
Policy developments

Children's nightclothes — flammability

The 1999 Australian/New Zealand standard on children's nightclothes was recently declared mandatory on 1 November 1999. It applies to garments ranged from size 00, includes a limited range of daywear items and stipulates two flammability labels. The standard is to run concurrently with the previous mandatory standard (declared mandatory in 1993) up until 1 September 2001 at which time the 1993 standard will cease.

Below is a summary of the main changes in the new standard.

Coverage

The following clothes are now covered (to address some coverage difficulties, some items of daywear have been included in the revised standard).

- Babies and toddlers' knitted all-in-one garments are all included irrespective of being daywear or nightwear.
- Loose-fitting boxer shorts are now included.
- Nightwear now specifically includes bath robes.

The size range now includes size 00.

Categories

There are now four categories of garments, with a new category for knitted all-in-one garments sizes 00–2.

Trims

Definitions are now clearer and there are fewer restrictions.

Labels

There are only two labels in the new standard. The high fire danger label with a flame symbol applies to category 4 (the old category 3). The other three categories now require a low fire danger label in black on a white background.

There is also a new test for label durability and, if packaging obscures the flammability labels, the labels must be repeated on the packaging.

Garment dimensions

There are some minor changes to garment dimensions and new drawings illustrate how to measure all dimensions.

Paper patterns

A new mandatory standard for paper patterns for children's nightwear has also been gazetted recently.

All details of the changes to the standard are contained in the consumer protection notice and in the Australian/New Zealand Standard 1249:1999. The Commission is preparing an overview guide to the standard; however, AS/NZS 1249:1999 has been written as a stand-alone document. Suppliers are urged to read the standard thoroughly before producing garments.

Child restraints for motor vehicles

A minor amendment to the mandatory consumer product safety standard for child restraints for motor vehicles came into effect on 30 June 1999. The amendments were made to allow the sale of spare parts that complied with the earlier standard. The amendments will allow the continued supply of attachment fittings and harnesses that have been available on the market for many years. It

was accepted that the likely effect of stopping the supply of the parts at this stage would be to increase the risk to children if consumers were unable to obtain replacement parts.

Pedal bicycle and bicycle helmet standards

Pedal bicycles

The joint 1998 Australian/New Zealand standard for safety requirements for pedal bicycles has recently been declared mandatory and came into effect on 1 November 1999. The new standard will run concurrently with the 1989 pedal bicycle standard (declared mandatory in 1994) until 31 October 2000 at which time the 1994 standard will cease.

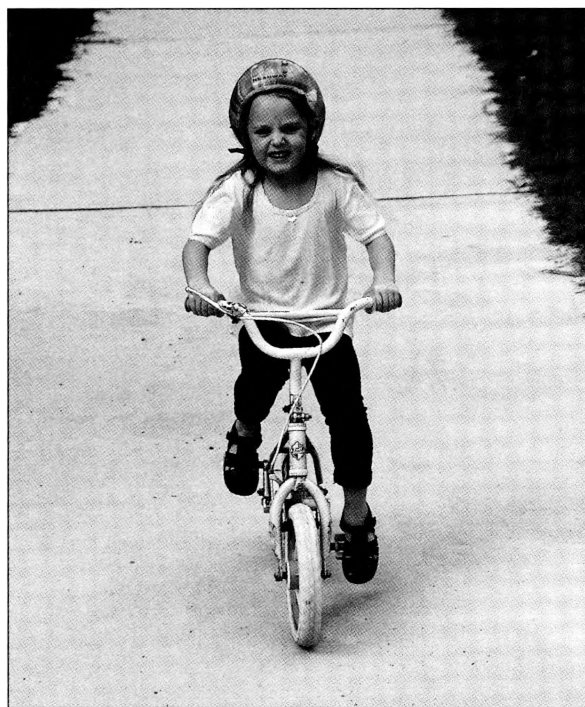
The new standard takes account of technological developments in the marketplace and sets performance criteria for the safety of the bicycle as a whole and for individual critical parts.

Because of the high proportion of child cyclists, the standard includes requirements that have been developed in response to Australian conditions and accidents involving children on bicycles. For example, there are more detailed requirements for front wheel quick-release devices, including a requirement and test method aimed at eliminating the likelihood that the wheel will fall out of the fork if the device is accidentally or otherwise released.

The new standard also includes a requirement for adequate assembly instructions for partly assembled bicycles. Bicycles have often failed to meet the standard because they were incorrectly assembled because of poor instructions. The new standard will ensure that bicycles purchased by Australian consumers are as safe as practically possible.

Bicycle helmets

On 22 September 1999 the Minister for Financial Services and Regulation introduced a new mandatory product safety standard for pedal cycle helmets. The updated standard is the result of a recently completed review of the mandatory standard. The review confirmed the



need for regulation to ensure the supply of safe helmets. Studies have shown that the compulsory wearing of bicycle helmets has resulted in the number of cyclists killed or admitted to hospital falling by more than 39 per cent since 1993.

The revised mandatory standard, which is based on the Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 2063:1996, provides improved protection for cyclists from better helmet coverage to the head particularly to the forehead, jaw and temple.

The review also found that the *Snell B95 standard for protective headgear*, promulgated by the Snell Memorial Foundation in the United States, provides comparable head protection to the Australian standard.

Australian manufacturers and importers will now be able to meet the Australian Standard or the Snell B95 standard. This will provide cyclists with a greater choice of helmets.

The regulations provide time for retailers and manufacturers to adjust to the new requirements by allowing the sale of helmets meeting the old mandatory standard up until 31 August 2001.

Ban on candles and candle wicks containing lead

On 1 September 1999 the Minister for Financial Services and Regulation declared that candles with wicks, and candle wicks containing lead, were unsafe goods and imposed an interim ban on their supply for 18 months. Research demonstrated that the candles, when burned in an enclosed space for a long period, released dangerously high levels of lead.

Care labelling

As from 1 January 2000, the information standard based on AS 1957:1987 *Care labelling of clothing, household textiles, furnishings, upholstered furniture, bedding, piece goods and yarns* shall cease to have effect. This standard has been running concurrently with the Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 1957:1998, *Textiles — care labelling*. From January 2000 all suppliers must ensure their products comply with the mandatory information standard based on AS/NZS 1957:1998.

The revised standard differs from the previous version in that it specifies individual pieces of a suite of furniture should be care labelled, expands the care instructions for leather and upholstery and includes as options the international symbols for care treatment. Written instructions are still required.

Elastic luggage straps

On 21 October 1999 the Minister for Financial Services and Regulation announced the introduction of a new regulation for warning labels on elastic luggage straps.

The updated standard is the result of a recently completed review of the mandatory consumer product safety standard. The revised labelling requires safety colours and additional warnings and will ensure that all consumers receive the same safety information.

The regulations provide time for retailers and manufacturers to adjust to the new requirements by allowing the sale of elastic luggage straps meeting the old mandatory standard until 31 May 2001.

Portable fire extinguishers

Aerosol fire extinguishers

On 1 January 2000 a new mandatory product safety standard for portable aerosol fire extinguishers came into effect. The new safety standard will ensure that portable aerosol extinguishers provide consumers with a safe, disposable fire extinguisher for household use.

The standard will also allow for new and innovative portable aerosol fire extinguishers to be manufactured and sold in Australia.

The new standard is based on Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 4353:1995 *Portable fire extinguishers — aerosol type*. The standard maintains the requirements of the previous standard, Australian Standard AS 1841.5-1992, *portable fire extinguishers Part 5: powder type* until 1 July 2001, to allow time for retailers and manufacturers to adjust to the new requirements.

AS/NZS 4353:1995 can be purchased from Standards Australia, telephone 1300 65 46 46. The Consumer Affairs Division of Treasury is now placing all Gazette Notices on their website and an electronic copy of the mandatory standard can be obtained at www.treasury.gov.au/publications/

Portable fire extinguishers

On 16 December 1999 the Minister for Financial Services and Regulation amended the consumer product safety standard for portable fire extinguishers. This mandatory product safety standard is based on Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 1841 parts 1–8 of 1997. These amendments are prescribed in Consumer Protection Notice No. 14 of 1999.

The previous mandatory standard based on Australian Standard AS 1841 parts 1–7 of 1992 ceased to have effect on 31 December 1999.