

LOG OF MEETING

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SUBJECT: Use of Plastics in Electrical Appliances.

DATE: June 13, 1995

PLACE: 1275 K St., N.W.
Washington, D.C.

DATE OF LOG ENTRY: June 16, 1995

SOURCE OF LOG ENTRY: William H. King, Jr., ESEE *W.H.K.*

CPSC PARTICIPANT: William H. King, Jr., ESEE

NON-CPSC PARTICIPANTS:

John Blair, DuPont
H. Pat Toner, The Society of the Plastics Industry, Inc.
(SPI)
Kenneth G. Adams, SPI
Robert Davidson, Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL)
Rick Mulhaupt, National Fire Protection Research Foundation
Bill Tomes, Tomes, Van Rickly and Assoc.
Rich Gottwald, SPI
Kurt Reimann, BASF
G. Degenkolb, Consultant
Bruce Navarro
Todd Laydenberg, Product Safety Letter
and members of the SPI Coordinating Committee on Fire Safety

SUMMARY:

At the invitation of the SPI Coordinating Committee on Fire Safety, Mr. King gave a brief overview of the CPSC staff concerns regarding the use of plastics in electrical appliances and the activities that have been initiated with Underwriters Laboratories in this area.

Mr. King noted the history of nonconductive materials that provide insulation and mechanical support for energized parts, from the use of naturally-occurring materials such as marble, soapstone and rubber, through the period when thermosetting polymeric materials began to be used, and up to more recent times when thermoplastic polymeric materials began to be substituted for the more traditional thermosetting materials.

Mr. King indicated that the primary characteristic of the thermoplastic materials of interest at this time is that these materials can distort at temperatures within the range produced by failing electrical components. This becomes significant when a failing component can increase the risk of a fire hazard.

Mr. King stated that the CPSC staff has seen examples of field incidents that may have involved the misapplication of thermoplastic polymeric materials in listed electrical consumer products that led to unsafe conditions. As a result, CPSC staff initiated a dialogue with UL staff members several months ago and

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out of this discussion a course of action was outlined by UL. Interested parties that have been briefed on this activity include SPI, the Assn. of Home Appliance Mfrs. and the National Electrical Mfrs. Assn.

The first task of the UL plan involves the exchange of incident data from CPSC to UL. To date, five CPSC engineering staff analyses of incidents have been provided to UL and to interested parties. On the basis of having provided reports of this type, the second task will be forming a committee of interested parties to review the data and define any needed research. The next task will be to conduct the defined work. The final task will involve analyzing the results and preparing recommendations to improve product safety requirements.

Mr. King indicated that he would keep all interested parties informed of progress as the UL plan is implemented.