

Newsletter from PROSAFE

PROSAFE and Market Surveillance Authorities from 25 EU Member States and EEA Countries Successfully Launch JA2016 Joint Market Surveillance Action on Consumer Products

PROSAFE continues to build on the success of ten years of Joint Actions. In the coming two years, 32 market surveillance authorities from 25 EU Member States or EEA countries will identify and remove non-compliant products in six product categories: baby carriers, cots, electrical toys, electrical appliances for haircare, impact drills and climbing equipment.

The Joint Action 2016 aims to protect consumers by identifying and removing unsafe products from the European market, to create equal terms and a "level playing field" for business and to support and increase the free flow of goods on the European market.

The Joint Action features participation from almost all EU Member States and EFTA countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden.

The products targeted by the Joint Action were chosen by the Member States after a rigorous consultation process undertaken by the Member States and coordinated by PROSAFE. This process reflects previous experience of the products and analysis of RAPEX and other relevant data.

The Joint Action addresses the following 6 product categories:

- **Baby carriers**

RAPEX data examined over the past 10 years shows 16 reports of Baby Carriers (12 for front/back Baby Carriers and 4 for Baby Slings). In addition, 14 of the 21 Member States authorities involved in the priority-setting exercise for this Joint Action gave some priority to Baby Carriers. European stakeholders were also in support of a Joint Action on Baby Carriers. A wide variety of products exists, and whilst European standards are in place for many of these items, it has so far proven too difficult to draft a full standard for them all. The Joint Action then will provide market surveillance authorities with useful experience in drawing up a test programme for these products.

- **Cots**

Cots were previously tested in JA2013. The results were startling, with 92% of cots and/or travel cot samples failing the current standard EN7161&2:2008+A1:2013, half of which were regarded to have a serious non-compliance. A number of recommendations were made to improve the current standard. Some improvements to the standard are currently underway. Sampling and testing additional cots in 2018 gives the market surveillance authorities an opportunity to check that the results of the earlier JA have taken effect.

- **Electrical Toys**

Electrical Toys were ranked by the Member States as the number one priority for this Joint Action. This kind of toys should be operated and designed to ensure that there is virtually no danger of electrocuting anyone. Electrical and electronic toys intended for use by children under 14 years of age fall within the scope of several pieces of union harmonisation legislation. Battery and/or mains powered electronic toys must not only comply with the Toy Safety Directive but also comply with various other Directives. Special attention will be given to the accessibility of battery compartment in toys having button-cell and R1 batteries as well as toys that are intended for children under 3 years of age with all type of batteries. Additionally, transformer-operated toys and/or dual-supply toys will also be concentrated upon, besides various other type of toys falling within this category.

- **Electrical Appliances for Haircare**

The main hazards associated with haircare products include electric shock, fire and burns. Since 2012 there have been 19 RAPEX notifications regarding electrical hair care products. Information from some Member States shows how widespread these products are. A research report suggests that there may be as many as 62 fatal accidents per year in the EU due to hair dryers. This same report suggests that in the USA fatalities have dropped from 15.7 per year to just 0.3 due to increased safety measures (a residual-current circuit breaker with an immersion sensor). Previous market surveys have identified problems with hair clippers, curling tongs, hair dryers and hair straighteners. The market surveillance authorities will have an opportunity to test a significant number of products and will also explore whether there is any correlation between deficiencies in the declaration of conformity presented and non-compliant products.

- **Climbing Equipment**

There were 32 notifications of climbing equipment to RAPEX during the period 2005 to 2016. Spain sampled 30 pieces of climbing equipment in 2015 and has expressed its concerns over its findings. Germany has undertaken some market surveillance on PPE and found high levels of non-compliance with the requirement to mark an expiry date on the product. Austria has noted some recent recalls of climbing equipment and a recent report of an accident in Belgium resulting in paralysis underlines the gravity of the hazard associated with these products. If Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for climbing fails to fulfill its protective function, a fall from a height may result in very serious injury, paralysis or death. In light of information from RAPEX notifications, product recalls, accident data and the opinions of stakeholders and experts, the project group will decide which specific categories of climbing equipment to sample and test during the Joint Action.

- **Power Tools - impact drills**

There have been twelve RAPEX notifications since 2007 concerning drills and impact drills. Four of these concerned a risk of injury, eight a risk of electric shock, five a risk of fire and another one a risk of burns. One particular source of risk associated with power tools is the migration over the years of professional equipment into the consumer market. Professional equipment is often more powerful than the consumer equivalent and thus able to inflict more serious injuries. It is also intended to be used by professional staff that has been trained and has to be supervised in its use. Due to this development and cheap imports many power tools like drills and impact drills have also become available in the lower end of the market in particular online. As a consequence, imported products from outside the single market may earn special attention in market surveillance efforts.

Methodology

These activities will sample a number of products, examine and test them, evaluate the results and take appropriate action against unsafe products that have been placed illegally on the market. Action will be taken in cooperation with the involved business if possible.

In addition to the above activities, the Joint Action continues the development of best practices for the Member State market surveillance authorities. They concern risk assessment methods, methods for addressing new and emerging issues, development of E-learning materials for market surveillance officers, implementation of mutual assessments between market surveillance authorities as well as other horizontal activities.

Background information

This information is issued by PROSAFE and the 32 participating authorities in the Joint Market Surveillance Action on GPSD Products 2016 - JA 2016.

The Action is coordinated by PROSAFE (Product Safety Forum of Europe), a non-profit organisation that brings together market surveillance officers from all over Europe and across the world. Visit www.prosafe.org to find more information about JA2016 and the other Joint Actions coordinated by PROSAFE.

Disclaimer

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