

# MEETING LOG UPHOLSTERED FURNITURE

**Meeting Between:** CPSC staff members and representatives of the American Furniture Manufacturers Association (AFMA)/Upholstered Furniture Action Council (UFAC)

**Date of Meeting:** March 14, 1995

**Site of Meeting:** CPSC Engineering Laboratory, Gaithersburg, MD

**Meeting Topic:** CPSC testing program and research protocol development for upholstered furniture small open flame hazards

**Log Entry By:** Dale R. Ray, EC  
Project Mgr., Upholstered Furniture

**Participants:**  
AFMA/UFAC: Joe Ziolkowski, UFAC Executive Dir.  
Russ Batson, AFMA/Washington  
Hugh Talley, UFAC technical consultant  
CPSC: Dale Ray, EC  
Margaret Neily, ES  
Rikki Khanna, ES  
Linda Fansler, LS  
Jim Hoebel, ES  
Other Non-CPSC: Kay Villa, ATMI  
Tom Fritz, Armstrong (Thomasville)

**Summary:**

The purpose of this meeting was to bring interested industry representatives up to date on CPSC's plans and activities regarding flammability testing of upholstered furniture, and to exchange technical views on a variety of test protocol development issues. CPSC staff presented an overview of these plans and activities, distributed and discussed a preliminary draft research test protocol, and performed some demonstrations of chair flammability tests using the draft protocol.

The first phase of CPSC's planned testing involves full scale, small open flame chair testing using a research test protocol. This will be followed by a series of small scale tests to evaluate the small open flame ignition performance of components of currently manufactured furniture, based on existing California and British test methods. These tests are designed to provide data to support possible future standards development, either by industry or by CPSC.



After a background statement by Mr. Ray, Ms. Neily noted the staff's plan to conduct a series of tests, and to use the resulting data to characterize small open flame ignition resistance and to develop promising technical approaches to reducing fire risks. She also stated that CPSC would obtain comments on the draft research test protocol from interested parties before initiating full scale open flame tests.

Mr. Khanna described the staff's draft research test protocol for full scale, small open flame research tests. The draft protocol calls for ignition source placement in three different areas: 1) dust cover (bottom); 2) skirt (if applicable); and 3) seating area (cushion/back and cushion/arm junctions). Mr. Khanna responded to questions about the gas flow rate of the burner used to simulate a match or lighter ignition source, and the length of time for flame impingement on the various locations to be tested.

The staff emphasized that the full scale research test protocol and the test methods to be developed for small scale tests are intended to provide data to evaluate the small open flame ignition performance of current furniture. Test methods incorporated into any future voluntary or mandatory standard would not necessarily be based on CPSC's research test protocol or any other existing test method, although elements could be considered.

Ms. Fansler described the test facilities and performed a number of demonstrations on a chair purchased for such tests. The assembled industry representatives raised a number of technical issues related to the research test protocol and to the test apparatus, discussed with the staff the rationale for various provisions, and made several constructive suggestions. The staff solicited continuing comments and suggestions to improve the protocol. UFAC's recent cushion tests using a methenamine pill ignition source were also discussed.

The industry representatives agreed to review the draft research test protocol and provide comments within a few weeks; the CPSC staff agreed to consider various alternatives within the protocol and to keep the industry informed on the progress of the program. It was also agreed that additional laboratory visits would probably be useful in maintaining the working contacts between CPSC and the various industry and other interested outside parties.