

# MEETING LOG

## UPHOLSTERED FURNITURE

CPSA 6 (b)(1) Cleared  
No Mfrs/PrvtLbrs  
Products Identified  
Excepted by  
CPSA/DTI Firms Notified  
Comments Processed

1993 APR -7 A 7:50

**Meetings Between:** CPSC staff and representatives of the U.K. Department of Trade & Industry (DTI), and various DTI contractors

**Date of Meetings:** December 11-12, 1997

**Site of Meetings:** DTI headquarters, London;  
Cambria Mobil, Bridgend, S. Wales;  
S. Glamorgan Trading Stds. Office, S. Wales

**Meeting Topic:** Upholstered Furniture Flammability

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

**Participants:** DTI: William Trott, Consumer Safety Unit  
Peter Mason, Director, CSU  
Margaret Harding, Cambria Mobil  
David Hawkridge, Mobeltest Laboratories  
Peter Crocombe, S. Glamorgan Trading Stds.  
Keith Paul, RAPRA Technology Ltd.  
Les Wilkinson & Janusz Kukula, Mydrin Ltd.)  
Gary Stevens, Univ. of Surrey

CPSC: Dale Ray, Project Manager

Other: Patrick Jacobs, Great Lakes Chemical N.V.  
Patricia Martin, Albright & Wilson UK Ltd.  
Russ Batson, AFMA  
James Norris, AFMA toxicology consultant

### Summary:

A representative of the CPSC staff met with DTI officials and others to discuss various aspects of the U.K. experience under the furniture flammability regulations of 1988/89. Dr. Trott of the DTI attended all meetings and hosted the December 12 meeting at DTI headquarters in London.

Ms. Harding of Cambria Mobil (a subsidiary of Christie-Tyler, a major UK furniture manufacturer) described the firm's products and experience in meeting the UK regulations. She guided a tour of the Cambria manufacturing plant, showing materials (such as flame retardant fabrics) and constructions required to meet the UK regulations.

Dr. Hawkrige of Mobeltest Quality Services (a former subsidiary of Cambria Mobel, now independent and conducting flammability tests for various manufacturers and for the DTI) described and demonstrated test procedures used to establish compliance with the regulations, and discussed uses and characteristics of various FR treatments used in upholstery fabrics and fillings. He also provided some contacts for obtaining additional test samples of FR fabrics.

Mr. Crocombe of Trading Standards Office in South Glamorgan, South Wales (an area with several furniture manufacturers) outlined compliance procedures under the UK regulations, and described his enforcement experience. He noted that his office often relies on compliance testing performed by Mobeltest. Specific, occasional compliance problems and the (generally cooperative) relationships with individual manufacturers and retailers--both are subject to the UK regulations--were also discussed.

Dr. Paul of RAPRA, which conducts tests and related technical research under contract to DTI, described his experience with different kinds of fabrics, interliners and other materials, and described his participation in a CEN-sponsored round robin project to look at the efficacy of the CEN test methods (which are based on the UK's). He also talked about problems associated with some results of the ongoing EU "grid" study of fabric and filling material flammability. There was also some discussion of the positive public reaction to the UK regulations, and of consumer acceptance of FR materials in complying furniture. He noted that concerns about FR chemical toxicity--particularly ecotoxicity, or environmental issues--arose relatively recently, and were not considered when the regulations were promulgated.

Drs. Williams and Kukula of Mydrin, a manufacturer of brominated FR backcoatings widely used in the UK and elsewhere in Europe, described the effectiveness of these backcoatings in meeting the UK regulations. They showed a number of treated fabrics and discussed issues such as cost, application methods, durability, aesthetics, and differences between perceived toxic hazards (primarily related to the use of antimony trioxide) and data in the scientific literature on toxicity, exposure and bioavailability. They noted that public perceptions of toxic hazards have driven the development and increasing use of non-antimony-containing brominated FRs. They also discussed the applicability of different FRs to different fabrics, e.g., immersion treatments of predominantly cellulosic fabrics.

Dr. Stevens of the University of Surrey described his recent work, under contract to DTI, on FR chemical usage in consumer products. He provided an abstract of the draft study report, which is still in governmental review). The report considers life-cycle risk assessment, risk balancing, and related topics applicable to FR chemical usage. He also discussed a German

(DIN) report on FR chemicals and the DTI response to that report in the context of the (voluntary) European toy standard (EN-71) and the EC Existing Substances directive. The results of the analysis strongly support the use of FRs. He also discussed specific chemical toxicity issues, including the ubiquity of antimony and other compounds alleged to be toxic.

At these meetings, Dr. Trott presented some general information about the mission and activities of the DTI, and discussed fire hazard data in the context of the UK furniture regulations. He also discussed the positive reaction to the regulations among industry and consumers. His overall conclusion from his experience was that the regulations have been very successful in the UK, and that they are providing significant fire safety benefits to consumers in the UK.

Mr. Ray gave an overview of CPSC's furniture flammability activities, and discussed some data needs, particularly with respect to UK comparative fire loss data, test results of UK upholstery materials, and potential FR chemical toxicity. Dr. Trott and Mr. Mason agreed to provide such data as may be available, and to set up additional industry contacts in the UK among manufacturers or fabric finishers that might be willing to share information on or samples of treated fabrics.