

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
LOG OF MEETING



2001 MAY -7 A 10:32

SUBJECT: Electric Overcurrent Protection

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DATE OF MEETING: March 19, 2001

LOG ENTRY SOURCE: William H. King, Jr., ES

DATE OF LOG ENTRY: March 21, 2001

LOCATION: Room 611, EWT

CPSC ATTENDEE(S): William H. King, Jr., ES

NON-CPSC ATTENDEE(S): Vincent Saporita, Cooper Bussmann

SUMMARY OF MEETING: Mr. Saporita requested the meeting with Mr. King to update Mr. King on the actions of Code-Making Panel 10 of the National Electrical Code Committee with regard to overcurrent protection for flexible cords and fixture wires. Mr. Saporita indicated that the panel acted to revise the current edition of the National Electrical Code (NEC) to remove the requirement that specified that No. 16 gauge (AWG) extension cords shall be permitted to be protected by a 20 ampere branch circuit overcurrent protection device. The panel rationale is that the requirements for extension cords should be left to the voluntary product standard for extension cords.

Mr. King indicated that the current code requirement, adopted in the 1984 edition of the NEC, had the effect of significantly improving the safety of



extension cords by increasing the minimum size conductor for extension cords from No. 18 to No. 16 AWG. This increase was supported by the CPSC staff. Mr. King expressed reservations about now removing this requirement. CPSC has been involved in recalls of non-certified (by an independent laboratory) extension cords with undersize conductors (less than No. 16 AWG), and the code provision was instrumental in establishing a baseline that represented a nationally-recognized minimum size considered suitable for use and relying on the circuit breaker or fuse in the building to adequately protect the cord.