



Consumer Federation of America

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Office of the Secretary
Consumer Product Safety Commission
4330 East-West Highway
Bethesda, MD 20814
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Comments of Consumer Federation of America to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission on “Safety Standard Addressing Blade-Contact Injuries on Table Saws, Supplemental Notice of Proposed Rulemaking,” Docket No. CPSC-2011-0074-1354

Consumer Federation of America (CFA)¹ submits the following comments to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (referred to hereafter as CPSC or Commission) in support of the above-referenced matter.

I. Background

In 2017, the Commission published a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPR) regarding table saw blade safety. CFA, along with National Consumers League, Consumer Union, Public Citizen, and US PIRG submitted comments supporting a mandatory standard to include a performance standard for active injury mitigation (AIM) technology, which would limit the depth of cut by a spinning table saw blade to no more than 3.5 mm.² The groups encouraged the Commission to finalize the rule without delay.

Now, this supplemental notice of proposed rulemaking comprehensively considers the comments in response to the NPR, a 2017 Special Study, additional staff testing, recent developments related to AIM technology, and robust economic analysis. CFA supports the proposed rule and urges the Commission to finalize it.

¹ CFA is an association of nonprofit consumer organizations established in 1968 to advance the consumer interest through research, advocacy, and education. See <https://consumerfed.org/>.

² Comments of the National Consumers League, Consumers Union, the Consumer Federation of America, Public Citizen, and US PIRG to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission on the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking: Safety Standard Addressing Blade-Contact Injuries on Table Saws Docket No. CPSC-2011-0074 (July 26, 2017), accessed at <https://www.regulations.gov/comment/CPSC-2011-0074-1289>.

II. Significant Consumer Safety Benefits of Proposed Rule

According to the 2017 Special Study, there were an estimated 26,501 blade contact injured treated in emergency rooms in 2017. This number does not reflect injuries treated in other medical settings but CPSC's Injury Cost Model (ICM) projects an additional 22,675 blade contact injuries. Staff also prepared a table which provides the estimated number of emergency department-treated injuries associated with table saw blade contact from 2010-2021, demonstrating no discernible change in the risk of injury associated with blade contact despite the increasing percentage of saws sold with modular blade guards and riving knives. Data are clear: the voluntary standard, (UL) 62841-3-1, *Electric Motor-Operated Hand-Held Tools, Transportable Tools and Lawn and Garden Machinery Part 3-1: Particular Requirements for Transportable Table Saws*, has failed to eliminate or even adequately reduce the risk of injury. The proposed rule will effectively prevent and mitigate the severity of blade contact injuries.

Each of these injuries have high societal costs, for which staff provided comprehensive analysis. The costs include medical expense, work loss, and the physical and emotional trauma for both the injured party as well as their caregivers/families. The Commission estimated that the proposed rule would prevent or mitigate the severity of an estimated 49,176 injuries. Further, the net benefits from the proposed rule – approximately \$1.28 billion to \$2.32 billion per year - far exceed the estimated cost. Given the significant societal costs and effectiveness of the proposed rule to prevent injuries, the benefits clearly bear a reasonable relationship to costs.

Industry has had decades of knowledge that AIM technology works and time to develop their own technology. The Commission proposes a 36-month effective date for manufacturers to spread the costs to modify table saw design, incorporate AIM technology, and retool factories to produce table saws with the new technology. The Commission has carefully considered the market conditions in its analysis. A later effective date would delay the availability of safer products and put more people at unnecessary risk of serious, life-long injuries.

III. Conclusion

The Commission's rigorous and objective analysis demonstrates the need for this proposed rule. CFA supports the proposed rule and urges the Commission to quickly finalize it.

Respectfully submitted,

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Consumer Federation of America