

Guidelines for Drawstrings on Children's Garments

In February 1996, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) issued guidelines and voluntary standards to assist manufacturers in designing clothing that will decrease the risk of accidental strangulation by drawstrings (cord, chain, ribbon, string, tape, etc...) of garments.

Although the CPSC's drawstring guidelines do not represent a standard or mandatory requirement set by the agency, some U.S. states, such as Wisconsin and New York, have implemented laws with drawstring requirements. The CPSC recommends that a combination of the drawstring guidelines be used on all garments in order to meet the laws and requirements of all states.

CPSC's recommendations for selling children's apparel in the United States:

Drawstring Specification for United States		
Types of Apparel	Citation	Specifications
Children's Clothing Sizes 0-16	Standard Measurement per ASTM F1816 CPSC Guideline	Head and Neck Area: There shall be no functional drawstrings in the hood and neck area of children's clothing sizes 0-16 (including outerwear and non-outerwear). CPSC recommends the use of alternative closures on upper body garments such as snaps, buttons, Velcro, and elastic.
		Waist area on Upper (tops, jackets, dresses) and Bottom (pants, skirts) Garments: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- No more than 3 inches of the drawstring shall be outside of the drawstring channel when the garment is extended to its fullest- Toggles, knots or other attachments shall not be used at the ends of the drawstring- The drawstring shall be sewn at the midpoint of the channel so it cannot be completely pulled out of the channel.

In the first quarter of 2008 alone, several major retailers have been forced to settle with the CPSC for damages in excess of \$320000 in civil penalties. CPSC alleges that retailers ignored information regarding possible defects on the drawstrings that could create a substantial safety hazard.

For more information on the CPSC's guidelines or a copy of the ASTM's Standard Safety Specification for Drawstrings on Children's Upper Outerwear, please contact a member of our Regulatory Compliance Team.