



The latest developments in international toy safety standards

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The international standards for toy safety in the International Organization for Standardization's (ISO) 8124 series are often crucial for selling toys outside Europe and North America. In many countries, it is necessary to demonstrate that toys meet standards laid down in the national legislation. This year several standards have been updated and new standards have been introduced. Additional standards are expected to be published next year. Here is a summary of the latest developments related to ISO toy safety standards.

ISO 8124-1 on mechanical and physical properties

A revised version of ISO standard 8124-1 will be published by the end of 2014. This version of the standard includes two amendments, which revise requirements and test methods for 'projectile toys, rotors and propellers' and 'toy fasteners with dome-shaped ends' (e.g. bolts, screws and pegs). The requirement for age warnings has also been updated (in line with the European standard) so that it will be sufficient to indicate one hazard even if a toy contains several hazards for children under three years of age, e.g. both small parts and small balls.

Other aspects of the standard are currently being evaluated in parallel with work carried out by the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) in order to set uniform requirements for cords, straps, electrical cables, etc.

In addition, requirements that can be found or that will be included in European or American standards are also being considered for inclusion into ISO 8124-1, such as:

- legibility of warnings
- clarification about when paper and paperboard can present a small parts hazard
- cords and drawstrings in toy disguise costumes
- jaw entrapment (in toys with handles)
- sound-producing toys
- fibrous filling in soft-filled toys

A detailed comparison of ISO 8124-1, the related European standard EN 71-1 and the American ASTM standard (parts relating to mechanical risks) is being conducted with a view to proposing amendments that will further align requirements and test methods in the three standards.

ISO 8124-2 on flammability

An updated version of ISO 8124-2 was published in 2014. The new version is identical to the corresponding European standard EN 71-2.

ISO 8124-3 on the migration of certain elements

In 2014, an amendment to the 8124-3 standard was published. This amendment specifies that, under certain conditions, raw material testing (and not only finished product testing) can be used to show compliance. 8124-3 specifies migration limits for eight heavy elements from toy materials.

ISO 8124-4 on activity toys for domestic use

A revised version of the 8124-4 standard was also published in 2014. It now includes requirements for paddling pools, based on the requirements in the corresponding standard EN 71-8, and requirements for inflatable activity toys such as small bouncing castles for home use.

Draft ISO 8124-5 on total concentration of certain heavy metals in toy materials

The standard 8124-5 is expected to be published in 2015. It will specify methods to determine the total content of eight heavy metals in toy materials. If tests show that the total concentration of a substance is lower than the migration limit, the more costly migration test can be avoided since the migration of a substance from a toy material can never be higher than the total content of the substance in the material.

ISO 8124-6 on certain phthalate esters in toys and children's products

The ISO 8124-6 standard, which was published in 2014, lays down test methods (not limit values) to determine compliance with the requirements on the maximum total content of certain phthalates (used as plasticisers) in toy materials, that are in place in many parts of the world including Europe. The US Consumer Product Safety Commission is currently evaluating this standard with the view to approving it for demonstrating conformity with US requirements for phthalates in toy materials. New work has now started to include further phthalates and possibly also test methods through a future amendment (the standard currently covers six phthalates, which are regulated in toys in the EU and US, for example).

Draft ISO 8124-7 on finger paints

The final vote on the standard on finger paints will take place shortly and it is likely to be published in 2015. These test methods are fully based on the European standard for finger paints (EN 71-7).

ISO 8124-8 technical report on age determination guidelines

A guide on how to determine the suitable age group for a toy was published in 2014. The European Committee for Standardization (CEN) is now considering publishing the technical report as a European document.

About TIE

Toy Industries of Europe (TIE) is the trade association for the European toy industry. The toy industry is highly international and is one of the most dynamic business sectors in Europe. Over 99% of the sector is composed of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), which have less than 50 employees. Members of TIE include companies as well as national associations from Bulgaria, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, the UK and the Nordic region. TIE membership is open to both companies with a presence in Europe and national associations from European Union Member States (including candidate countries).

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