

### **Market Surveillance Activities against Dangerous Cigarette Lighters Continue**

**In December 2009, PROSAFE and market surveillance authorities in 13 European Member States presented the results of a successful cross-border surveillance action to improve the safety of cigarette lighters. Almost 1,300 lighter models were removed from the European market during the action. The work continues on.**

In September 2007, PROSAFE together with 13 Member States and with financial support from the European Commission began a joint action on non child-resistant lighters and novelty lighters. The joint action ended in December 2009 and produced some significant results:

- More than 4,500 inspections were carried out at importers, wholesalers and retailers.
- Customs inspected almost 8,500 consignments ranging from small packages to entire containers upon arrival to Europe.
- The participants checked more than 5,500 lighter models.
- Measures were taken against almost 1,300 lighter models because they were dangerous or because the economic operator was unable to present the required technical documentation.
- Almost 500 models of novelty lighters were removed from the European market.

The aim of the joint action was to increase the safety of the European consumer by ensuring that only safe lighters are placed on the EU market. Reports from the Member States show that this objective was partly met. Most Member States reported that the problem with novelty lighters has more or less been solved, but the results also show that too large a share of the inexpensive cigarette lighters on the European market still do not comply with the legal requirements.

Therefore, PROSAFE and the Member States decided to carry on the activities on lighters for 3 more years. Four of the Member States from the first joint action decided to focus on other products. They have been replaced by four others meaning that the follow-up action also has 13 participating Member States.

The follow-up action started January, 1<sup>st</sup> 2010 and continues until December, 31<sup>st</sup> 2012.

#### **Advice to consumers**

As a consumer you are advised to follow the 8 rules for the safe use of lighters listed below:

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## **8 rules for safe operation of lighters**

1. Do not buy lighters without any evidence of child safety or lighters with a design that appeals to children.
2. Do not leave lighters within easy reach of children. Child-resistance does not mean child-proof.
3. Do not leave lighters on hot surfaces. Heat might change the lighters properties and cause fires.
4. Only use lighters for their intended purposes. Misuse may be dangerous.
5. Dispose of defective lighters as soon as you discover any disruption or leakage.
6. Do not attempt to repair a lighter yourself. Always use the appointed service centre.
7. Only use the appropriate fuel when refilling your lighter. Guidance is found in the instructions for use.
8. Never attempt to refill lighters that are not refillable.

Take care of the environment. Dispose of empty lighters properly.

## **Background**

The joint action is coordinated by PROSAFE, “The Product Safety Enforcement Forum of Europe”, a non-profit organisation that brings together market surveillance officers from all over Europe and across the world. The joint action is co-financed by the Directorate General for Health and Consumers of the European Commission.

According to the General Product Safety Directive any product that is placed on the European market must be safe. This is an obligation of the producers, importers and retailers. Lighters are presumed to be safe if they are constructed and produced so that they meet the requirements of the two standards EN ISO 9994 and EN 13869.

The RAPEX reports on those lighters presenting the most serious risks to the consumer can be found on the European Commission’s website:

[http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/dyna/rapex/rapex\\_archives\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/dyna/rapex/rapex_archives_en.cfm)

PROSAFE compiles inventories of lighter designs that are commonly recognised by market surveillance authorities to be novelty lighters and designs that are recognised not to be novelty lighters. They can be found on the PROSAFE WebEx workspace:

<http://prosafe.project.webexworkspace.com/r.asp?a=12&id=17619>

Please use the option “Enter as a guest” below the username box.

## **Disclaimer**

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