

- New requirements for products that rely on “wide lift bands” to raise and lower window coverings.
- A new requirement for a warning label on the outside of the retail package and merchandising materials for custom made corded window coverings to ensure that the consumer is made aware of this issue prior to a purchase.
- Newly expanded testing requirements for cord accessibility, hazardous loop testing, roll up style shade performance, and durability testing of all devices.

The predominant complaint made by the Petition about the 2012 safety standard is that it does not eliminate all corded window products. In her comments on the draft 2012 safety standard, Rachel Weintraub of the Consumer Federation of America wrote that the group opposes the revised standard because “This Proposed Revised Standard allows for separate operating cords, cord release devices, cord tension devices, and cord connectors.”¹¹ Indeed, it was the petitioners who, rather than engaging all stakeholders in a good-faith discussion about potential alternatives and solutions, came to the standard-setting process intent on banning all corded window blinds regardless of whether feasible and less costly alternatives exist.

Further evidencing their lack of sincerity in participating in a truly collaborative process, the consumer groups staged a media event during a steering committee meeting in September 2011 where they invited reporters to witness their scripted announcement that they were leaving the steering committee essentially because of the WCMA/ANSI steering committee’s refusal to ban all corded products. However, despite this type of activity, it is important to note that WCMA continued to include these consumer groups in the standards-development process and that some of these groups participated in the canvassing of the new standard and provided comments. Indeed, comments on the standard from consumer groups significantly contributed to the following concepts and principles being included in the 2012 WCMA/ANSI safety standard:

- A warning label on the outside of the retail package. The industry expanded this to include merchandising materials for custom made products not sold in a box;
- Durability tests and a pull out test from the wall;
- A pathway for new innovations to be tested for compliance as soon as they were introduced, so there would be no need for innovators to wait for a new revision to the standard; and,
- More robust product installation instructions.

IV. 2012 WCMA/ANSI SAFETY STANDARD IN RELATION TO GLOBAL STANDARDS

¹¹ Explanation of Negative Ballot to WCMA Letter Ballot on Proposed Revision of WCMA/ANSI A100.1 – 2007 Filed by Rachel Weintraub, Consumer Federation of America, February 9, 2012.