
U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION



Office of Compliance

Safety Standard¹ for Multi-Purpose Lighters

16 C.F.R. Part 1212

What is the purpose of the rule that requires multi-purpose lighters to be child-resistant?

This rule reduces the risk that children under age 5 will set fires while playing with multi-purpose lighters.

What is a multi-purpose lighter?

The term “multi-purpose lighter” includes products such as grill lighters, fireplace lighters, utility lighters, micro-torches, or gas matches that

- (1) are hand-held,
- (2) are flame producing,
- (3) operate on 10 oz. or less of fuel, and
- (4) have an ignition mechanism that is part of the lighter, and
- (5) are used by consumers to light items such as candles, charcoal, campfires and stoves, fuel-fired appliances, and pilot lights. They can also be used for brazing or soldering.

Cigarette lighters and matches are not multi-purpose lighters.

Where can I find the requirements?

The requirements are published in the Code of Federal Regulations, 16 C.F.R. 1212. You can get a copy from the Commission’s web site at: <http://www.cpsc.gov>

What are the requirements for multi-purpose lighters?

At least 85% of the children who test a surrogate (dummy) multi-purpose lighter in the manner described below must not be able to make it work. The child-resistant mechanism of the lighter must also:

- (1) Operate safely when used in a normal and convenient manner.
- (2) Work as long as the lighter has fuel.
- (3) Not be easy to deactivate or override.
- (4) Automatically reset when or before the user lets go of the lighter.

Multi-purpose lighters with a hands-free operation must also have an additional feature that locks the flame on. The child resistant feature on such a lighter must automatically reset after the flame is turned off.

What is a surrogate multi-purpose lighter?

A surrogate lighter is a substitute for an actual working multi-purpose lighter. Surrogate lighters are used for testing so that the children tested do not have to try to operate real lighters. A surrogate lighter approximates the appearance, size, weight, and shape of an actual lighter intended for use by consumers. It does not have fuel, and must also be identical to the actual lighter in all of the characteristics that might affect child resistance, including the method of operation and the force(s) needed to operate the lighter. When operated, a surrogate produces a sound or visual signal to let the tester know that it has been operated in a manner that would have caused the actual lighter to light.

How do you test multi-purpose lighters?

If you need to test a lighter, we recommend that you find a qualified child-testing laboratory in the U.S. to perform the test. A list of testing facilities known to the staff is available from the Office of Compliance or on the Commission's Web Site at: <http://www.cpsc.gov>. You should also review the test protocol carefully to make sure that you comply with all of the testing requirements.

The qualification test uses at least one, but no more than two, test panels of 100 children between the ages of 42 and 51 months to test surrogate lighters. Each panel is divided into 3 groups – 30 children 42 through 44 months old, 40 children 45 through 48 months old, and 30 children 49 through 51 months old.

Approximately of the children in each group must be boys. The test allows a small variation in the size of each group and in the number of boys and girls in each group.

Each child in the test panel must live within the United States, and have no illness, injury, or disability that

¹This document is a general summary of the Safety Standard for Multi-Purpose Lighters and does not replace the requirements published in 16 C.F.R. 1212. This summary does not include all of the details included in those requirements, particularly those involved in conducting tests on lighters for child-resistance. For those details, please refer to the regulation or contact the Office of Compliance.

would interfere with the child's ability to operate the test lighters. No child may participate in more than one test panel or test more than one model of multi-purpose lighter. Before any child participates in a test, a parent or legal guardian must agree in writing to let the child participate.

Two children at a time participate in the test in a well-lighted room that is familiar to them and is free from distractions. A tester first operates a surrogate lighter in the presence of the children without letting them see what he or she is doing, so that the children will know what sound or visual signal the surrogate makes when it is operated successfully. The tester then gives each child a surrogate lighter, and asks the children to try to make the same sound or signal. Each child has five minutes to try to do this.

If a child succeeds in making the sound or signal, he or she is not tested further and that child's test is counted as a failure of the multi-purpose lighter that the surrogate represents. The tester shows any child who does not succeed in the first five minutes how to make the surrogate make the sound or signal. The child then has five more minutes to try to operate the surrogate successfully. Any child who succeeds in operating it in the second five minutes is also counted as a multi-purpose lighter failure.

For a multi-purpose lighter to pass, at least 85% of the children tested must be unable to operate the surrogate lighter. For the first 100-child test panel, if 10 or fewer children operate the surrogate successfully, the multi-purpose lighter that the surrogate represents passes. If 19 or more children succeed, the lighter fails. In either case, no further testing is necessary. If 11 through 18 children in the first panel operate the surrogate lighter successfully, the second 100-child panel is tested. In that case, the lighter fails if 31 or more of the total 200 children tested operate the surrogate.

Are there other requirements?

Yes. After conducting qualification tests on surrogate lighters, manufacturers and importers of multi-purpose lighters must certify that the lighters they sell comply with the standard. Certification assures that the child-resistant mechanisms on lighters produced for sale perform as effectively as the mechanisms on the tested surrogates. A certificate must be based on a reasonable testing program of lighters sampled during production or on a test of each lighter produced for sale.

Does the multi-purpose lighter standard have record keeping and reporting requirements?

Yes. Every manufacturer and importer of lighters subject to the standard must maintain records of child

testing in English on paper, microfiche, or similar media, and must give those records within 48 hours to any designated officer or employee of the Commission who asks for them.

A manufacturer or importer of a lighter that is not manufactured in the United States may maintain its production records outside the United States, but must make such records available to the Commission in the United States within 1 week of a request from a Commission employee. Please refer to the standard more detail.

Are there any requirements to report to the Commission before distributing lighters?

Yes. At least 30 days before an importer or manufacturer imports into or distributes a multi-purpose lighter in the United States, the manufacturer or importer must provide a written report to the Office of Compliance, Consumer Product Safety Commission 4330 East West Hwy. Room 610, Bethesda, Maryland 20814. The report must include:

- (1) The name, address, and principal place of business of the manufacturer or importer,
- (2) the design of the lighter model and the child-resistant feature(s) used in that model,
- (3) about the results of the qualification testing,
- (4) the place or places where the lighters were or will be manufactured,
- (5) the location(s) where the records required to be maintained are kept, and

At least one prototype or production unit of the lighter must accompany the report.

Are there any labeling requirements?

Multi-purpose lighters are subject to precautionary labeling under the Federal Hazardous Substances Act (FHSA) if they contain fuel under pressure.

The labeling must appear both on the lighter itself and on its retail display package, and must also state the name and address of the manufacturer or importer. The labeling must also be prominent and conspicuous. See 16 C.F.R. 1500.121 for more detail.

Where can I find additional information?

You can obtain the Safety Standard for Multi-Purpose Lighters, 16 CFR parts 1145 and 1212, from the Commission's Web site at <http://www.cpsc.gov>. For more information, contact the Consumer Product Safety Commission, Office of Compliance, Washington, D.C. 20207, telephone: (301) 504-0608, e-mail: sect15@cpsc.gov.