



U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION

Drawstring Bulletin

Subject: Drawstrings on children's upper outerwear

October 2013

Hazards of Drawstrings

Young children can be seriously injured or fatally entangled if the drawstrings of the upper outerwear they are wearing catch or snag. Most incidents involving upper outerwear occur when a drawstring gets entangled or caught on other objects, such as playground slides, hand rails, school bus doors or other moving objects.

Drawstrings on Children's Upper Outerwear

In 2012, the Commission determined that drawstrings on children's upper outerwear present a substantial product hazard and issued a rule, 15 U.S.C. § 2064(j), under Section 15(j) of the Consumer Product Safety Act (CPSA). Under Section 15(j), drawstrings at the hood or neck and waist or bottom areas that do not meet certain requirements present a substantial product hazard, present an unreasonable risk of injury and are considered a defect subject to reporting requirements and corrective action, including recalls and penalties.

Obligations

Section 15(b) of the CPSA, 15 U.S.C. § 2064(b), requires every manufacturer, importer, distributor, and retailer of consumer products to report immediately to the Commission when it obtains information that reasonably supports the conclusion that a product distributed in commerce contains a defect that could create a substantial product hazard or creates an unreasonable risk of serious injury or death. The statute also provides for the imposition of civil and criminal penalties for failing to report the required information. Children's upper outerwear sold in the United States should comply with the voluntary safety standard, ASTM F-1816--*Standard Consumer Safety Specification for Drawstrings on Children's Upper Outerwear*, which can be ordered from ASTM International (www.astm.org).

Clothing Subject to the Requirements

Upper Outerwear: Drawstrings are not allowed at the hood and neck area on children's upper outerwear in sizes 2T through 12. Waist and bottom drawstrings in upper outerwear for sizes 2T through 16 must meet certain requirements.

"Upper outerwear" is defined as clothing such as jackets, ski vests, anoraks, and sweatshirts that generally are intended to be worn over other garments. This definition includes lightweight outerwear that is appropriate for use in warmer climates. Underwear, inner clothing layers, pants, shorts, swimwear, dresses and skirts are not considered upper outerwear.



Drawstring Requirements

Hood & Neck: Drawstrings are not allowed at the hood and neck area of upper outerwear in sizes 2T-12. Children's upper outerwear should use alternative closures, such as snaps, buttons, Velcro, and elastic, pictured above.

Waist & Bottom: Drawstrings at the waist and bottom area of upper outerwear in sizes 2T-16 must meet certain requirements. The length of the drawstring must not extend more than three inches from the channel when the garment is expanded to its fullest width. Drawstrings that are one continuous string must be bar tacked or stitched through to prevent the drawstring from being pulled through its channel. Cord locks, knots, toggles, or other attachments that could pose a catch hazard at the free ends of drawstrings are prohibited.

Definitions

Drawstrings: A drawstring is a non-retractable cord, ribbon, or tape of any material to pull together parts of upper outerwear to provide for closure and generally runs through a casing.

Ties: Ties are considered drawstrings and are subject to the requirements. Ties are a type of closure that can tie, snap or buckle and are attached to the garment through an eyelet, sewn into a seam or run through a casing.

Belts: Belts are not considered drawstrings and are not subject to the requirements. A belt goes around the body and is generally visible. Belts may be held in place by belt loops and may buckle, tie or fasten. Belts may be tacked, but can be removed with minimal effort or alteration to the garment.

Fully retractable drawstrings: Fully retractable drawstrings are permitted and are exempt from the drawstring requirements. Fully retractable drawstrings must completely and automatically retract into the garment after being adjusted and released, without any effort to retract it, leaving only the cord lock, knot, toggle, or any other end attachment against the outside of the garment. Cord locks, knots, toggles, and other attachments that are not flush against the surface of the garment that could pose a catch hazard at a free end or loop are not allowed. Retractable bungees must not extend more than three inches below the hemline.

Contact CPSC

To view a listing of all drawstring related recalls, log on to: www.CPSC.gov. To report a dangerous product or product-related injury, go online to www.SaferProducts.gov or call CPSC's Hotline at: (800) 638-2772.