

Consumer Product Safety Commission

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greater involvement of Commission personnel in the standards activities of domestic and international voluntary standards organizations. However, such involvement might present an appearance or possibility of the Commission giving preferential treatment to an organization or group or of the Commission losing its independence or impartiality. Also, such involvement may present real or apparent conflict of interest situations.

(c) The purpose of this subpart is to further the objectives and programs of the Commission and to do so in a manner that ensures that such involvement:

(1) Is consistent with the intent of the Consumer Product Safety Act and the other acts administered by the Commission;

(2) Is not contrary to the public interest;

(3) Presents no real or apparent conflict of interest, and does not result in or create the appearance of the Commission giving preferential treatment to an organization or group or the Commission compromising its independence or impartiality; and

(4) Takes into account Commission resources and priorities.

(d) Commission employees must obtain approval from their supervisor and the Office of the Executive Director to be involved in voluntary standards activities. They must regularly report to the Voluntary Standards Coordinator regarding their involvement in standards activities, and provide copies of all official correspondence and other communications between the CPSC and the standards developing entities.

(e) All Commission employees involved in voluntary standards activities are subject to any restrictions for avoiding conflicts of interest and for avoiding situations that would present an appearance of bias.

§ 1031.10 Definitions.

For purposes of describing the level of involvement in voluntary standards activities for which Commission employees may be authorized, the following definitions apply:

(a) *Membership*. Membership is the status of an employee who joins a voluntary standards development or advisory

organization or subgroup and is listed as a member. It includes all oral and written communications which are incidental to such membership.

(b) *Employee involvement*. Employee involvement may include the active, ongoing involvement of an official or employee in the development of a new or revised voluntary standard pertaining to a particular consumer product or to a group of products that is the subject of a Commission voluntary standards project. These projects should be those that are approved by the Commission, either by virtue of the agency's annual budget or operating plan, or by other specific agency authorization or decision, and are in accord with subpart A. Employee involvement may include regularly attending meetings of a standards development committee or group, taking an active part in discussions and technical debates, expressing opinions and expending other resources in support of a voluntary standard development activity. It includes all oral and written communications which are part of the process. Employee involvement may also involve maintaining an awareness related to general voluntary standards projects set forth in the agency's annual budget or operating plan or otherwise approved by the agency.

(c) *Observation*. Observation is the attendance by an official or employee at a meeting of a voluntary standards development group for the purpose of observing and gathering information.

§ 1031.11 Procedural safeguards.

(a) Subject to the provisions of this subpart and budgetary and time constraints, Commission employees may be involved in voluntary standards activities that will further the objectives and programs of the Commission, are consistent with ongoing and anticipated Commission regulatory programs as set forth in the agency's operating plan, and are in accord with the Commission's policy statement on involvement in voluntary standards activities set forth in subpart A of this part.

(b) Commission employees who are involved in the development of a voluntary standard and who later participate in an official evaluation of that

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standard for the Commission shall describe in any information, oral or written, presented to the Commission, the extent of their involvement in the development of the standard. Any evaluation or recommendation for Commission actions by such employee shall strive to be as objective as possible and be reviewed by higher-level Commission officials or employees prior to submission to the Commission.

(c) Involvement of a Commission official or employee in a voluntary standards committee shall be predicated on an understanding by the voluntary standards group that such involvement by Commission officials and employees is on a non-voting basis.

(d) In no case shall Commission employees or officials vote or otherwise formally indicate approval or disapproval of a voluntary standard during the course of a voluntary standard development process.

(e) Commission employees and officials who are involved in the development of voluntary standards may not accept voluntary standards committee leadership positions, e.g., committee chairman or secretary. Subject to prior approval by the Executive Director, the Voluntary Standards Coordinator may accept leadership positions with the governing bodies of standards making entities.

(f) Attendance of Commission personnel at voluntary standards meetings shall be noted in the public calendar and meeting summaries shall be submitted to the Office of the Secretary as required by the Commission's meetings policy, 16 CFR part 1012.

§ 1031.12 Membership criteria.

(a) The Commissioners, their special assistants, and Commission officials and employees holding the positions listed below, may not become members of a voluntary standards group because they either have the responsibility for making final decisions, or advise those who make final decisions, on whether to rely on a voluntary standard, promulgate a consumer product safety standard, or to take other action to prevent or reduce an unreasonable risk of injury associated with a product.

(1) The Commissioners;

(2) The Commissioners' Special Assistants;

(3) The General Counsel and General Counsel Staff;

(4) The Executive Director, the Deputy Executive Director, and Special Assistants to the Executive Director;

(5) The Associate Executive Directors and Office Directors;

(6) The Assistant Executive Director of the Office of Hazard Identification and Reduction, the Deputy Assistant Executive Director of the Office of Hazard Identification and Reduction and any Special Assistants to the Assistant Executive Director of that office.

(b) All other officials and employees not covered under §1031.12(a) may be advisory, non-voting members of voluntary standards development and advisory groups with the advance approval of the Executive Director. In particular, the Commission's Voluntary Standards Coordinator may accept such membership.

(c) Commission employees or officials who have the approval of the Executive Director to accept membership in a voluntary standards organization or group pursuant to paragraph (b) of this section shall apprise the General Counsel and the Voluntary Standards Coordinator prior to their acceptance.

(d) Commission officials or employees who desire to become a member of a voluntary standards body or group in their individual capacity must obtain prior approval of the Commission's Ethics Counselor for an outside activity pursuant to the Commission's Employee Standards of Conduct, 16 CFR part 1030.

§ 1031.13 Criteria for Employee Involvement.

(a) Commission officials, other than those positions listed in §1031.12(a), may be involved in the development of voluntary safety standards for consumer products, but only in their official capacity as employees of the Commission and if permitted to do so by their supervisor and any other person designated by agency management procedures. Such involvement shall be in accordance with Commission procedures.