandum provides recent data on incidents related to electric halogen torchiere-style floor lamps. The Injury or Potential Injury Incident File (IPII), the In-depth Investigation File (INDP), and the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS) were searched for incidents, deaths and injuries associated with electric halogen torchiere-style floor lamps.

The torchiere or pole lamps are free-standing floor lamps with a light fixture mounted on top of a pole about six feet tall. These lamps first became available in 1983 and have become increasingly popular in the 1990s. The tubular halogen bulbs range between 300 and 500 watts, which represents temperatures from about 970 degrees Fahrenheit for a 300-watt tubular bulb to 1,200 degrees Fahrenheit for a 500-watt tubular bulb. In comparison, a 75-watt incandescent bulb operates at about 260 degrees Fahrenheit and a 150-watt incandescent bulb operates about at 340 degrees Fahrenheit.

Halogen Torchiere-Style Floor Lamp Fires

From January 1, 1992 to March 30, 1998, CPSC has received 260 reports of incidents involving halogen torchiere-style floor lamps. Of these 260 incidents, 232 were fire-related. As shown in Table 1, the most common hazard scenario associated with these lamps was unintended contact between the lamp and combustible or flammable materials that resulted in fire (89). Some of the materials ignited by the lamps included curtains (31), bedding materials (15), ceiling and/or wood wall paneling (10), clothing (6), paper (10), other combustible materials (12), such as toys, towels, carpet,

and hanging artificial plants. Five of the fires did not report the type of combustible material that was ignited.

The second most common hazard scenario was the halogen bulb exploding or shattering and hot glass fragments igniting combustible materials (52). Fires resulting from electrical short-circuiting within the lamp were reported as the third most common hazard scenario (42). Other hazards included lamps being tipped or knocked over and igniting combustible materials such as clothing, bedding, sofas, and curtains (30), fires of unknown origin (19), lamp bulbs exploding without a fire occurring (9), victims receiving shocks and burns from the lamps (2), and other nonfire-related hazards associated with overheating of the lamp and construction of the lamp (17).

As shown in Table 1, there were an additional 19 incidents reported as involving “pole” or “high intensity” lamps. These lamps could be torchiere-style lamps since torchiere-style floor lamps resemble a pole and halogen lamps are sometimes described as “high intensity” lamps. Also, there were an additional 125 incidents reported as involving unspecified style halogen lamps. The unspecified style of lamp could include torchiere-style floor lamps, as well as other types of halogen lamps (e.g., desk lamps, work lights). These additional fires give a total of 404 incidents reported to CPSC from January 1, 1992 to March 30, 1998.

Deaths and Injuries

Included in the 232 fire-related incidents involving halogen torchiere-style floor lamps, there were 12 deaths. (See Table 2.) Ten of the deaths involved children. In one fire, an 18-month-old male and two other siblings were alone when the halogen lamp began to emit flames and smoke. The children tried to extinguish the flames with a sweatshirt. When the smoke detector sounded, the other two children escaped the fire but the 18-month-old did not. In another incident, two children were playing and knocked a lamp over onto a pile of clothing. All persons in the home escaped the fire except for an 18-month-old female who was trapped in her playpen. Five persons also suffered smoke inhalation in this fire. Another fire killed three children when a dog knocked over the lamp. Another child died in a fire that resulted from a short circuit in the wiring of the halogen lamp. One additional fire claimed the life of a three year old male; his mother and 17-month-old brother were injured when a halogen lamp ignited the wood paneling and curtains in the living room of their home.

Included in the 260 incidents involving halogen torchiere-style floor lamps, there were 84 reported injuries. Most of the injuries included smoke inhalation and burns from the lamp-related fires, and burns resulting from the hot shattered glass fragments. Table 2 shows that there were an additional six deaths and 15 injuries associated with unspecified styles of halogen lamps as well as two deaths and three injuries associated with “pole” lamps or “high intensity” lamps.

Table 1
Hazard Scenario by Type of Lamp
January 1, 1992 - March 30, 1998

Hazard	Number of Report Incidents			
	Halogen Torch / Floor Style Lamp	Halogen Lamp, Unspecified Style	Pole or High Intensity Lamp	Total
Total	260	125	19	404
Fire Involving Nearby Combustibles	89	43	6	138
Fire, Bulb Exploding	52	10	1	63
Fire, Electrical Short	42	13	3	58
Fire, Lamp Tipover	30	13	1	44
Fire, Nonspecific	19	23	3	45
No Fire, Bulb Exploding	9	5	0	14
Shock / Burn	2	9	1	12
Other	17	9	4	30

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission / EHHA, In-depth Investigation File, Injury or Potential Injury File, and National Electronic Injury Surveillance System.

Table 2
Deaths and Injuries by Type of Lamp
January 1, 1992 - March 30, 1998

Type of Lamp	Deaths	Injuries
Total	20	102
Halogen Torch / Floor Style Lamp	12	84
Halogen Lamp, Unspecified Style	6	15
Pole or High Intensity Lamp	2	3

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission / EHHA, In-depth Investigation File, Injury or Potential Injury File, and National Electronic Injury Surveillance System.