



Intensive international standardisation work for toy safety

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Greater global coordination of toy safety standards is promoted in order to ease the burden of meeting differing requirements in different standards.

There are many countries where the International Organisation for Standardisation's (ISO) standards for toy safety are linked to legislation. Examples include Australia, China, Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina, New Zealand and Malaysia. Manufacturers supplying the European Union (EU), the USA and any of the abovementioned countries must therefore meet the requirements of European, American and international standards.

It would of course be considerably easier if there was a worldwide standard. However, this is difficult to achieve as both US and European standards are based on legal requirements (the Toy Safety Directive in the EU and the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act in the US). This means that many regional factors must be taken into consideration. Nevertheless, there is a strong desire to coordinate the new requirements of the different standards as far as possible.

Many new initiatives within ISO

The International Standardisation Committee for toy safety, ISO Technical Committee (TC) 181, is responsible for toy safety standard series ISO 8214 (below, the year indicates when the last edition was published):

ISO 8124-1:2009 Mechanical and physical properties

ISO 8124-2:2007 Flammability

ISO 8124-3:2010 Migration of certain elements

ISO 8124-4:2010 Slides, swings and other activity toys

At its 2009 meeting, TC 181 decided to identify subject areas where work was ongoing in any part of the world. The aim was for this work to be conducted within the ISO but in partnership with the other major standards organisations.

Areas include:

- toys containing magnets
- projectile toys
- determination of the total content of certain hazardous substances in toy material
- determination of certain phthalates in toys and children's products
- toys that contain strings, ropes, ribbons, etc.
- toys with a shape presenting an impaction hazard (e.g. if the child falls with the toy in its mouth)
- toys that are used in the bathtub and present an impalement hazard
- paddling pools
- age grading guidelines

The goal is both for the ISO standards to incorporate requirements and test methods that already exist in different locations around the world and, in the new areas, to develop requirements and test methods that can also be accepted by other standards organisations around the world.

More and broader cooperation

In recent years, many organisations have promoted greater global coordination of toy safety standards. These include the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development), APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation), ICPSC (International Consumer Product Safety Caucus), ICPHSO (The International Consumer Product Health and Safety Organisation), CPSC (Consumer Product Safety Commission) in the United States, the European Commission and others. There is therefore a broad understanding of the benefits of coordinating the requirements as much as possible. ISO TC 181 is often cited as a major player in achieving concrete results that leads towards a “global standard” for toy safety.

About TIE

Toy Industries of Europe (TIE) is the trade association for the European toy industry, which comprises over 25% of the total world toy market. The toy industry is highly international and is one of the most dynamic business sectors in Europe. Around 80% of the sector is composed of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) which have less than 50 employees. Members of TIE include corporate 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 corporate companies with a presence in Europe and national associations from European Union Member States (including candidate countries).

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