

Electrical Products (Household)

Korean companies are very active in electrical and electronic product manufacturing. Some of their production takes place in Korea and some in other locations, such as China.

No matter where your products are manufactured, if you export to the United States, there are product safety requirements that you should know about. This page provides an overview of how CPSC manages product safety in the case of electrical and electronic products and what requirements you are expected to meet.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is the federal government agency responsible for ensuring the safety of consumer products sold in the United States. Our mission is to protect U.S. consumers from unreasonable risks of injury or death associated with consumer products. The CPSC has jurisdiction over thousands of types of consumer products used in and around the home, outdoors, and in schools, including everything from children's toys to hairdryers, generators and toasters.

Product categories, such as automobiles and boats; alcohol, tobacco, and firearms; food and drugs; and pesticides, cosmetics, and medical devices are regulated by other federal agencies.

Although U.S. importers are directly responsible for the safety of the products they bring to the United States, they rely on foreign suppliers, like you, to know and comply with U.S. product safety requirements. Meeting these requirements not only keeps U.S. consumers safe, but also makes your products more competitive in the long run. Buyers prefer suppliers that provide quality and safety and have worked hard to ensure that their products are safe.

We want to help you understand CPSC's requirements for electrical products so that you can avoid product entry refusal or recalls. At the bottom of this page, you will find English resources with more detailed information.

It is necessary to understand the important role that voluntary standards play in the U.S. consumer products marketplace. This is especially true because most electrical and electronic products sold in the United States are not subject to federal product safety regulations.

What does “Voluntary Standard” mean (also known as “consensus standard”)?

Through collaboration among stakeholders, standards development organizations (like ASTM International, CSA, UL, and others) develop safety standards for consumer products. In many cases, these standards bring industry groups, government agencies, and consumer groups together to agree on best consumer product safety practices and product performance characteristics.

As such, using the information available to you from voluntary safety standards is one element of a successful program to ensure that safety is built into your consumer product at the design stage.

One way CPSC staff promotes product safety is by actively participating in voluntary standards activities for a wide range of consumer products.

Please note that the term “voluntary standard” means that, although there is not a federal requirement that the standard be used, failure to follow the standard may result in a substantial product hazard, and the CPSC may view the failure to follow the standard as a contributing factor.

This means that even in the case of products with voluntary standards, if there is a defect, CPSC can take compulsory action, if necessary. In particular, please note that CPSC has issued rules under section 15 (j) of the CPSA, which states that products that do not conform to certain federally required portions of the voluntary standard requirements are treated as a substantial product hazard and can be stopped at the ports. Here are some examples:

A. Handheld Hair Dryer

The Commission has determined that hand-held hair dryers that are not equipped with integral immersion protection are a substantial product hazard. A hand-supported hair dryer without this protection can be stopped at the port, and can be recalled if sold in the United States. Integral immersion protection



reduces the risk of electric shock if the hair dryer is immersed in, or otherwise contacts, water. This protection is provided by a block-shaped plug that incorporates a type of circuit interrupter. This safety device, which protects against shock, has helped reduce the number of deaths in the United States

from hair dryers making contact with water.

B. Holiday lights

Each year, individuals are seriously injured or killed by seasonal lighting, including holiday lights and decorative outfits, that use undersized wiring, use insufficient strain relief, or omit fuses.

The Commission has determined that seasonal and decorative lighting products, including holiday lights, that do not contain one or more of three readily observable safety characteristics (minimum wire size, protection from damage caused by normal strain , or overcurrent protection) present a risk of electrical shock or fire and constitute a substantial product hazard.

Read more about holiday lights here*.

*here URL

<http://www.cpsc.gov//PageFiles/169801/HolidayLightsletter6115.pdf>

The three readily observable safety characteristics are:

- 1) Minimum wire size
- 2) Sufficient strain relief
- 3) Overcurrent protection

C. Extension Cords

Fires or electrical shocks can occur, and families and individuals can be seriously injured or killed, if extension cords fail to meet one or more requirements of the applicable UL standard, including minimum wire size, sufficient strain relief, proper polarization, proper continuity, and covers for jacketed cords (outdoor cords).

The Commission has determined that extension cords that are missing one or more readily observable characteristics, as set forth in the rule, constitute a substantial product hazard.

Read more about extension cords here*.

*here URL http://www.cpsc.gov//PageFiles/174374/Extension-Cord-Letter_MJS.pdf

Please note that in addition to CPSC's requirements, there are other federal and state requirements and consensus industry standards that may be required for your products. Additionally, some retailers have other requirements.

For more information on the requirements for household electrical products, contact the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission:

- 1) Office of Compliance (for specific enforcement inquiries)
Email: sect15@cpsc.gov
Telephone: (301) 504-7520
- 2) Small Business Ombudsman (for general assistance understanding and complying with CPSC regulations)
Email: Please use our Contact Form*, which is the best way to get a fast response.
Telephone: (880) 531-9070

*hyperlink: <http://www.cpsc.gov/About-CPSC/Contact-Information/Contact-Specific-Offices-and-Public-Information/Small-Business-Ombudsman/>

This communication has been prepared for general informational purposes only. This summary document does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice nor does it replace or supersede a manufacturer's obligations to comply with all applicable laws, regulations, standards, or bans enforced by CPSC.

References:

- 1) Voluntary standards:
<http://www.cpsc.gov/en/regulations-laws--standards/voluntary-standards/>
- 2) Electrical Products (Household):
<http://www.cpsc.gov/en/Business--Manufacturing/Business-Education/Business-Guidance/Household-Electrical-Products/>
- 3) Hand-Supported Hair Dryers:
<http://www.cpsc.gov/Business--Manufacturing/Business-Education/Business-Guidance/Household-Electrical-Products/Hand-Supported-Hair-Dryers/>
- 4) Seasonal Lighting (Holiday Lights and Decorative Outfits):
<http://www.cpsc.gov/Business--Manufacturing/Business-Education/Business-Guidance/Household-Electrical-Products/Seasonal-and-Decorative-Lighting-Products/>
- 5) Extension Cords:
http://www.cpsc.gov/PageFiles/174374/Extension-Cord-Letter_MJS.pdf