



**U.S. CPSC's
Consumer Product Safety Information Database**

Consumer Specialty Products Association (CSPA) Conference

The Consumer Product Safety Commission FROM A to Z (and Beyond)

September 24, 2010
Hyatt Regency Hotel
Bethesda, Maryland

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U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

Searchable Public Database

Welcome!

INTRODUCTION

Good morning!

My name is Ming Zhu. I'm the Phase I Project Manager for the Consumer Product Safety Risk Management System at the CPSC. That's a long way of saying I'm managing the team that's creating our new searchable public database. Over the next half hour, I'm excited to be talking to you about the database and how it will help keep consumers informed and their families safe. This database is one of the top priorities of the Commission and covers three goals: **consumer education and outreach**, **government transparency**, and **fair but vigorous enforcement**.

There are also several projects in this program that are complementary to the database that we are completing in Phase I. These projects include:

- IT Governance
- Rulemaking
- Redesign of our main website, CPSC.gov.

- and Public engagement.

You'll hear more about these later.

I want to talk with you about how we think the database will work and why we're so excited about it. But there's one caveat: I'm an IT guy, not a lawyer, and the views I express today are mine alone. They have not been reviewed by -- and do not necessarily reflect the views of -- the Commission.

GOALS

Let's talk about our goals for a moment. Once we're finished, our database will empower consumers and reduce the risk of death and injury to consumers – **something we are really excited about**. The database will give consumers access and information to product safety in a quicker manner so that they can be informed about what is in the marketplace. Once we have followed all the statutory requirements, this information will be publicly available and searchable on our website. That will be **a critical tool for the public to know about when responding to hazards**.

We are also excited that the database will benefit stakeholders in the manufacturing and retail communities. If manufacturers or private labelers register to use the database, it will provide them with rapid access to the reports of harm we receive about the products they manufacture or label. Quick access to reports of harm regarding their products will allow them to respond earlier and to quickly remove any hazardous products from store shelves and retail websites.

BACKGROUND

Before we can talk about the future, let's make sure we understand how we got here. As many of you may know, Congress passed the Consumer Product Safety Act in 1972 establishing the

Commission. Congress charged the CPSC with protecting the public against unreasonable risk of injury associated with consumer products, and we have thousands of types of consumer products under our jurisdiction.

Basically, we have jurisdiction over nearly every product in the typical home except what's in your refrigerator and most things in your driveway. Pretty much everything else falls to us. As you can imagine, we receive tens of thousands of incident reports each year from health care professionals, industry, public safety workers, and ordinary consumers. As we review these reports, we look for patterns and try to focus on the greatest hazards. We enforce our regulations by removing hazardous products from store shelves and imposing civil penalties, and work with manufacturers in many ways, including initiating product recalls, to ensure consumer safety. This business model has reduced the risk of injury and death to consumers. In fact, over the past 30 years, CPSC has contributed substantially to the decline in the rate of deaths and injuries from consumer products.

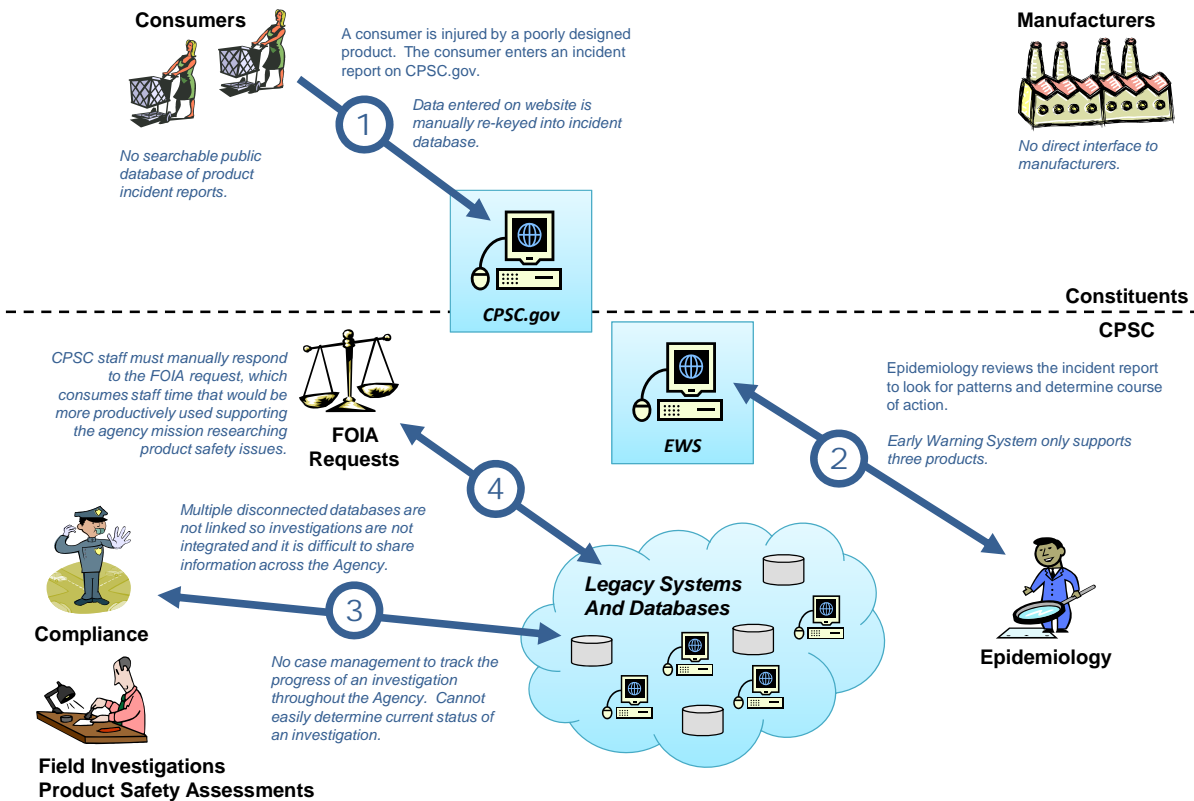
Every year however, our work becomes more challenging for at least **three** reasons:

- **First**, there are many more types of products in the typical home. Most of our homes have a lot more gadgets than they had ten years ago. Looking on the floors of my kids' rooms, it is clear that the toys kids have today are very different than those that I used to play with *and there are a lot more of them!* This means that we have the responsibility to monitor **hundreds** of additional **types** of products that didn't exist when CPSC was created. Those products are more complicated and typically made of parts from multiple manufacturers.
- **Second**, the enactment of CPSIA has given us more responsibilities in the rulemaking and enforcement area;
- **Third**, manufacturing has gone global since CPSC's inception. That means we now have to monitor more closely the entry of consumer products at our **borders**, and not just consumer products entering our **stores**. In 1972, most toys were made by American

manufacturers. Now roughly **ninety percent** are made outside the U.S. We not only have to educate foreign manufacturers about U.S. standards, but we also have to work with U.S. Customs and Border Protection to catch dangerous products as they enter our ports. This presents the CPSC with logistical, communications, and enforcement challenges far greater than anything envisioned in 1972.

CURRENT STATE

Current State – Outmoded Technology



Let me show you how we manage and investigate a hazard report in our current state, and how those limitations impact our work. Currently, when a consumer is injured by a hazardous product, they file an incident report at cpsc.gov (1). Our Epidemiology Directorate then reviews the incident report to look for patterns and to figure out the next steps (2). Staff members have to

search in at least five different disconnected databases to look for similar cases. And since we lack case management software, it is not easy to track the progress of an investigation of a single product (3). Finally, if any members of the public want to see what information we have on a product, they have to file a FOIA request, so we spend a lot of staff time complying with FOIA requests, time that could be used to research product safety issues (4).

That's pretty much how we've been doing things. We have an extremely dedicated and talented staff working with an outdated and stovepiped IT system that limits our ability to respond as quickly as we want to. And product information is not transparent to the public except through a FOIA request.

In addition to these internal limitations, we face those three major challenges I mentioned:

- an increasingly complicated marketplace,
- expanded responsibilities,
- and globalized manufacturing.

One major tool we should take greater advantage of is the internet. Obviously, the internet can be a really powerful tool to share information and to empower consumers. So let me describe some features of the new law and our future state business model.

CPSIA

Congress passed the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act, or CPSIA, in the summer of 2008. CPSIA gave the 35-year old Consumer Product Safety Act a facelift and gave the CPSC additional resources, and new authority to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century marketplace.

In CPSIA's section 212, Congress mandated us to create a searchable public database of reports of harm that we receive from:

- consumers
- local, state, and Federal government agencies
- health care professionals
- child service providers, and
- public safety entities.

Reports of harm must be transmitted to manufacturers for comment. And the whole database must be linked to our CPSC.gov website.

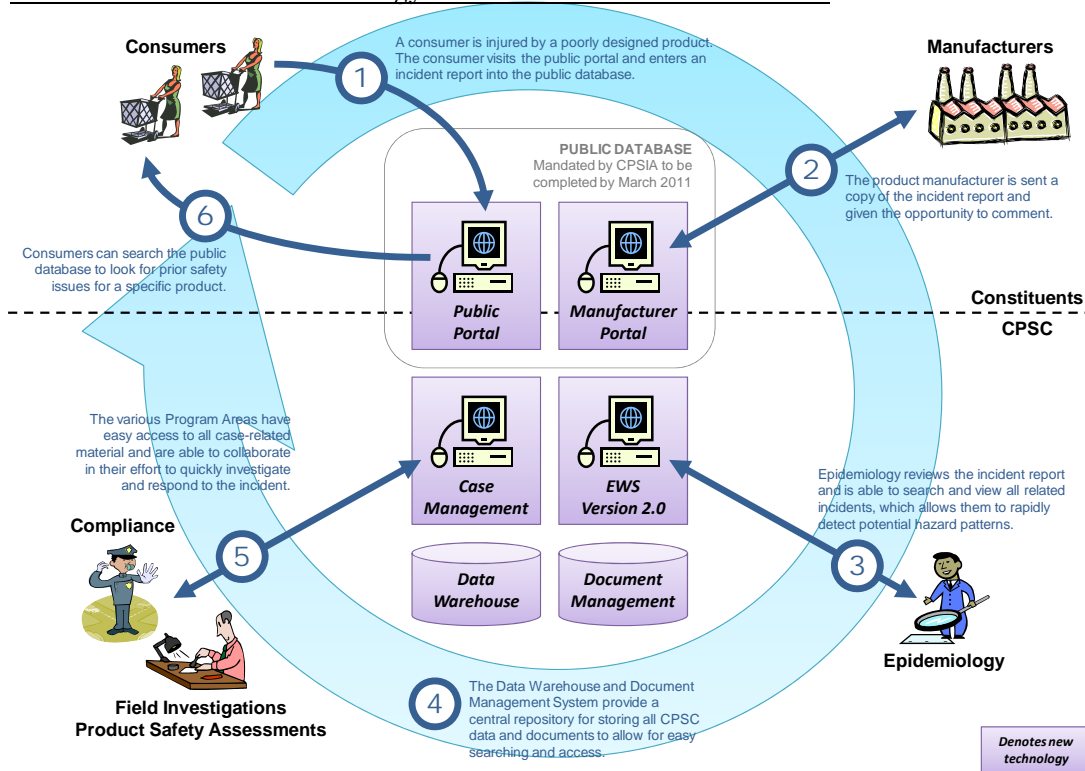
Congress also directed the CPSC to “upgrade and improve” our information technology systems and we are using the development of the database to implement some of the long-overdue business process, systems, and database modernizations that I mentioned earlier.

We need these modernizations to help us handle the increased number of incident reports we expect to receive after the launch of the public database.

FUTURE STATE

Let's update the business model that I showed you earlier to give you an idea of what we have in mind once the public database is online and the rest of our IT modernizations are complete.

In the Future – New Technology Protects Children and Families



We'll go around the numbers clockwise. At One (1), the consumer reports a product hazard through our public database.

At Two (2), the manufacturer is sent a copy of the report and given an opportunity to comment.

That way, at Three (3), CPSC's Epidemiology Directorate can begin their research with the benefit of additional information from the manufacturer. Plus, our expanded Early Warning System will accelerate our ability to detect patterns in hazard reports from many different types of products.

At Four (4), our enhanced case management system will help CPSC staff access relevant research into similar cases far more quickly.

At Five (5), with modernized IT systems, all our departments can quickly access all relevant information and respond more quickly to protect consumers.

And finally, at Six (6), consumers will have access to the hazard reports, manufacturer comments, safety alerts, and recall information when making marketplace choices empowering them to make informed decisions.

NEW BUSINESS MODEL – EMPOWERED CONSUMERS

This is a huge change for us. Essentially, with the creation of the searchable public database and our overall IT modernization, we're changing our business model to improve our ability to protect consumers.

Our new model is proactive, and it emphasizes prevention, not just recalls. It relies on stakeholder education and government transparency. It gives consumers the information they need to make smart choices, and it allows them to be with us on the front lines, to be partners in our efforts to keep their families safe. It also allows industry involvement much sooner than before. By engaging early in the process, manufacturers and labelers can respond to incident reports, and identify product hazards, more expeditiously, thereby increasing the safety of their products.

Once the database is up and running in March 2011, in most cases the public will be able to see the incident reports we receive, and any response from manufacturer. They'll have access to more immediate information about products than they do now – so they can make more informed decisions. We will still launch investigations and issue recalls as appropriate, but consumers will also have lots of new information about products whether or not we take any additional action.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

You can see we don't think of this as simply an IT project. This is a project that affects our entire agency and improves how we keep consumers safe. So to make sure that the public database is as useful as possible to our end users, we have already begun outreach to many of the stakeholders who will be using the database. That's one reason you're hearing this presentation today. But it didn't start today. In November of last year, we held public hearings. The Commission invited stakeholders, including CSPA staff, to come in and tell us how they expected to use the database and how they would like to see it work.

And then in January, Commission staff brought dozens of key stakeholders -- manufacturers, retailers, and consumer advocates -- to our headquarters to participate in workshops. We covered details like what the reporting form should look like, how manufacturers would be notified of reports of harm; and how the CPSC should handle any inaccurate information. database. We have also issued a proposed rule regarding the database, and we've received comments from stakeholders including CSPA. The Commission will be considering a Final Rule later this year.

All that feedback from stakeholders has been invaluable for the Proposed Rule and the design of Phase I of the CPSRMS project. Later this year, we hope to solicit further input from end users, and that input will be used to inform Phase II of our database project and our overall IT modernization. I will talk in a few minutes about some of the transformational things we are planning in Phase II to take advantage of the new information in the public database, as well as how we plan to tie it all together and work more effectively.



News

September 11, 2009

Report to Congress:
[Implementation of a Searchable Consumer Product Safety Incident Database](#)

Commissioners



October 28, 2009
Keynote Address,
ICPHSO/International
Cooperation on
Product Safety
Toronto, Canada

Inez Tenenbaum
Chairman
Robert Adler
Commissioner
Thomas Moore
Commissioner

Nancy Nord
Commissioner
Anne Northup
Commissioner

Creating a Safer America

The **Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA)** became law on August 14, 2008. Through CPSIA, Congress gave the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) powerful new tools to protect consumers and their families. Our Commissioners, staff, and stakeholders are engaged in the implementation of CPSIA through a process we call the **Consumer Product Safety Risk Management System (CPSRMS)**. CPSRMS will help us bring together consumer advocates, manufacturers, retailers, and the general public to create dialogue and track our progress. [Learn More...](#)

Hearings and Workshops

The goal of the workshops will be to promote an open dialogue between CPSC and key constituents on matters important to the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act. Key constituents will include manufacturers, retailers, applications providers, community groups, and other groups that have a stake in the future of consumer safety.

Upcoming Events | [Complete Schedule](#)

February						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17 8:00am	18	19	20

In the meantime, we have launched a new website, SaferProducts.gov, at which you can track what's going on with our database development. We hope you will use it to keep your staff, your customers, and your members in the loop as we move forward. We'll also use the site to preview some of the pages and functionality of the database before we go live with it in March 2011. This site will become the public face of the database when it's launched. We hope you will use the site to help your members, customers, and staff members understand the new business model, to be aware of the information that will soon be at their fingertips, and to be prepared to use the new tools that will be available to them.

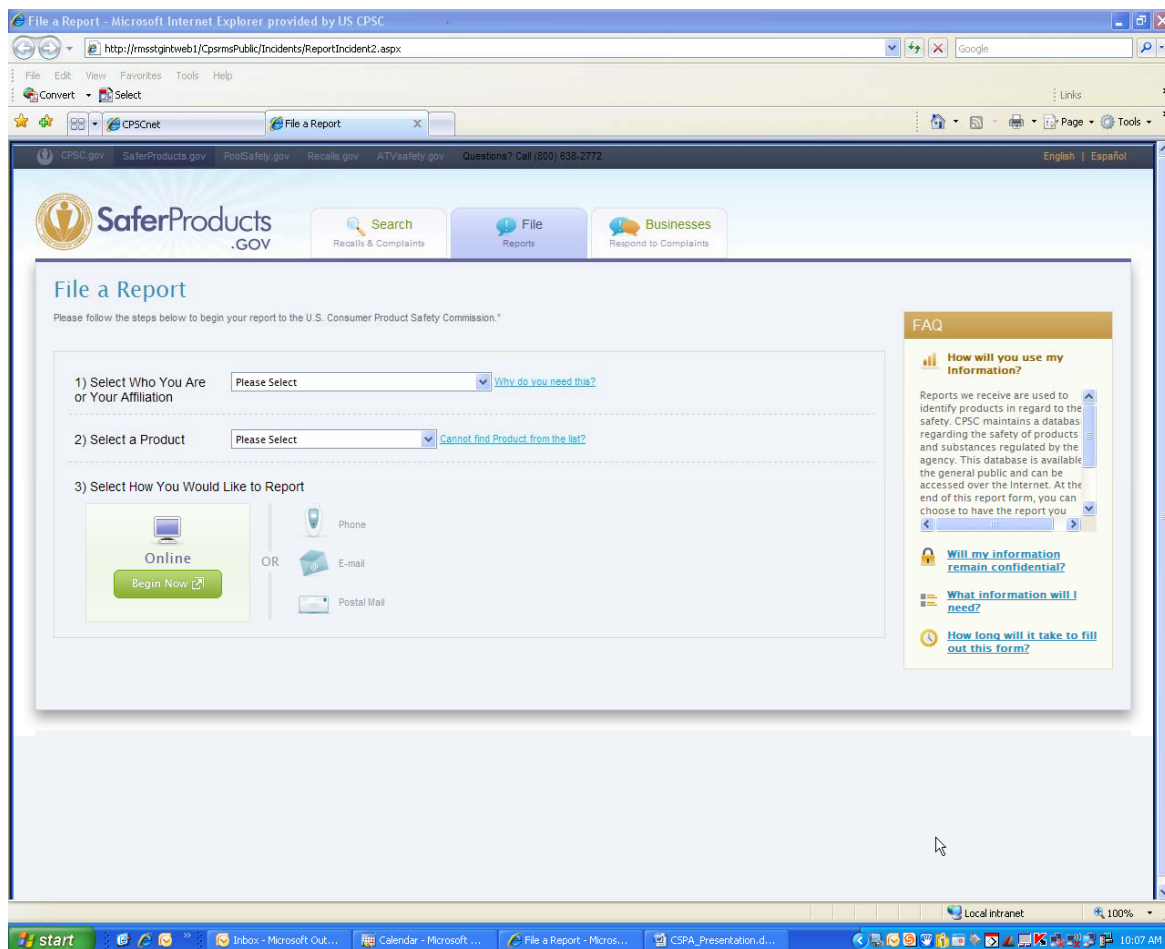
SCREENS

So now that you have the background and you know where we're headed, I want to share with you a little sneak preview into what the database might look like and how it might function. The final database you'll see in March of next year may not look exactly like this. We're still incorporating feedback. But these slides give you some idea of what we're looking at, and [this](#)

version is making its debut here today. And previews like these will be posted on SaferProducts.gov as we move forward.

Let's say that next year, a consumer logs on to SaferProducts.gov to report an injury.

First, we'll find out what type of product caused a problem so we can put them in touch with the appropriate agency. If, for example, the problem is caused by a car or truck, food or drugs, or business practices, we can't help them, but we'll put them in touch with the right people.



Then, if it's one of the thousands of types of products we regulate, we'll ask the consumer how they want to submit a report: using our online form, via email, by phone, or by postal mail. We'll encourage them to submit an online form, but we'll also have information about our phone hotline, our mailing address, and downloadable forms they can email us, both in English and Spanish.

When they agree to complete the online form, they might be the injured party or a family member, or a public safety official, or a medical examiner or coroner.

Report Incident Wizard - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by US CPSC

http://mstgintweb1/CpsrmsPublic/Incidents/ReportIncidentWizard.aspx?ProductCategory=3&Affiliation=2

Report

What Happened | People & Injuries | Product | Contact | Review | Consent & Submit

Tell Us What Happened

Please provide us as many details as you can. More information helps CPSC investigate your Report. * = Required

* I am reporting An actual incident or injury involving an unsafe consumer product.
 The potential for an unsafe consumer product to cause an incident or injury.

* Incident Description

Incident Date: 09/02/2010 Estimated

Incident Location: Home / Apartment / Condominium

Address Line 1: 10 Pine St.

Address Line 2:

City: Philadelphia

State / Province: PA

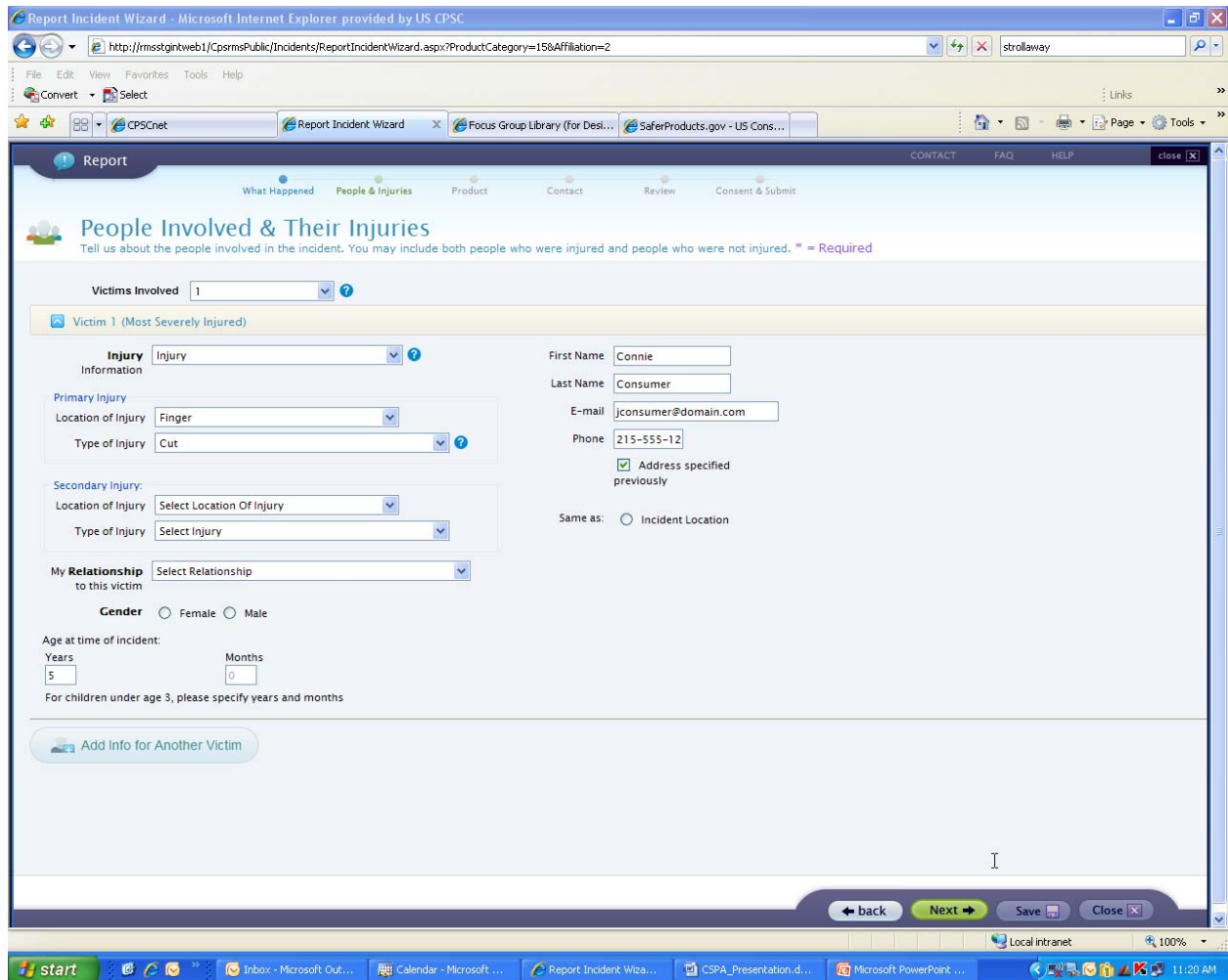
Postal Code: 19102

Country: United States

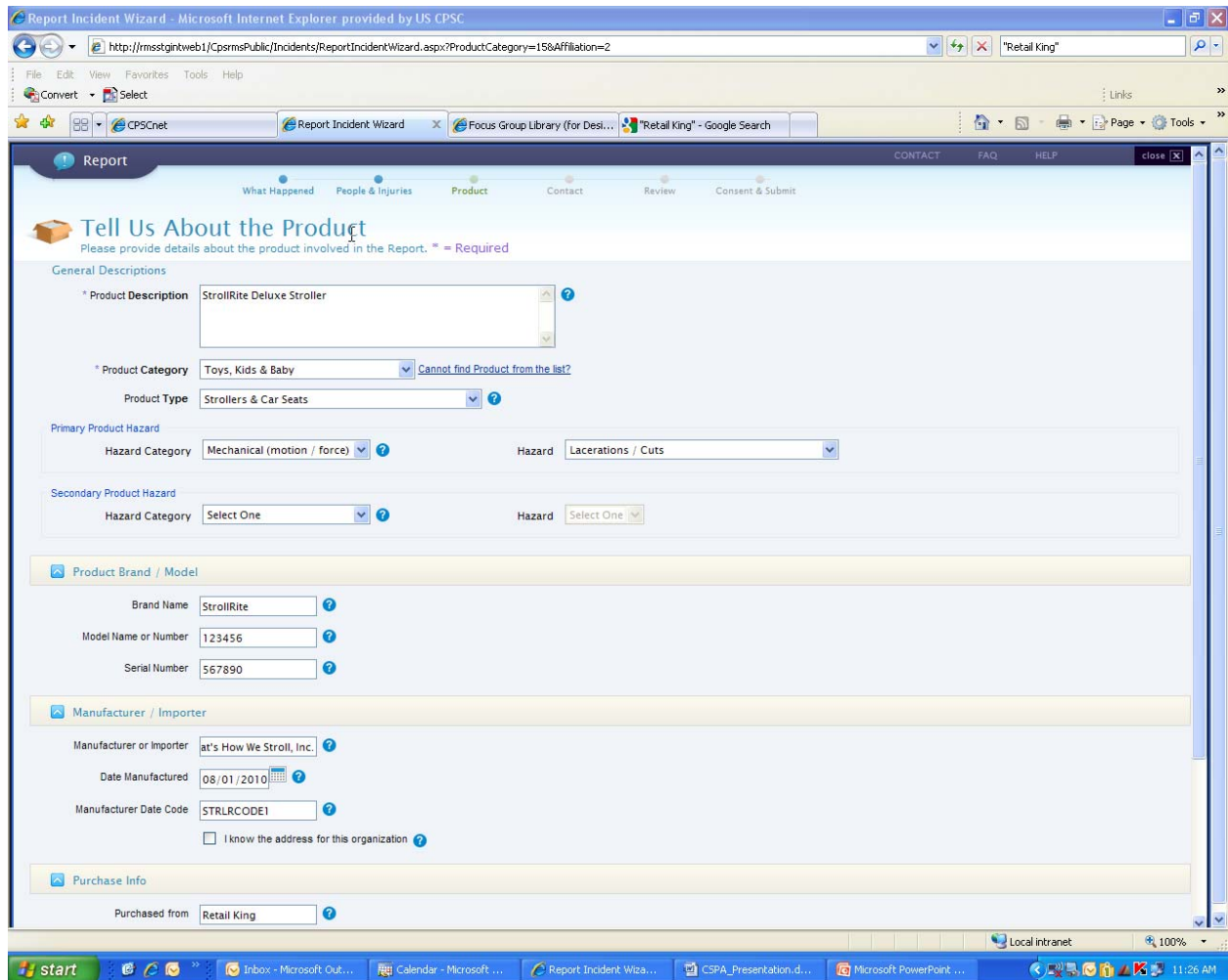
This is my home address

back Next Save Close

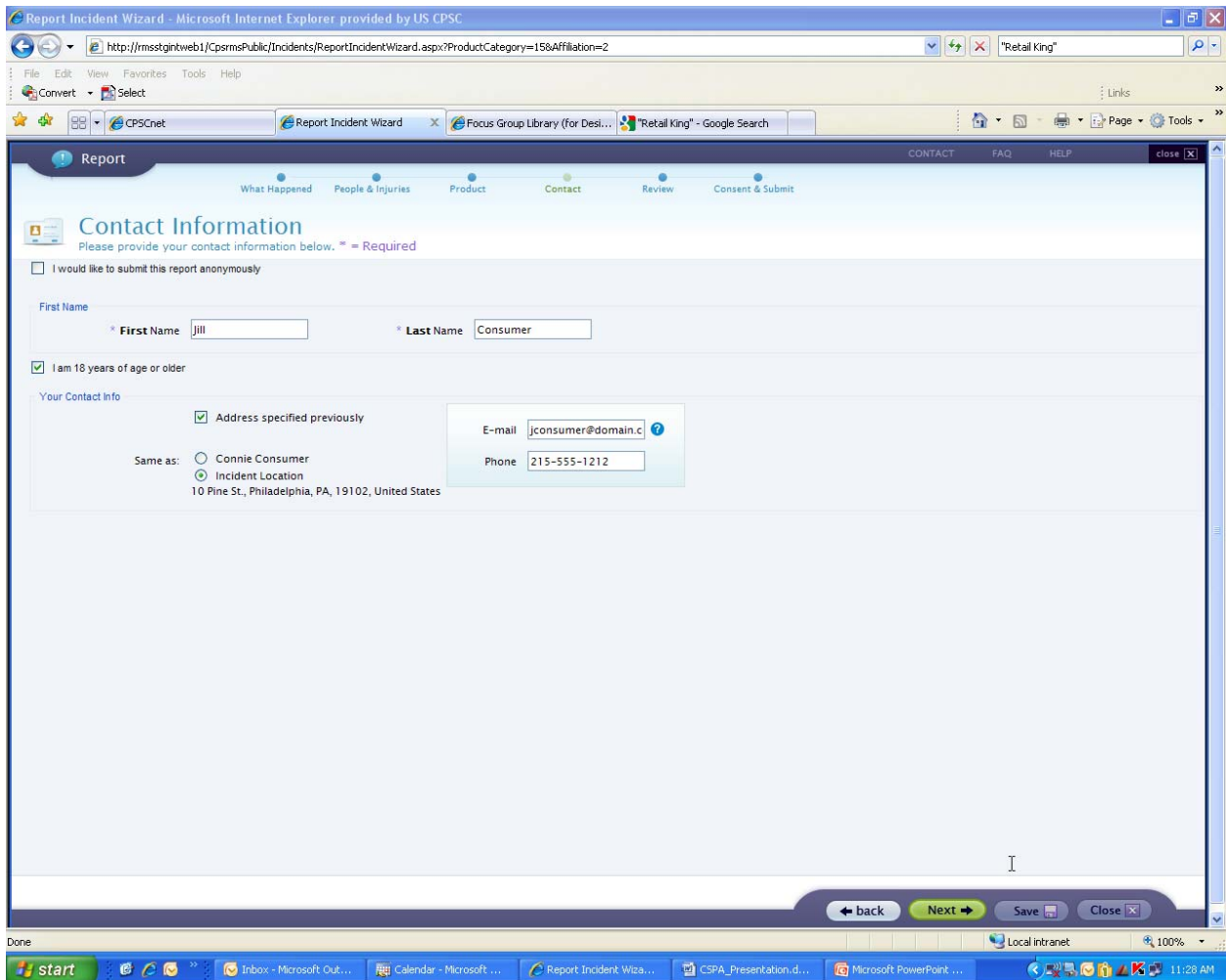
start | Inbox - Microsoft Out... | Calendar - Microsoft... | Report Incident Wiza... | CSPA_Presentation.d... | Local intranet | 100% | 10:28 AM



Then we'll capture the information on the product.

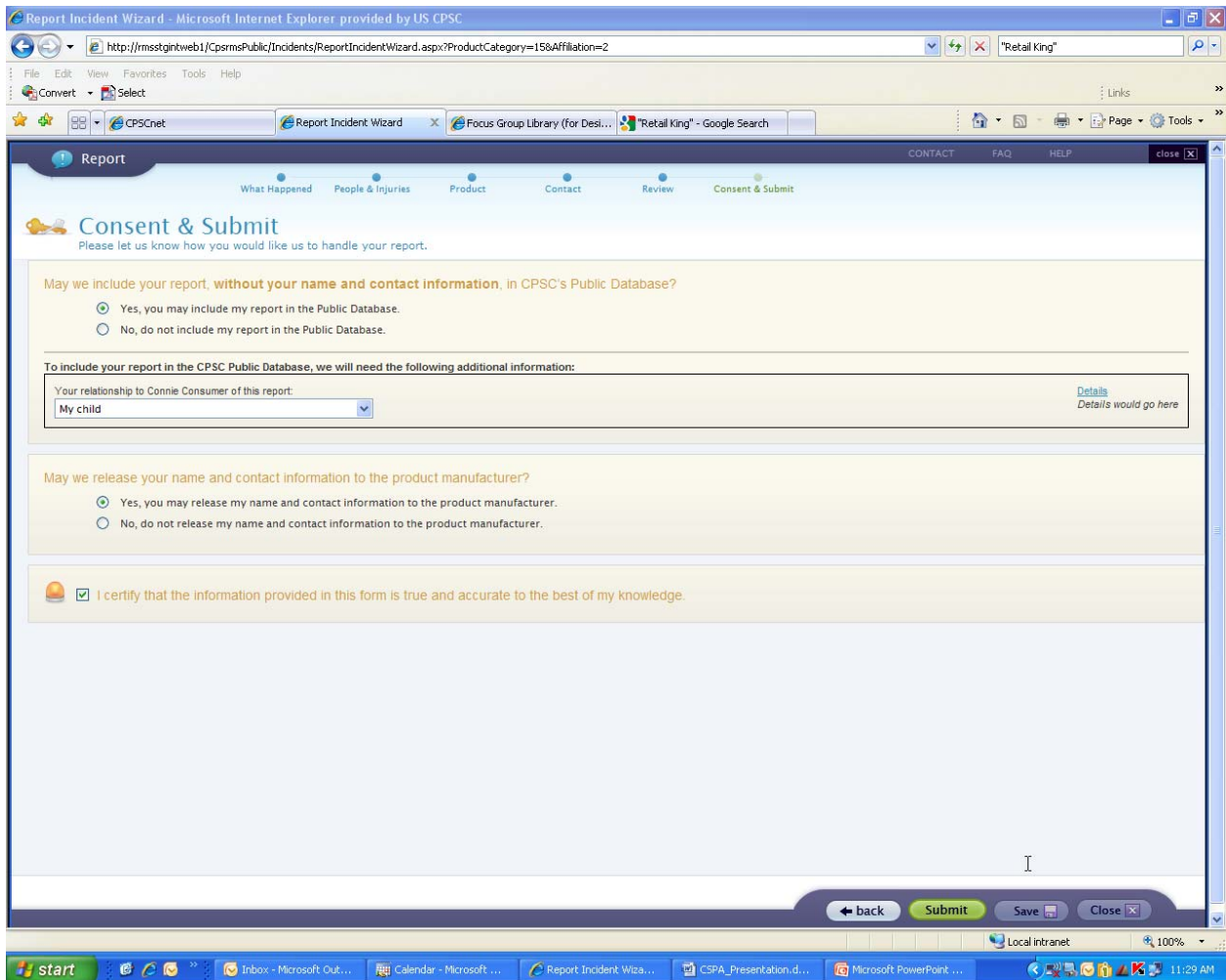


We'll find out the brand, and the manufacturer, and, and other information about the product if possible.

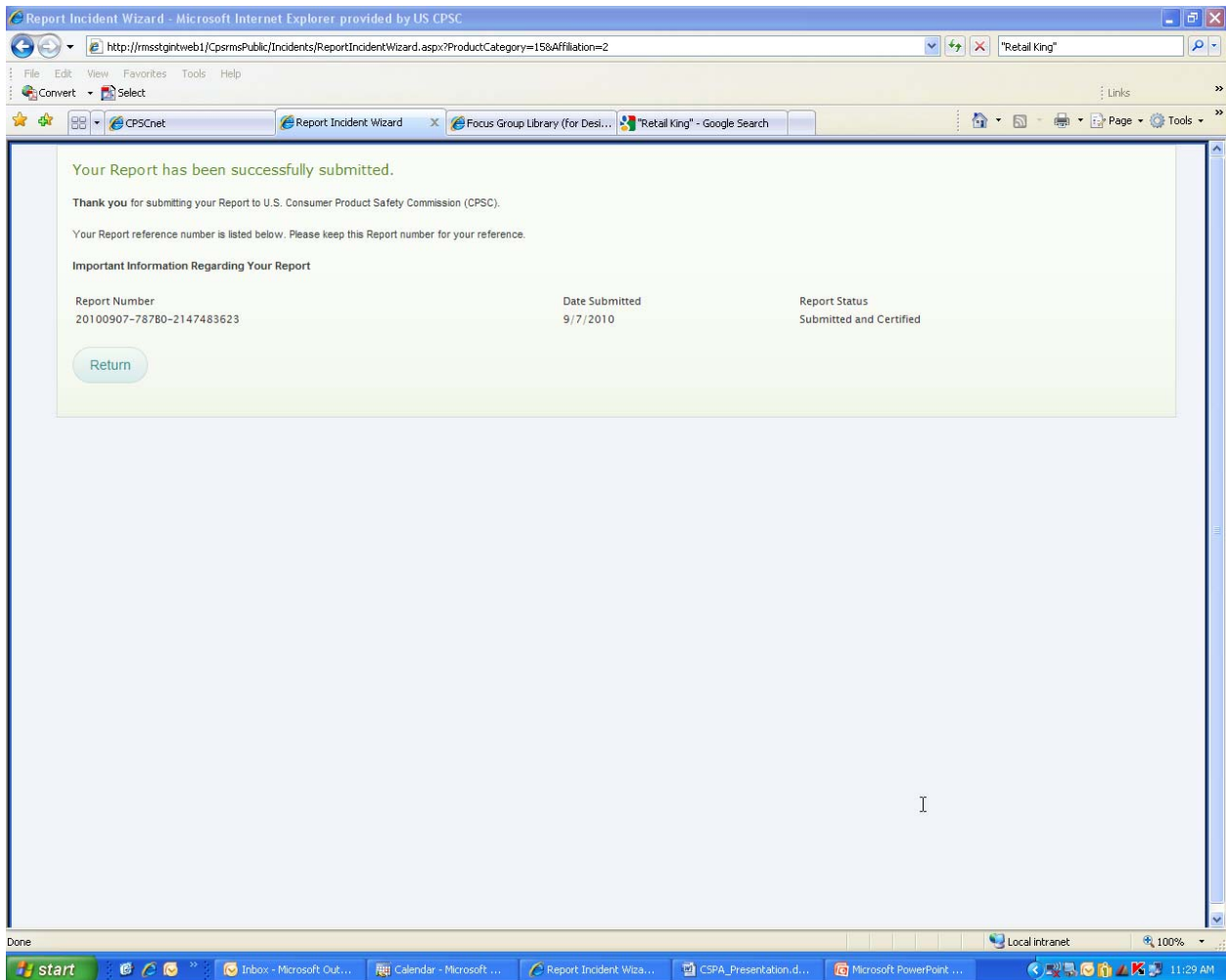


Then, we'll capture their contact information.

If we have a problem with any of the data the consumer has submitted, we may ask them to go back and fix it, and we may suggest possible corrections.



And before they submit the data to us, we'll ask them to review it to make sure it's correct, to verify that it is accurate, and to consent to its use in the public database.

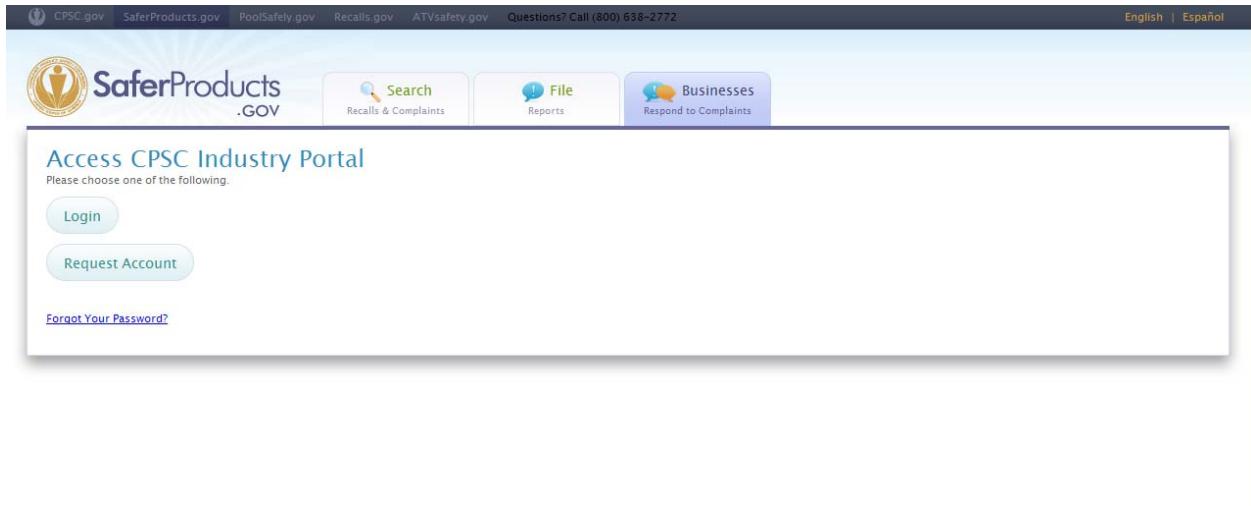


Once they verify and submit the report, they'll receive a Report Number and a pdf copy of their report in their email.

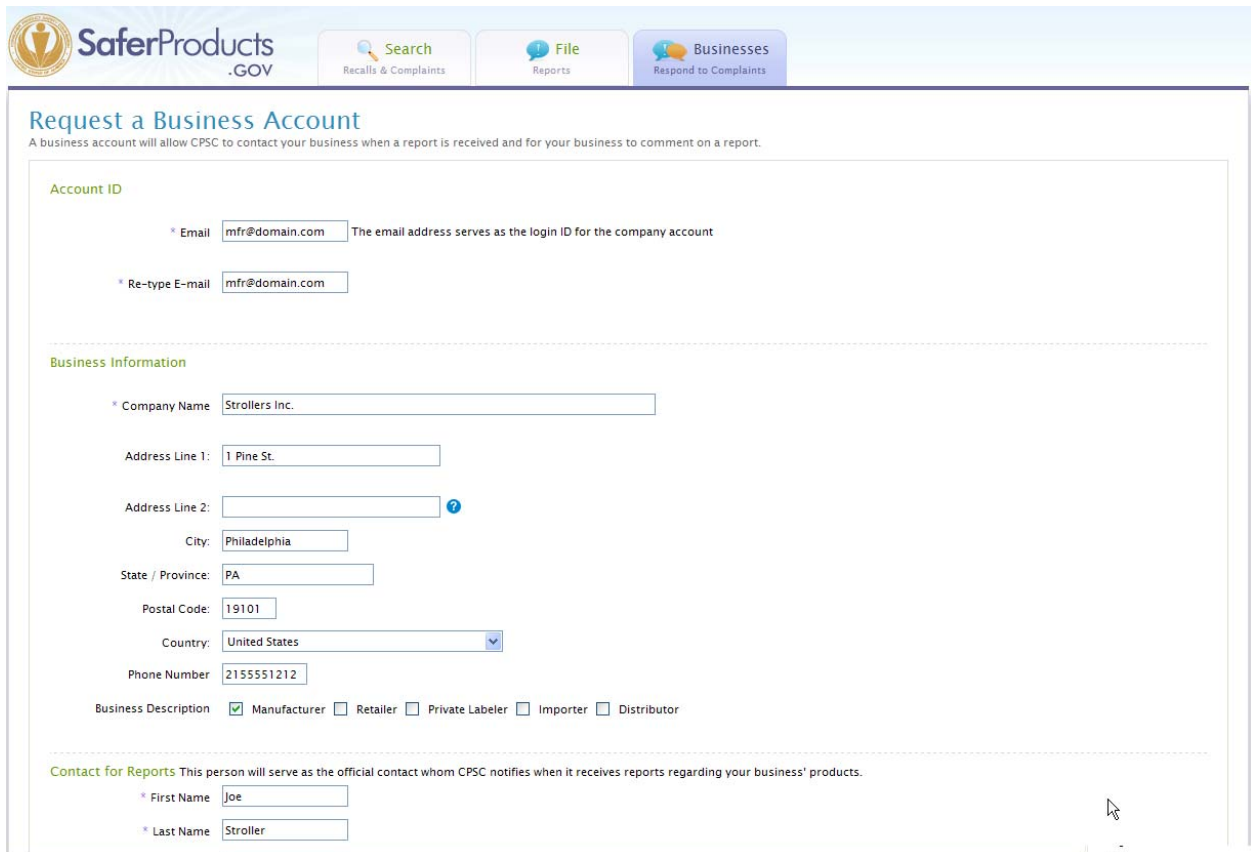
MANUFACTURER COMMENT

After a report is submitted, the CPSC Intake Team will code the incident report and scrub it of any Personally Identifiable Information. Then the incident report will be sent to the manufacturer. Under CPSIA, the CPSC has five business days to send the report to the manufacturer, and the manufacturer has the option to provide its comments to the report. Ten days after the report was sent to the manufacturer or private labeler, the incident report, along with any comments from the manufacturer, will be published into the public database.

So how would you read and comment on an incident report about a product associated with your company? First, you enter the Industry Portal from SaferProducts.gov.

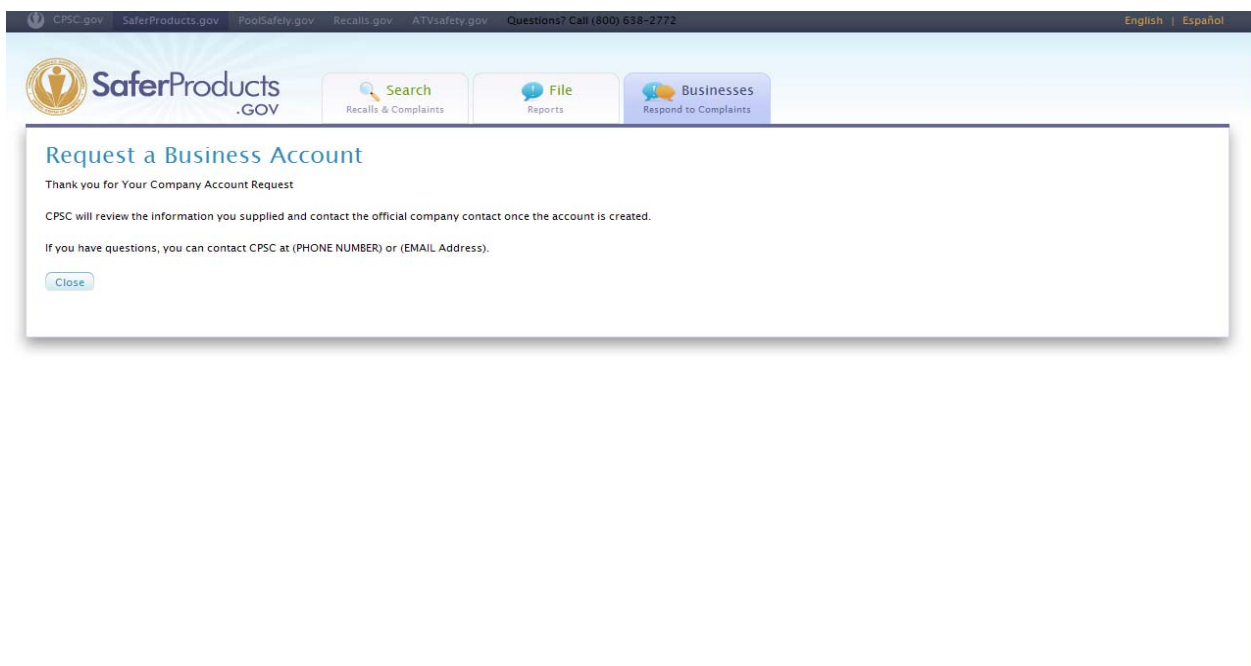


Then, you'll click on Request a Company Account so you can receive and comment on information related to your company.



Then, at the next screen, you will complete the form to provide CPSC with the name, address, and phone number of your business. We need to know whether you are a manufacturer, retailer, importer or distributor, or more than one of those. And we need you to supply an email address that can serve as your company's ID for logging on in the future.

Next, you'll fill in the name, title, phone number, and email address for the Official Company Contact for your business. You can also specify up to five additional emails of people who will get copied if CPSC contacts the Company Contact.



Then, you'll see a confirmation that we have received your request to create a company account with the Company Contact you submitted. Staff at the CPSC will review the request and send a confirmation email to the contact identified once the account is approved.

Welcome: THucker

Authentication Profile

User Login Federation

CPSRMS Login

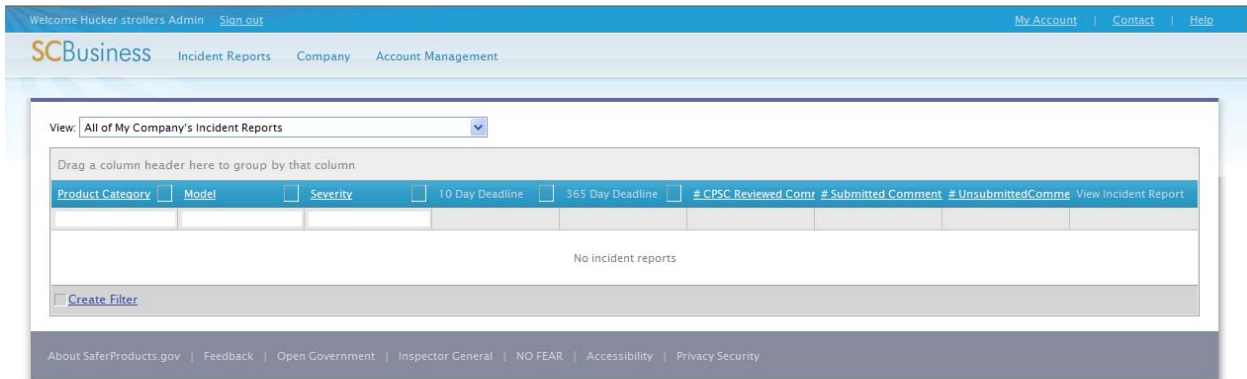
Username:

Password:

Login

So that's a summary of the possible registration process. Once you have registered and the account is approved, we will send the Official Company Contact an email with a link asking them to create a password. Once you click that link, you will be directed to this screen where you can create a password.

Then you sign in with the new password to log onto the system.



We are planning the database so that you may see each incident report that is associated with products made by your company. You will also be able to see if any, described in each incident. And you will be able to see whether your company has already submitted a comment on each incident, and how long you have to comment before the incident report will be published in the public database.

We hope to bring the industry registration form online later this fall, and we encourage all CSPA members to register your companies as soon as the registration form goes online. Registering your company is the first step to enable you to view reports associated with your products, and to allow you to comment on the reports.

BENEFITS

So that's how the database will be filled with reports and manufacturer comments.

Let me talk a bit about the benefits the public will receive from the public database. Obviously, as more reports come in and become available to the public, consumers will have a tremendous new tool to assess whether the consumer products in their households, or the ones they are considering buying, may have safety concerns.

But manufacturers and private labelers will benefit from the new database as well. First, they will be notified quickly whenever CPSC receives a report of an incident involving one of the manufacturer's or private labeler's products. Second, manufacturers and private labelers will have the opportunity to view reported product safety information more quickly, and they will have the opportunity to comment. Third, the rapid nature of both the consumer report and manufacturer comment will mean a more rapid response to incidents. In the event that a hazardous product makes its way into stores or online retailers, this faster response may mean fewer injured consumers.

DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

You might be wondering when all this is going to happen, so let me explain where we are in the process. One year ago this month, Chairman Tenenbaum delivered a report to Congress on this program. Congress gave us a deadline of eighteen months from that date to bring the database online. We spent last fall and winter gathering the specific requirements for the database in consultation with stakeholders from industry, consumer groups, and local and state governments.

The database design team began designing the database last spring. They've been working hard all summer and are now ironing out the final details. Testing began in the third quarter, and will continue until the planned release in March of 2011.

As I mentioned, we published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, which you can easily access from SaferProducts.gov. We have received comments on the proposed rule, and we are currently reviewing the comments. The Commission will vote on the final rule before the end of the year.

PHASE I

I also want to mention a few other related initiatives:

First, we are planning a major redesign of our main website, CPSC.gov. We have thirty years of accumulated research, recall notices, alerts, educational materials, and other documents, so at this point it's time to clean up and organize the site so it's easier to navigate. When consumers, businesses, and staff go to our website, they need to be connected with the **right information they need the first time**.

Second, and related to this, and one of the tools that we will use to better organize all our documents is work in an area called Taxonomy. We're working hard to put all those documents I mentioned in our archives into the right boxes with the right labels. As those screenshots showed, we are going to ask better questions up front to help categorize the information we receive automatically as much as possible.

Finally, we are expanding our presence in social media. We will use social media to alert more consumers and businesses to updated information at both SaferProducts.gov and the new CPSC.gov. We want consumers to see our sites as the best places to go to find information about the safety of products in their homes and stores.

So... we are categorizing vast amounts of information, making it available through an easier to use website and more powerful search tools, and using social media to draw consumers to our websites. This is all part of our new overall emphasis on education and transparency, which are priorities for Chairman Tenenbaum, the Administration, and Congress. If we do it right, we're going to reduce the risk of death and injury in an increasingly challenging environment.

INVOLVEMENT

So you can see that we've put a lot of thought into the creation of the public database and our overall IT modernization in an effort to improve public access to product safety information

related to the use of consumer products, and to enable the CPSC to better manage its data, in the dynamic 21st century global marketplace.

But we're a small agency, and we need your help to make this effort successful. We are asking you to communicate with your members and your staff and your customers about the public database and help them understand what a powerful tool it will be. We hope you'll talk about it at your board meetings and conferences, in your newsletters and on your websites. And, most important, we ask you to urge CSPA members and any other companies you deal with -- whether they are manufacturers, importers, or private labelers -- to register online at our Industry Portal once the Industry Registration form goes online later this year at SaferProducts.gov. If they don't register, we might not be able to find them if one of their products is named in an incident report. If we can't find them, they might not be able to respond quickly to an emerging product hazard. And they might miss the opportunity to add a comment to the incident report, such as to clarify that the product named in the incident report is not their product, or to identify confidential information for redaction before it is made public.

CONCLUSION AND THANKS

So that's it. I want to thank you for your attention this morning. I know how hard it can be to stay awake during a lecture about a database. You all did pretty well.

Let me open it up now to see what questions might be on your mind.