observable and that are incorporated in those products for safety-related purposes;

(3) The customs and practices of the trade of which the manufacturer is a member in marketing, designating, or evaluating similar products.

(4) Information on how consumers use the products and on consumer need or demand for different products, such as products of different size. In analyzing whether products are different models, differences in size or calibration afford the basis for distinguishing between products only if those differences make the products distinctive in functional design or function.

(5) The history of the manufacturer's model identification and marketing of the products in question;

(6) Whether variations between products relate solely to appearance, ornamentation, color, or other cosmetic features; such variations are not ordinarily sufficient to differentiate between models.

(7) Whether component parts used in a product are interchangeable with or perform substantially the same function as comparable components in other units; if they are, the use of such components does not afford a basis for distinguishing between models.

(8) Retail price. Substantial variations in price arising directly from the characteristics enumerated in section 37(e)(2) for evaluating product models may be evidence that products are different models because their differences are distinctive. Price variations imposed to accommodate different markets or vendors are not sufficient to draw such a distinction.

(9) Manufacturer's designation, model number, or private label designation. These factors are not controlling in identifying "particular models".

(10) Expert evaluation of the characteristics of the products in question, and surveys of consumer users or a manufacturer's retail customers.

(b) The definition of "consumer product" expressly applies to components of consumer products. Should a component manufacturer be joined in a civil action against a manufacturer of a consumer product, the section 37 reporting requirements may apply to that manufacturer after a combination of three judgments or settlements involving the same component model during a two year period, even though the manufacturer of the finished product is exempt from such reporting because the lawsuits do not involve the same particular model of the finished consumer product. The same proposition holds true for common components used in different consumer products. If the manufacturer of such a component is a defendant in three suits and the requisite statutory criteria are met, the reporting obligations apply.

(c) Section 37 expressly defines the reporting obligation in terms of the particular model of a product rather than the manner in which a product was involved in an accident. Accordingly, even if the characteristic of a product that caused or resulted in the deaths of grievous injuries alleged in three or more civil actions is the same in all of the suits, the requirement to report under section 37 would arise only if the same particular model was involved in at least three of the suits. However, the existence of such a pattern would strongly suggest that the obligation to file a report under section 15(b) (2) or (3) (15 U.S.C. 2064(b) (2) or (3)) exists because the information reasonably supports the conclusion that the product contains a defect that could present a substantial risk of injury to the public or creates an unreasonable risk of serious injury or death.

(d) Section 37 does not require that the same category of injury be involved in multiple lawsuits for the reporting obligation to arise. As long as a particular model of a consumer product is the subject of at least three civil actions that are settled or adjudicated in favor of the plaintiff in one of the statutory two year periods, the manufacturer must report, even though the alleged category of injury and the alleged causal relationship of the product to the injury in each suit may differ.

§ 1116.9 Confidentiality of reports.

(a) Pursuant to section 6(e) of the Consumer Product Safety Act (15 U.S.C. 2055(e)) no member of the Commission, no officer or employee of the Commission, and no officer or employee of the Department of Justice

may publicly disclose information furnished to the Commission under section 37(c)(1) and section 37(c)(2)(A) of the Act, except that:

(1) An authenticated copy of a section 37 report furnished to the Commission by or on behalf of a manufacturer may, upon written request, be furnished to the manufacturer or its authorized agent after payment of the actual or estimated cost of searching the records and furnishing such copies; or

(2) Any information furnished to the Commission under section 37 shall, upon written request of the Chairman or Ranking Minority Member of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate or the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives or any subcommittee of such committee, be provided to the Chairman or Ranking Minority Member for purposes that are related to the jurisdiction of such committee or subcommittee.

(b) The prohibition contained in section 6(e) (15 U.S.C. 2055(e)) against the disclosure of information submitted pursuant to section 37 only applies to the specific items of information that a manufacturer is required to submit under section 37(c)(1) and to statements under section 37(c)(2)(A) relating to the possibility or existence of an appeal of a reported judgment adverse to a manufacturer. Section 6(e)(1) does not, by its terms, apply to information that the manufacturer voluntarily chooses to submit pursuant to section 37(c)(2)(B). Thus, disclosure of such information is governed by the other provisions of section 6 of the CPSA (15 U.S.C. 2055) and by the interpretative rules issued by the Commission (16 CFR parts 1101 and 1015). For example, if a manufacturer includes information otherwise reportable under section 15 as part of a section 37 report, the Commission will treat the information reported pursuant to section 15 as "additional information" submitted pursuant to section 37(c)(2)(B). Generally, any issue of the public disclosure of that information will be controlled by the relevant provisions of section 6(b), including section 6(b)(5) relating to the disclosure of substantial product hazard reports, and section 6(a) relating to the disclosure of confidential or trade secret information. However, to the extent the section 15 report reiterates or references information reported under section 37, the confidentiality provisions of section 6(e) still apply to the reiteration or reference. In addition, interpretative regulations issued under section 6(b) of the Act establish that disclosure of certain information may be barred if the disclosure would not be fair in the circumstances. 16 CFR 1101.33. Accordingly, issues of releasing additional information submitted pursuant to section 37 will also be evaluated under the fairness provisions of section 6(b). Should the Commission receive a request for such information or contemplate disclosure on its own initiative, the manufacturer will be given an opportunity to present arguments to the Commission why the information should not be disclosed, including, if appropriate, why disclosure of the information would be unfair in the circumstances. Among the factors the Commission will consider in evaluating the fairness of releasing the information are the nature of the information, the fact that it is an adjunct to a Congressional protected report, and whether the information in question supports the conclusion that a section 37 or 15(b), CPSA, report should have been filed earlier.

(c) Section 6(e) imposes no confidentiality requirements on information obtained by the Commission independently of a report pursuant to section 37. The provisions of section 6(b) govern the disclosure of such information.

§ 1116.10 Restrictions on use of reports.

No member of the Commission, no officer or employee of the Commission, and no officer or employee of the Department of Justice may use information provided to the Commission under section 37 for any purpose other than to carry out the responsibilities of the Commission.

§ 1116.11 Reports of civil actions under section 37 not admissions.

Pursuant to section 37(d), 15 U.S.C. 2084(d), the reporting of a civil action under section 37 shall not constitute an admission of—

(a) An unreasonable risk of injury;