

Consumer Product Safety Commission

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as to whether or not to use the artificial embers and ashes.

(1) *Utility.* Manufacturers of artificial gas log emberizing material are currently using four substitutes for asbestos in their products: vermiculite, rock wool, mica, and a synthetic fiber. None of the four is claimed to be as aesthetically effective as asbestos. Thus, the utility derived by consumers from some gas-burning fireplace systems may be adversely affected.

(2) *Cost.* No effect on the overall price level of gas logs is anticipated as a result of the ban. The average price of emberizing kits may rise somewhat; the Commission estimates the total price effect of the ban on consumers at under \$25,000.

(3) *Availability.* The Commission believes that all producers of artificial emberizing material will have eliminated asbestos from their products by the time the ban becomes effective. No significant impact on the availability of asbestos substitutes to producers nor on the availability of gas logs or emberizing kits to retail dealers and consumers is expected as a result of the ban.

(d) *Any means of achieving the objective of the ban while minimizing adverse effects on competition or disruption or dislocation of manufacturing and other commercial practices consistent with the public health and safety.* The Commission believes that there will be minimal disruption to the market for artificial emberizing materials as a consequence of the ban and that no further reduction in adverse effects is feasible.

PART 1306—BAN OF HAZARDOUS LAWN DARTS

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SOURCE: 53 FR 46839, Nov. 18, 1988, unless otherwise noted.

§ 1306.1 Scope and application.

(a) In this part 1306, the Commission declares lawn darts, described in

§1306.3, to be banned hazardous products.

(b) Lawn darts and similar products that are articles intended for use by children are not covered by this ban, but are banned under the Federal Hazardous Substances Act at 16 CFR 1500.18(a)(4).

§ 1306.2 Purpose.

The purpose of this rule is to prohibit the sale of lawn darts, which have been found to present an unreasonable risk of skull puncture injuries to children.

§ 1306.3 Banned hazardous products.

Any lawn dart is a banned hazardous product.

§ 1306.4 Findings.

(a) The Commission has found that lawn darts are being distributed in commerce and present an unreasonable risk of injury.

(b) *The degree and nature of the risk of injury.* (1) The risk that the Commission intends to address in this proceeding is that of puncture of the skulls of children caused by lawn darts being used by children. The potential for these devices to cause these types of injuries is not necessarily obvious to parents or other adults who might buy these items or allow their children to play with them, much less to the children themselves. This is because the tips do not appear sharp enough to present an obvious danger of puncture. The combined factors of weight, the narrow elongated shaft, the speed that the dart is traveling at the time of impact, and the thickness of the child's skull at the point of impact present the risk. The Commission has concluded that all lawn darts have the potential for skull puncture during reasonably foreseeable use or misuse.

(2) Because all lawn darts are being banned, the elimination of lawn darts that can cause skull puncture injuries will also eliminate the punctures of other parts of the body, as well as the lacerations, fractures, and other injuries that have been associated with lawn darts in the past. The Commission's staff estimates that about 670 injuries from lawn darts are treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms per year. About 40 percent of these are

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puncture wounds. Approximately 57 percent of the injuries involved the head, face, eye, or ear. Approximately 4 percent of the injured victims were hospitalized (on the average, approximately 25 per year), including all of the injuries reported as fractures. Over 75 percent of the victims were under age 15; about 50 percent of the victims were under age 10. In addition, Commission records dating back to 1970 show that at least three children have been killed by injuries associated with lawn darts. These children were 4, 7, and 13 years old. In the 25 lawn dart injury reports for which information about the user of the lawn darts was available, the reports indicated that children were playing with the lawn darts, despite the ban and exemption which were developed to keep the product out of the hands of children.

(c) *Products subject to this ban.* (1) Lawn darts are devices with elongated tips that are intended to be used outdoors and that are designed so that when they are thrown into the air they will contact the ground tip first. Often, lawn darts are used in a game where the darts are thrown at a target or other feature on the ground. The types of lawn darts that have generally been available in the past and that have demonstrated their ability to cause skull puncture injuries typically have a metal or weighted plastic body, on the front of which is an elongated metal shaft about ¼ inch in diameter. These darts have a shaft on the rear of the body containing plastic fins. These darts are about a foot in length and weigh about one quarter to one half pound. These darts are intended to stick in the ground when thrown. Prior to this rule, annual sales of these lawn darts were estimated at 1-1.5 million units.

(2) The definition for lawn darts in this rule is not intended to include arrows or horseshoes, nor is it intended to apply to indoor dart games that use a vertically-placed target, such as "English darts" or "American darts."

(d) *The need of the public for lawn darts, and the effects of the rule on their utility, cost, and availability.* The need of the public for lawn darts is for recreational enjoyment. Substitute recreational enjoyment can be obtained

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from other products. Lawn darts will not be available through commercial channels after the effective date of the ban.

(e) *Alternatives.* (1) The Commission considered various labeling requirements and limitations on the marketing of lawn darts that would be intended to discourage the marketing of the product to children and the use of the product by children. The Commission concluded, however, that these types of requirements would not preclude substantial use of the product by children and would not reduce adequately the risk of injury addressed by this rule.

(2) The Commission also considered the possibility of performance requirements for lawn darts to determine which lawn darts present an unreasonable risk of injury of skull penetration to children, but such requirements were determined not to be feasible.

(f) *Conclusion.* The Commission finds:

(1) That this rule, including its effective date, is reasonably necessary to eliminate or adequately reduce the unreasonable risk of skull puncture wounds to children associated with lawn darts and will also eliminate or reduce the other injuries, including puncture wounds, that have been associated with this product.

(2) That issuance of the rule is in the public interest.

(3) That no feasible consumer product safety standard would adequately protect the public from the unreasonable risk associated with lawn darts.

(4) That the benefits expected from this rule bear a reasonable relationship to its costs.

(5) That the rule imposes the least burdensome requirement which prevents or adequately reduces the risk of injury for which the rule is being promulgated.

§ 1306.5 Effective date.

This rule is effective December 19, 1988 and applies to all lawn darts in the chain of distribution on or after that date.