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LOG OF MEETING
DIRECTORATE FOR ENGINEERING SCIENCES

SUBJECT: Meetings of ASTM Subcommittee F15.09 on Home Playground Equipment

DATE OF MEETING: December 3-4, 1996

PLACE: ASTM
West Conshohocken, PA

LOG ENTRY SOURCE: Scott Heh, ESME *M*

DATE OF ENTRY: December 18, 1996

COMMISSION ATTENDEES: Scott Heh, ESME

NON-COMMISSION ATTENDEES: Available upon receipt of meeting minutes.

SUMMARY OF MEETINGS

The Subcommittee reviewed the minutes from the Sept. 9, 1996 meeting and made minor clarifications.

The Subcommittee Chair announced a recent ASTM Committee on Standards decision to uphold the Subcommittee's position that playground equipment used in a Home Day Care facility is within the scope of the F 1148 Home Playground Standard.

The first major point of discussion was whether multiple occupancy swings should be required to meet the same impact requirements that are specified in the standard for single occupancy swings. I provided copies of sanitized CPSC/LSEL test results that showed that many common multiple-occupancy swings can pass the swing impact requirement. However, some heavy wooden swings do not pass the test.

One of the discussion points focussed on the fact that the test method calls for an unoccupied swing. Many group members felt that the test method is appropriate for single-occupancy swings because it is much more likely for a child to be injured by an unoccupied single swing, either after a child jumps out of the swing or when a child pushes an empty single swing into another child. They did not see these as likely play patterns for multiple occupancy swings.

The group discussed the details of the known deaths that were associated with multiple occupancy swings. Many felt that the hazards in these incidents were due to sharp edges or protrusions on the swing or were due to inadequate clearance beneath the swing. After lengthy discussion, a motion was made to continue to exclude multiple-occupancy and straddle type swings from the swing impact requirement. The rationale was that the data show no need for a change to the current requirements. The motion passed. The Subcommittee did agree to investigate further the need for revisions to the spacing requirements around and under multiple-occupancy swings.

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The next issues on the agenda were proposed requirements for guardrails and protective barriers around raised platforms on home playground equipment. The group worked on revising proposed definitions for "handrail" and "platform" to clarify the meaning of these terms.

The Subcommittee reviewed a CPSC staff letter recommending that platforms over 30 inches high and less than 48 inches high have guardrails with a minimum height of 25 inches above the platform. A letter to the Subcommittee from a manufacturer of molded plastic home playground equipment was also reviewed. The manufacturer agreed with the need for guardrails, but believed that a 25 inch minimum height was too high. The manufacturer believed that children will attempt to climb to the highest possible place on the equipment. A higher guardrail will increase the fall height and increase severity of the fall hazard. Many others in the Subcommittee believed that to protect against inadvertent falls, the guardrail must be above the child's center of gravity (cg). This was the basis for the 25 inch recommendation. Those who were against the 25 inch guardrail claimed that the most at risk group were closer to the 2-yr-old range than the 3-yr-old range. This would lower the cg dimension. Those against 25-inch-high guardrails also claimed that there are many units currently in use that have 18-inch-high guardrails or "retaining walls" and that there is no data to show that these are not protecting children from inadvertent falls.

After further discussion, a two-part motion was made. The first part was to ballot a change to the standard to require platforms over 48" high to have a protective barrier. The second part was for manufacturers that are against 25-inch-high guardrails on platforms between 30 inches and 48 inches to meet separately with CPSC staff to work out the differences in opinion on this matter. The motion passed.

cc: John Preston, ES
Colin Church, EXHR
George Sushinsky, LSEL
Mark Eilbert, LSEL
Celestine Trainor, ESHF
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File