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U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

Log of Meeting

Subject: Introductory meeting with Portable Generator Manufacturers Association (PGMA)

Date of Meeting: November 18, 2010

Log Entry Source: Janet Buyer

Date of Log Entry: December 9, 2010

Location: Room 714 Bethesda Towers, Bethesda, MD 20814

CPSC attendees: Robert "Jay" Howell, Hazard Identification and Analysis (EXHR); DeWane Ray (EXHR); Colin Church (EXHR); Linda Edwards, Engineering Sciences (ES); Patty Adair, Combustion and Fire Sciences (ESFS); Janet Buyer (ESFS); Don Switzer (ESFS); Susan Bathalon (EXHR); Han Lim (ESFS)

Non-CPSC attendees: John Addington, Executive Director, Portable Generator Manufacturers Association (PGMA); Robert Stoll (Technical Director, PGMA); Rock Reed (President, PGMA, American Honda); Thomas Burkard (Briggs & Stratton, member PGMA); Greg Marchand (Briggs & Stratton, member PGMA); James Jongkind (American Honda, member PGMA); Dustin Antonello, Underwriters Laboratories (UL); Mary Foley, Product Safety Letter (PSL); Roy Deppa, Marchica & Deppa, LLC.

Summary of meeting: CPSC staff met with PGMA representatives and some of their members at their request for an introductory meeting. PGMA staff provided the meeting agenda (attached) and gave a presentation that included the PGMA's history, purpose/mission, and descriptions of the industry standard they have drafted as well as those they intend to draft.

The PGMA is a trade association that was originally formed in 1999 with the intent of promoting portable generators to the public in preparation for "Y2K", when widespread power outages were predicted to occur. The group disbanded shortly thereafter but reformed in 2009 upon request from the industry for the purpose of developing and influencing safety and performance standards for portable generators. PGMA members include the major manufacturers of portable generators sold in North America: American Honda Motor Co., Briggs & Stratton Home Power Products, Champion Power Equipment, Generac Power Systems, Pramac America, Techtronic Industries, Wacker Neuson Corporation, and Yamaha Motor Corp USA. PGMA membership is open to those firms actively engaged in the design and manufacture of engine-driven portable generators sold in North America, as well as North American companies actively engaged in selling portable generators in North America under their own name.

The PGMA has two technical subcommittees, one for mechanical issues and the other for electrical, that meet monthly. To date, they have drafted a standard, *PGMA G200: Draft Standard for Testing and Validating Performance of Portable Generators*, the purpose of which

is provide a uniform test method for verifying the manufacturer's advertised wattage rating. This standard became available on PGMA's newly-created website, www.pgmaonline, on 11/19/10. PGMA is drafting or intends to draft two other standards: one for surge starting procedures and the other for safety.

PGMA desires to seek ANSI accreditation for these standards as American National Standards. CPSC staff inquired if the PGMA has contacted Underwriters Laboratories (UL) about their intention to draft an ANSI safety standard since UL already has their own safety standard in place. PGMA responded that there are multiple standards already in place for portable generators sold in the U.S., such as ISO 8528 and CSA C22.2 and added that the PGMA will wait to initiate any ANSI standard development activity until after their members agree on what safety topics will be included in their safety standard. PGMA requested CPSC staff participation in the development of the safety standard, particularly asking staff to share findings to date on CPSC's contract with the University of Alabama that is supporting the Commission's effort to reduce the carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning hazard associated with portable generators. Staff responded that they are willing to participate and are eager for a standard that will address the CO hazard, which CPSC's data indicates is the hazard associated with most deaths attributed to portable generators. They explained that staff can attend PGMA's meetings as long as they are open to the public, as CPSC's statute prohibits staff from participating in closed meetings. A copy of CPSC staff's annual epidemiology report was distributed that provides details from CPSC's databases on many of the 481 CO poisoning deaths associated with portable generators that occurred between 1999 and 2008. Research is underway to support the Commission's decision to address the CO hazard of portable generators through possible rulemaking that the Commission will consider when staff's work is complete. Staff is preparing the findings for public release, but since it is part of a rulemaking activity, the information can't be released before the Commission has seen it; after that it will be available to the public all at one time.

Staff provided copies of some CPSC's recalls involving portable generators, most of which have to do with leaking fuel tanks, posing a fire hazard. Staff reported that in 2006, when the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) drafted a standard, ANSI B71.10 *Small Off-road Ground Supported Outdoor Power Equipment Gasoline Fuel Systems Performance Specifications and Test Procedures* through industry closed meeting, staff made recommendations to improve the fuel tank integrity. None of these recommendations were incorporated when the standard was adopted. Incidents of fuel leaks on many small engine products persist.

CPSC staff recommended that PGMA refer to the CPSC annual Operating Plan as one means of keeping current on staff activities on portable generators. It was also recommended that PGMA track recalls related to any type of engine-driven consumer product. In addition, CPSC staff recommended referring to CPSC's voluntary standards webpage for portable generators as a central location for finding all cleared staff documents on the portable generator project. Janet Buyer is the CPSC contact for information on the portable generator rulemaking.

Portable Generator Manufacturers Association
CPSC MEETING AGENDA
Thursday, November 18, 2010
10:30 A.M. –11:30 A.M. Eastern Time

Expected Attendance

Janet Buyer, CPSC Directorate for Engineering Sciences
Colin Church, CPSC Voluntary Standards Coordinator
Don Switzer, CPSC Project Officer
Rock Reed, PGMA President, American Honda Motor Co., Inc.
James Jongkind, American Honda Motor Co., Inc.
Tom Burkard, Briggs & Stratton
Greg Marchand, Briggs & Stratton
John Addington, PGMA Staff
Robert Stoll, PGMA Staff

1. Introductions
 2. PGMA – History
 3. PGMA – Purpose
 4. PGMA – 2009
 5. PGMA – Mission
 6. PGMA – Standards Developed
 - PGMA G200 Standard
 - Standard for Testing and Validating Performance of Portable Generators*
 7. PGMA Standards Under Development
 - Starting Surge Procedure*
 - Safety Standard*
 8. CPSC – Working Relationship With PGMA
 9. CPSC's direction and plans for portable generators in the future.
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1. Next Meeting
 1. Adjournment