

CPSC MEETING LOG
UPHOLSTERED FURNITURE

CPSC 6 (b)(1) Cleared

No Mfrs/Prvt. Blrs. of

Products Identified

Excepted by

Firms Notified

Comments Processed

All: 54

2A

Meeting Between: CPSC staff and representatives of the Business & Institutional Furniture Manufacturers Association Flammability Committee

Date of Meeting: March 5, 2001

Meeting Site: Sheraton Four Seasons Hotel, Greensboro, NC

Log Entry By: Dale R. Ray, Project Mgr., EC, (301) 504-0962 x1323

Participants: Richard Driscoll, BIFMA Executive Director
Randy Ruster, Herman Miller Co., Committee Chairman
David Walton, Haworth
Paul Hedinger, Kimball
Tom Donahue, Global Group
Tom Rademaker, Steelcase
Dick Stob, Intek
Cindy Schaaf, K-I
Chiquita Mays, Steelcase
Peter McDevitt, Absecon Mills
Joe Ziolkowski, Upholstered Furniture Action Council
Dale Ray, CPSC

Summary:

This meeting of the BIFMA Flammability Committee was held in conjunction with the American Furniture Manufacturers (AFMA) flammability workshop. BIFMA members produce or supply components for contract-market and other commercial furniture. Most of their products are distributed for non-residential use, although some may be sold to consumers through retailers or otherwise. Many of these products are designed to meet California Technical Bulletin 117. BIFMA's meeting agenda is attached.

The committee members discussed flammability standards activities of CPSC, the California Bureau of Home Furnishings & Thermal Insulation (BHF), ASTM and the Upholstered Furniture Action Council (UFAC). Mr. Ray presented an update of CPSC's work to develop a small open flame standard, and to forward a decision package to the Commission as soon as possible. He noted that the CPSC staff was monitoring the activities of BHF in its TB-117 revision project. In response to Mr. Ray's question, the BIFMA members said they would continue to meet any revision to TB-117.

The BIFMA members discussed options regarding the inclusion or exclusion of small office / home office (SOHO) furniture in the scope of a possible CPSC regulation.

Mr. Ray said that exclusively non-residential products probably would not be covered by a standard, though some home office products could be.

Mr. Donahue initiated a discussion of whether non-structural plastic shells of office chairs could be subject to the dust cover provisions of a CPSC standard. This issue was not completely resolved; Mr. Ray said the standard was intended to apply to fabric dust covers, and that he would clarify that intent.

Mr. Ziolkowski presented a report on UFAC's activities in the furniture industry's Small Open Flame Technical Committee (SOFTC). He also described upcoming revisions to the UFAC consumer information hang tag program.

There was additional discussion of the status of BIFMA's X5.7 cigarette ignition voluntary guidelines, which had not been revised since 1991. The group decided to suspend further work on this issue.

Mr. Ray asked the group to provide any new ideas regarding the definitions of upholstered furniture products to be covered under the scope of a standard. The BIFMA representatives said they would consider whether to provide a written submission on this topic.

Flammability Committee Report

- Last official meeting – 3/6/00 - Held in conjunction with AFMA Flammability Conference. This has become the default plan as it works well for most members.
- Activities:
 1. **California TB-117 Planned Revisions.** The current Cal TB-117 standard is 25 years old and up for revision. BIFMA has volunteered to help with the rewrite effort. Concern that there may be pressure to move in the direction of CPSC open-flame test, since CPSC does not appear to consider Cal 117, as it is, a meaningful test. (See action item below.)
 2. **California TB-133/New Hampshire.** NH may be considering legislative action requiring the use of the Cal TB-133 requirements, or something similar. BIFMA Government Affairs staff to check into the detail of any proposed legislation. Members are asked to contact BIFMA with any information they may have on the subject. Goal is to assure requirements, if instituted, are identical to TB-133.
 3. **Polyurethane labeling.** CPSC has been petitioned to require labeling of polyurethane foam. May be aimed at bulk shipments, but could require “pass-through” labeling citing fire danger of products containing this material. BIFMA staff to contact Polyurethane Foam Association for additional information. Members asked to report to BIFMA regarding labeling of foam as received or shipped.
 4. **CPSC open-flame test.** Continuing to follow CPSC activities relating to open-flame ignition test. BIFMA continues to maintain a watchful eye on these activities. Significant work is underway by the National Academy of Sciences regarding health/environmental impact of fire retardants that may be used to treat textiles. The General Accounting Office is continuing its economic assessment via cost-benefit analysis. BIFMA will be attending upcoming American Textile Manufacturer’s Association (ATMI) meeting as part of ongoing monitoring of this issue.
 5. **Underwriter’s Laboratory Fabric Recognition Program.** Reports from BIFMA members suggest a varied understanding of this program and lack of uniformity in application between member companies. BIFMA will be working with UL to gain clarity/consistency relative to this program. As a separate initiative, based on member interest, BIFMA will encourage and support efforts to add fabric blends to this program.

Flammability Committee Report
Denver Engineering Committee

6. **Tunnel Test, Canada vs. US.** The differences between the US and Canada versions of the tunnel test and associated differences in building code requirements have caused some members confusion and/or added costs in gaining product approvals. The Building Codes committee is following up on this issue and will be analyzing the best approach to seeking harmonization and/or pursuing equivalency in these requirements.

- **Open Issues:**

Future of BIFMA X5.7 Flammability Standard. The X5.7 standard was last revised in 1991. It has many elements of the California TB-117 standard in it. Cal TB-117 is in the revision process (see #1 above). The flammability committee is looking for direction regarding the future of the BIFMA standard:

- ⇒ Should it be dropped in favor of the revised TB-117?
- ⇒ Should it be held in its current state pending the upcoming TB-117 revision.
- ⇒ Should work begin immediately to revise and update the standard regardless of the current TB-117 activity?