§ 1115.4 Defect.

Section 15(b)(2) of the CPSA requires every manufacturer (including an importer), distributor, and retailer of a consumer product who obtains information which reasonably supports the conclusion that the product contains a defect which could create a substantial product hazard to inform the Commission of such defect. Thus, whether the information available reasonably suggests a defect is the first determination which a subject firm must make in deciding whether it has obtained information which must be reported to the Commission. In determining whether it has obtained information which reasonably supports the conclusion that its consumer product contains a defect, a subject firm may be guided by the criteria the Commission and staff use in determining whether a defect exists. At a minimum, defect includes the dictionary or commonly accepted meaning of the word. Thus, a defect is a fault, flaw, or irregularity that causes weakness, failure, or inadequacy in form or function. A defect, for example, may be the result of a manufacturing or production error; that is, the consumer product as manufactured is not in the form intended by, or fails to perform in accordance with, its design. In addition, the design of and the materials used in a consumer product may also result in a defect. Thus, a product may contain a defect even if the product is manufactured exactly in accordance with its design and specifications, if the design presents a risk of injury to the public. A design defect may also be present if the risk of injury occurs as a result of the operation or use of the product or the failure of the product to operate as intended. A defect can also occur in a product's contents, construction, finish, packaging, warnings, and/or instructions. With respect to instructions, a consumer product may contain a defect if the instructions for assembly or use could allow the product, otherwise safely designed and manufactured, to present a risk of injury. To assist subject firms in understanding the concept of defect as used in the CPSA, the following examples are offered:

(a) An electric appliance presents a shock hazard because, through a manufacturing error, its casing can be electrically charged by full-line voltage. This product contains a defect as a result of manufacturing or production error.

(b) Shoes labeled and marketed for long-distance running are so designed that they might cause or contribute to the causing of muscle or tendon injury if used for long-distance running. The shoes are defective due to the labeling and marketing.

(c) A kite made of electrically conductive material presents a risk of electrocution if it is long enough to become entangled in power lines and be within reach from the ground. The electrically conductive material contributes both to the beauty of the kite and the hazard it presents. The kite contains a design defect.

(d) A power tool is not accompanied by adequate instructions and safety warnings. Reasonably foreseeable consumer use or misuse, based in part on the lack of adequate instructions and safety warnings, could result in injury. Although there are no reports of injury, the product contains a defect because of the inadequate warnings and instructions.
§ 1115.5 Reporting of failures to comply with a voluntary consumer product safety standard relied upon by the Commission under section 9 of the CPSA.

(a) General provision. Under the CPSA, the Commission may rely on voluntary standards in lieu of developing mandatory ones. In recognition of the role of voluntary standards under the CPSA, section 15(b)(1) requires reports if a product fails to comply with a voluntary standard “upon which the Commission has relied under section 9” of the CPSA. The Commission has relied upon a voluntary consumer product safety standard under section 9 of the CPSA if, since August 13, 1981 it has terminated a rulemaking proceeding or withdrawn an existing consumer product safety rule because it explicitly determined that an existing voluntary standard, or portion(s) thereof, is likely to result in an adequate reduction of the risk of injury.