



DEBATE PACK

Number CDP-2017-0123, 21 April 2017

Whirlpool and the product safety system

Westminster Hall Debate 26 April 2017 at 2.30pm

There will be a Westminster Hall debate on Whirlpool and the product safety system on Tuesday 26 April at 2.30pm. Andy Slaughter MP called this debate.

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

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1. What is the issue with Whirlpool?

Following Whirlpool's acquisition of the Hotpoint/Indesit brands in 2014, it carried out a safety review of its product portfolio. As part of this review, Whirlpool identified a fault with two tumble dryer models manufactured between April 2004 and September 2015. In some cases, excess fluff coming into contact with the heating element, presented a fire risk. The affected brands are: Hotpoint, Indesit, and Creda.

Whirlpool has asked the public to check whether their machine is one of those affected and, if so, to contact the company through its [dedicated website](#). Consumers were advised of a 6-8 week wait for an engineer visit. However, it has been reported that some consumers have waited as long as 16 months for the necessary repair.¹ Initially, consumers were advised by Whirlpool that the dryers were safe to use provided the following precautions were observed: the tumble dryer was not left on overnight; the machine was not left unattended during the day; the lint filter was cleaned after every use; and the machine was properly vented. However, in February 2017, Whirlpool updated its website advising consumers to unplug faulty machines and refrain from using them at all, until they have been modified.

There was an Adjournment debate on [Faulty tumble dryers \(fire risk\)](#) on 13 September 2016, introduced by Andy Slaughter MP following a serious fire in a block of flats in Shepherd's Bush on 9 August 2016. Speaking during this debate, Carolyn Harris, Chair of the all-party group on home electrical safety, said that a proper Government response was needed.² Margot James, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) gave the following appraisal of the Whirlpool situation:

Although we have heard terrible reports this evening, I really should put on record again that, of the five Whirlpool products that are mainly sold in Britain, 5 million were sold over the course of a year. There were 750 fire incidents, most of which were contained within the machine. That represents 0.02% of all the sales of each individual product. That is a very small percentage, but I accept that 750 fires is a high number, albeit that most of them were contained within the machine.³

[...]

I have been in contact with trading standards, and to date I have been satisfied with its approach. The advice and guidance through the process of modification that Whirlpool is implementing whereby one has to attend the tumble dryer while it is carrying out its operation is certainly inconvenient—I would be the first to admit that. If one has dual meters so that machines can be put on overnight that does not help with energy conservation. However, I

¹ [HC Deb 13 September 2016 c.867](#)

² [HC Deb 13 September 2016 c.872](#)

³ [HC Deb 13 September 2016 c.875](#)

am not yet persuaded that the product is necessarily unsafe, because the very few fires overall in terms of the 5 million machines that have been sold have mostly been contained within the machine. On being present, bearing in mind what trading standards believes to be a very low risk, I think that the advice is reasonable given that a total product recall is unlikely to get back more than one in four machines.⁴

[...]

I want to share with the House the key points made to me by the chief executive of Whirlpool. Following its acquisition of Indesit in 2014, its global safety experts worked to review the product portfolio, proactively engaged with trading standards, shared with it all relevant information available and sought its determination on what action to take. Trading standards subsequently determined that corrective action was required and that a modification programme was necessary to resolve the issue. Since then, Whirlpool has been in continual dialogue with the trading standards authority. Alongside a widespread safety alert and information campaign, including adverts in the national press, it rapidly engaged with customers and set up a dedicated phone line and websites and an online model-checker for consumers to instantly find out whether they had an affected appliance. It is continuing its efforts to identify all owners of the affected models and to contact them directly by all of the usual means. In addition to direct consumer outreach, it has continued to work with retail and trade partners to identify the machines involved and to communicate with owners.⁵

[...]

Whirlpool engineers are visiting more than 4,000 homes a day across the UK and, as of today, it has resolved more than 805,000 customer cases. I am assured by Peterborough trading standards that that is true and, although the mood in the Chamber tonight is hostile to Whirlpool, that is quite a creditable performance and not to be lightly dismissed. It is continually looking into additional ways to improve the efficiency of the programme, and I am sure that tonight's debate will have illuminated a few of those additional ways. It is increasing the number of engineers all the time—it has increased its team of engineers by more than 45%.⁶

⁴ [HC Deb 13 September 2016 c.876](#)

⁵ [HC Deb 13 September 2016 c.877](#)

⁶ [HC Deb 13 September 2016 c.877-878](#)

2. Product safety system

2.1 EU safety standards

All tumble dryers sold in the UK must carry a 'CE mark'. In brief, a CE mark must be affixed to certain categories of products sold in the 27 member states of the EU and Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway (in other words, the European Economic Area, or EEA). A CE mark is a declaration by the manufacturer that the product in question complies with all relevant EU legislation that mandates:

- compliance with specific standards and requirements concerning product safety, environmental impact, consumer protection, etc.; and
- the placing of a CE mark

In effect, CE marking enables a product to enter the European market. More than 30% of industrial products can be sold on the EU market only if they bear the CE Mark. Within the EU and the broader EEA, the marketing and use of products which carry a CE mark cannot be restricted unless there is evidence of non-compliance with the underlying EU legislation justifying such restriction. A CE mark is also intended to serve as a sign of assurance for consumers and other end users of the products.

A wide range of products are covered by EU laws that mandate CE marking. In respect of tumble dryers, the [Ecodesign Directive](#) mandates CE marking, specifically, [Regulation No 1275/2008](#). It is the responsibility of the manufacturer to ensure that the tumble dryer is CE marked.

It is important to note that CE marking does not address all regulatory requirements that may apply to a product. A CE mark only signifies compliance with a certain set of EU legislation that specifically mandates CE marking. There is other EU legislation that regulates products, but does not mandate CE marking. For example, in respect of tumble dryers:

- [Directive 2001/95/EC](#) (the "General Product Safety Directive") stipulates that a product which is intended for consumers must meet certain product safety requirements before it is placed on the market. However, the General Product Safety Directive does not require such product to be CE marked.
- [Directive 2012/19/EC](#) (the 'WEEE Directive' on waste electrical and electronic equipment), stipulates the manner in which electrical and electronic equipment which constitutes waste should be collected and treated, and also provides that electrical and electronic equipment must not be designed or produced in a manner which prevents the reuse of their waste. However, the WEEE Directive does not require such products to be CE marked.

In other words, the fact that a product bears a CE mark does not necessarily mean that it complies with all other EU legislation that applies to that product.

Finally, it is important to point out that CE marking of a tumble dryer (or other consumer 'white goods') is in addition to other legal requirements as to consumer protection, product safety, environmental protection, etc.

2.2 Product recall

Overview

In the UK, general product safety is covered by the [General Product Safety Regulations 2005](#). Producers, importers and sellers of goods are required to put on the market products which are safe. If they become aware that a product they are selling is not safe, that there is a risk of serious injury, damage or death, they should institute "corrective action". The defective product should immediately be removed from sale and recalled in some way, which might mean a modification, repair or other process which removes the potential harm.

Manufacturers, importers, distributors, etc. are required to carry out checks to ensure consumer products are safe – this is a requirement under the [EU General Product Safety Directive](#) (GPSD). These duties are enforced by Market Surveillance Authorities (MSAs). In the UK, local authority Trading Standards Services are the main MSAs in respect of consumer goods (whether they are bought from a shop, online or second-hand). Specifically, it is the responsibility of Trading Standards to stop unsafe products from entering the country, remove products already on the market, conduct random sampling, offer advice and assistance to business, and investigate reports of unsafe products.

Who is responsible for monitoring and approving all other product safety recalls?

In respect of white goods (i.e. electrical equipment), manufacturers are required to inform their local Trading Standards Authority of any issue that poses a serious or moderate risk to health and safety. General product safety is covered by the [General Product Safety Regulations 2005](#). Under these Regulations, the manufacturer must:

- contact consumers who have purchased the product in order to inform them of the recall, "where and to the extent it is practicable to do so"
- publish a notice in such form and such manner as is likely to bring to the attention of purchasers of the product the risk the product poses and the fact of the recall, or
- make arrangements for the collection or return of the product from consumers who have purchased it or for its disposal

Although the recall communication will be led by the manufacturer, they must be supported by the distribution chain (e.g. retailers). This is to ensure that the recall communication quickly reaches as many customers as possible thereby reducing the risk of consumers being harmed by the product.

What are the challenges of communicating a product safety recall to consumers?

Product recalls are often complex and it can be difficult to trace the customer – for example they may not have provided contact details when the product was purchased or have moved house. According to [YouGov research](#), just over a third of consumers currently register their appliances.

Where manufacturers do not know the owners of affected products they have to resort to ‘broadcasting’ details of the recall in the hope that consumers see the information, realise that they have the product and make contact. In practice, a manufacturer may need to use a combination of approaches in the hope that at least one communication gets through to every customer with an affected product.

A report on the findings of an [Independent Review into product recall](#)⁷ under Lynn Faulds Wood, was published in February 2016 (see below). According to this report, consumers are confused by the number of websites (over 30 in some form or another) which list consumer product recalls. The main websites are:

- [Chartered Trading Standards Institute](#)
- [OECD Recall Portal](#)
- [RAPEX](#)
- [Electrical Safety First](#)
- [UK Association of Fire Investigators](#)

The feeling from stakeholders was a need for more information sharing and more consistency between the main players involved in a product recall.

⁷ [“UK Consumer Product Recall – An Independent Review by Lynn Faulds Wood”](#), February 2016, [online] (accessed 20 April 2017)

3. Redress

3.1 Consumer protection: statutory rights

A UK consumer will have the benefit of certain statutory rights depending on the date of purchase of the faulty tumble dryer:

- If the tumble dryer was purchased on or before 30 September 2015, then [the Sale of Goods Act 1979](#) (as amended) (the 'SGA 1979') will still apply.
- If the tumble dryer was purchased on or after 1 October 2015, then the new [Consumer Rights Act 2015](#) (the 'CRA 2015') will apply.

There are separate Library briefing papers on both the "[Sale of Goods Act 1979](#)" (CBP 2239) and the "[Consumer Rights Act 2015](#)" (CBP 6588).

In addition, if a consumer bought a faulty white good using a credit card, depending on the circumstances, he/she may be able to pursue a claim against the credit card company under section 75 of the [Consumer Credit Act 1974](#). This provision makes the credit provider "jointly and severally liable" with the retailer for any breach of contract or misrepresentation by the company, provided the item costs between £100 and £30,000. This protection applies to purchases made over a counter, online or by phone.

3.2 Personal injury

In addition to statutory rights under consumer protection legislation, a personal injury claim might also be brought to recover financial compensation for anyone who has suffered a personal injury through no fault of their own. Much would turn on the circumstances of the case.

4. Government action

4.1 Independent review into product recall

During the House of Lords Report Stage of the [Consumer Rights Bill](#) on 19 November 2014, a review of the UK's system for the recall of unsafe products was announced by Baroness Neville-Rolfe. Jo Swinson, then Consumer Minister, announced on 13 March 2015 that Lynn Faulds Wood would lead this review. Its remit was to consider how enforcement could be made more effective and explore consumer understanding of the process.

The review considered the key issues that directly impact on the effectiveness of the UK's consumer product recall systems, and how those systems interact with the wider EU RAPEX system (a pan-Europe online platform which identifies and removes unsafe consumer products from the market). Specifically, the review considered:

- The existing mechanisms in place to assist Market Surveillance Authorities (MSAs), business and consumers and how well these are used and understood by all of the relevant parties and what currently works well and what does not.
- It considered regional variations on how well the recall regulations are being enforced around the UK.
- It looked into the procedures used by business to allow consumers to register products and the impact of their approach to the use of data for marketing purposes on this.

A [report](#) on the findings of this review was published in February 2016.⁸ It reached the following conclusion about the current recall system:

On paper it looks like a good system – our robust laws in the UK and Europe are among the strongest in the world, potential penalties and fines have been increased, thousands of products are withdrawn from sale or recalled every year. But the system is out of date. It isn't working well enough to protect us. Trading Standards Officers have suffered severe cutbacks and find it difficult, if not impossible to catch businesses cutting corners and behaving badly. Only one company across Europe has been fined. Many unsafe goods come from outside the European Union through entities which are hard – if not impossible - to trace. Traceability is a major issue.⁹

The report made a number of recommendations, as outlined in **Box 1** below.

⁸ ["UK Consumer Product Recall – An Independent Review by Lynn Faulds Wood"](#), February 2016, [online] (accessed 20 April 2017)

⁹ Ibid, p.12

Box 1: Recommendations of the Independent Review into Product Review

- **Recommendation 1:** There is a need for the creation of an official national product safety agency or 'centre of excellence' to show leadership and coordinate the system, promoting, protecting, informing and empowering business and consumers.
- **Recommendation 2:** There should be an official trusted website - for business and the public – for everyone - with the central product safety agency its guardian.
- **Recommendation 3:** There is an urgent need to improve funding, training, resources and procedures for Market Surveillance - the enforcement authorities whose job it is to make the system work effectively.
- **Recommendation 4:** Alternative funding solutions to improve the recall system should be explored, solutions which could bring enormous benefits to good business and the insurance industry.
- **Recommendation 5:** Business could lead Europe with more reliable, detailed guidance on product recall (templates, British Standards etc.) – guidance under consideration for the European General Product Safety Directive.
- **Recommendation 6:** There is an urgent need for a 'mapping' of organisations involved in product recall and better data and information sharing to prevent injury, damage and death.
- **Recommendation 7:** There is a need to re-introduce a national Injury database with wider benefits beyond providing information and evidence for the recall system.
- **Recommendation 8:** There is a need to improve consumer interest and involvement in the recall process – to research evidence-based ways to reach consumers and influence their behaviour.

The [Government's response](#) to the Faulds Wood report was published in February 2016. In terms of "next steps", the Government said:

This document sets out the actions that Government will take in response to the Review's recommendations. However, Government cannot act alone; everyone with an interest in the recall system needs to play their part.

To support our actions, we will therefore set up a steering group comprising senior representatives from key stakeholders (manufacturers, distributors, trade associations, consumers groups and market surveillance authorities) and supported by BIS officials. This group will then appoint its own chair and terms of reference. The group will be tasked with monitoring progress on each of the actions outlined above, together with the actions taken by others in response to the Review.

We believe that having a group comprising of stakeholders that have a range of skills and perspectives and a vested interest in seeing an improved UK recall system will deliver meaningful and effective change. A report outlining progress against the actions will be published in due course.¹⁰

¹⁰ Department for Business Innovation and Skills (now BEIS), "[UK Consumer Product Recall Review: The Government response to the independent recall review by Lynn Faulds Wood](#)". February 2016, [online] (accessed 20 April 2017)

4.2 Recall Review Steering Group (RRSG) and Working Group on Product Recalls and Safety

The **Recall Review Steering Group** (RRSG) set up to evaluate the independent review met three times in 2016. According to the Government, its key objective was to improve the UK recall system and improve consumer safety more generally, whilst identifying ways to further engage business and consumers.¹¹ A target of 24 months was agreed to meet three main targets, which were to:

- establish a 'centre of excellence' or official website for business and the public
- more reliable, detailed guidance on product recall (templates, British Standards)
- the 'mapping' of organisations involved in product recall and better data and information sharing to prevent injury, damage and death¹²

During an Adjournment Debate on [Faulty tumble dryers \(fire risk\)](#) on 13 September 2016, (see below) Margot James, gave the following appraisal of the work of the RRSG:

"The group works closely with officials from my Department who provide a secretariat function. It is primarily focusing on three work strands: (i) establishing a centre of excellence, or official website, for business and the public; (ii) considering how to ensure that we have more reliable, detailed guidance on product recalls, which would, I hope, improve the rate of recall from its current one in four success rate; and (iii) establishing a mapping process whereby all organisations involved in product recalls can have access to better data and information sharing. There will be regular updates on the work of the group, including progress on the new website. Hon. Members will be able to see that information posted on gov.uk very shortly.

[...] Although they have set themselves a timeline of reporting within two years, the Government has asked them at least to produce an interim report, in a much shorter timeframe, with measures that the Government can then consider implementing without further delay."¹³

In October 2016, a new **Working Group on Product Recalls and Safety** ("the Working Group") was announced by the Government, to build on the earlier work of the previous RRSG. The role and membership of this new Group has been expanded (bringing together experts in the fire services, trading standards, consumer groups and industry) to consider wider issues of product safety and recall. Specifically, the Working Group, which met for the first time on 1 November 2016, has been asked to develop options to improve the

¹¹ Gov.UK, "[Product Safety: Working Group](#)", 28 November 2016 [online] (accessed 20 April 2017)

¹² Ibid

¹³ [HC Deb 13 September 2016 c.876](#)

system of product recalls and safety. It is encouraged to pay particular attention to:

- identifying the causes of fire in white goods and the action needed to reduce them
- registration of electrical products at the point of sale
- the development of a code of practice for product recalls including the peer review of risk assessments
- improving the information available to consumers and the role of consumer education
- ways to improve the capture and use of data relating to faulty electrical goods
- the value of marking white goods to preserve their identification through fire

The Government asked for options and recommendations to improve the safety of white goods such as tumble dryers. The Working Group has now submitted five initial recommendations to the Government, which it is considering. These are:

- greater coordination of product safety recalls and enforcement at the national level
- developing Primary Authority Partnerships
- developing a Code of Practice on managing effective correction action (including recalls)
- government support for AMDEA's 'Register my Appliance'
- research into consumer behaviour to understand how best to encourage consumers to engage with a corrective action when a problem is identified with a product

The Working Group is expected to provide a full set of recommendations and report of its findings in spring 2017.¹⁴

4.3 Register My Appliance Day

On 19 January 2017, the Consumer Minister Margot James and the [Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy](#) (BEIS) announced their support for "Register My Appliance Day" with the Association of Manufacturers and Domestic Appliances (AMDEA) to raise awareness of product safety and recalls. Consumers are encouraged to add product details onto the [AMDEA Register My Appliance portal](#), so that they can be contacted swiftly in the event that a safety repair is needed.¹⁵

¹⁴ Gov.UK, "[Product Safety: Working Group](#)", 28 November 2016 [online] (accessed 20 April 2017)

¹⁵ Gov.UK, "[Consumer Minister urges people to register their appliances](#)", 19 January 2017, [online] (accessed 20 April 2017)

4.4 Minister's letter to Whirlpool

According to a press notice published by BEIS on 15 October 2016, the Consumer Minister, Margot James, wrote to Whirlpool UK asking for reassurance that everything possible was being done to ensure the safety of consumers.¹⁶ She asked the company to resolve the ongoing safety issue affecting consumers more quickly.¹⁷

In the same press notice, two other measures were announced, namely:

- The formation of a new government-backed working group to deliver urgent recommendations to improve the safety of white goods (including tumble dryers) (see above).¹⁸
- An ongoing review into local authorities to prioritise the issue of product safety following an investigation into a serious fire caused by a tumble dryer in Shepherd's Bush, London. (The investigation concluded on Thursday 6 October 2016 that the cause was a tumble dryer with a fault previously identified by the manufacturer.)

An extract from the press notice is reproduced below:

While Whirlpool has made significant efforts to modify the affected machines, the Minister does not consider this to go far enough and has asked the managing director to look at options to reduce the waiting times for machine modifications. Government also wants consumers to receive a clear response committing to action within an agreed timeframe and for Whirlpool to improve how they communicate the option of receiving a replacement machine rather than a modification to its customers.

The new working group on product recalls and safety will bring together expertise from the fire service, trading standards, consumer groups and industry, and report back with interim findings by the end of the year (2016). Areas of focus will be the causes of fires in white goods, the marking of appliances to make them easier to identify after a fire, and a code of practice for product recalls, including the peer review of risk assessments.

Alongside this, the Minister has asked an ongoing review into local authorities to prioritise the enforcement of product safety regulation.

Consumer Minister Margot James said:

"Manufacturers should be doing everything they can to make sure their products are safe to use and, where needed, rectifying issues as quickly as possible. This government takes consumer safety very seriously and I have offered to meet the managing director of Whirlpool to discuss how the company can improve its response to this issue.

¹⁶ "[Government demands more action from Whirlpool on faulty tumble dryers](#)", Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, 15 October 2016, [online] (accessed 31 October 2016)

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Ibid

I also want to see what more can be done to improve the safety of white goods and to support local trading standards officers to make sure customers aren't put at risk."¹⁹

¹⁹ Ibid

5. Media

5.1 Articles and blogs

BBC online

[Llanrwst fatal fire: spontaneous combustion dryer claim](#)

21 April 2017

Telegraph

[Ignored by Whirlpool? Four ways to fast-track compensation for your fire-risk dryer](#)

17 March 2017

Telegraph

[Tumble drier scandal: Whirlpool 'sold out' of popular replacement machines](#)

10 March 2017

ITV online

[Hotpoint issue safety warning urging customers to 'unplug' tumble dryers](#)

22 February 2017

Daily Mirror

[Whirlpool orders plug to be pulled on millions of faulty tumble dryers until they can be repaired](#)

22 February 2017

Telegraph

[Whirlpool scandal: three million families told 'do not use' faulty tumble dryers](#)

22 February 2017

Guardian

[Dangerous business: what to do if a product you use has been recalled](#)

11 January 2017

BBC online

[Truth, fires and tumble dryers: are our home appliances safe?](#)

11 October 2016

ITV online

[How to check if your tumble dryer is a safety risk](#)

6 October 2016

Guardian

[Whirlpool told to do more to ensure safety after tumble dryer blaze](#)

6 October 2016

Metro

[London Fire Brigade's got some real beef with Whirlpool and it's letting the world know](#)

30 August 2016

BBC online

['Action needed' on fire-risk dryers, says Trading Standards chief](#)

18 March 2016

Daily Mirror

[6,000 tumble dryers burst into flames in six years as campaign calls for tougher safety](#)

15 February 2016

ITV online

['Significant number' of Hotpoint, Indesit and Creda tumble dryers 'pose a fire risk'](#)

23 November 2015

5.2 Press releases

Local Government Association

[LGA responds to new safety advice for fire-risk tumble dryers](#)

22 February 2017

Chartered Trading Standards Institute

[Shoppers stuck with faulty electrical items urged to use their consumer rights](#)

28 November 2016

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

[Government demands more action from Whirlpool on faulty tumble dryers](#)

15 October 2016

London Fire Brigade

[We want Whirlpool to change advice on faulty white goods after tower block blaze](#)

26 August 2016

[Includes statement by the then Fire Commissioner, Ron Dobson]

6. Parliamentary Business

6.1 Debates

[Faulty Tumble Dryers \(Fire Risk\)](#)

HC Deb 13 September 2016 c865-78

[Faulty Electrical Imports](#)

HC Deb 22 March 2016 c487-510WH

6.2 Parliamentary Questions

[Product Recalls and Safety Working Group](#)

Asked by: Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Lord Prior of Brampton on 23 January (HL Deb, col 421), which individuals sit on the working group on product recalls and safety; when it first met; when the next meeting is due to take place; and what is the scope and scale of its review.

Answered by: Lord Prior of Brampton | Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

The Working Group on Product Recalls and Safety was announced by my hon. Friend the Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility in October 2016. The Group first met on 1 November 2016. It has subsequently met on 14 December and 8 February and the next meeting is due to take place on 13 March.

The Working Group is tasked to develop options to improve the system of product recalls and safety with an immediate focus on recommendations to improve the safety of white goods such as tumble dryers.

The Group is chaired by Neil Gibbins, Former Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Devon and Somerset. Membership of the Working Group is drawn from:

- Association of British Insurers (ABI)
- Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers (ACTSO)
- Association of Manufacturers of Domestic Appliances (AMDEA)
- Baker McKenzie LLP
- British Retail Consortium (BRC)
- British Standards Institution (BSI)

- British Toy and Hobby Association (BTHA)
- Brunel University London (BUL)
- Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI)
- Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA)
- Citizens Advice (CA)
- Electrical Safety First (ESF)
- Fire Protection Association (FPA)
- Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA)
- Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT)

More detailed information on the activities of the Working Group, its initial recommendations and meetings notes can be found on the following website <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/product-safety-working-group>. The Group is due to report back to my hon. Friend in March.

1 March 2017 | Written questions | HL 5507

[Domestic Appliances: Fires](#)

Asked by: Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent discussions they have had with manufacturers about fires caused by faulty electric tumble dryers.

Answered by: Baroness Neville-Rolfe | Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

Whilst the Government continues to meet regularly with representatives from the electrical appliances sector, the enforcement of the relevant legislation is a matter for local Government Trading Standards services. The recent modification programme for tumble dryers announced by Whirlpool is being overseen by Peterborough Council as the Primary Authority. The Government has asked Peterborough Council to provide regular updates on progress.

3 August 2016 | Written questions | HL 1314

[Domestic Appliances: Fires](#)

Asked by: Baroness Byford

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will review the safety standards for refrigeration units and tumble dryers in the light of the number of fires caused by such machines in individual homes.

Answered by: Baroness Neville-Rolfe

The safety of tumble dryers and refrigeration units is regulated by the Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994, which require these products to be safe and manufactured in accordance with good

engineering practice. Standards, although voluntary, support the legislation by providing a benchmark as to what is considered to constitute safe in practice. The review of British Standards is a matter for the British Standards Institution (BSI) which undertakes regular reviews to ensure the standards address any safety concerns raised and follow best practice, and BIS officials participate in these activities.

I am aware that the BSI has submitted proposals to the International Electro-technical Committee (IEC) to revise the refrigeration standard to address the recent fire concerns.

The standard for tumble dryers is frequently revised, the last revision being in 2015, to ensure the relevant hazards are addressed.

4 July 2016 | Written questions | HL 779

[Consumer Protection](#)

Asked by: Rehman Chishti

What steps he is taking to protect consumers from faulty and unsafe products.

Answered by: Nick Boles | Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

Last year we passed the Consumer Rights Act 2015, which established a defined period of 30 days in which consumers can reject faulty goods after purchase, ending the possibility of consumers becoming trapped in a cycle of recurring faults.

HC Deb 15 March 2016 c780

[Consumer Protection](#)

Asked by: Rehman Chishti

My constituent Mr Clive Davison has raised a concern about the delay in having his faulty Hotpoint tumble dryer fixed. There is real concern about this, given the risk of fire with these products. What are the Government doing to ensure that consumers like my constituent receive speedy assistance?

Answered by: Nick Boles | Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

I understand that this risk was assessed as low; nevertheless, it is very important that the company deal with it. My hon. Friend's local trading standards service has informed us that it is satisfied that the company is taking this matter seriously. I am sure that the company will want to pay particular attention to this constituent since his case has been raised in the House of Commons.

HC Deb 15 March 2016 c780-1

[Consumer Protection](#)

Asked by: Mark Durkan

The Minister referred to the Consumer Rights Act. When the Bill that became that Act was going through the House, I tabled a number of amendments to address the issue of unsafe and faulty electrical goods, and the then Minister gave a series of assurances and arguments that now appear to be hollow when we see the campaigning work by Electrical Safety First and by the *Daily Mirror*. We were told that the issue would be kept under review—is it under review?

Answered by: Nick Boles | Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

Absolutely. I will make sure that I have a conversation with the hon. Gentleman to understand what continuing concerns he has and to make sure that we address them.

HC Deb 15 March 2016 c781

[Consumer Protection](#)

Asked by: Yvonne Fovargue

Today is World Consumer Rights Day. The Consumer Rights Act was trumpeted as bringing a new era of simplified, clearer consumer laws. However, most trading standards services have cut their staff by at least 40% since 2010. How can consumers enforce these new rights, and how can rogue traders be brought to justice, in the light of these cuts?

Answered by: Nick Boles | Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

I am afraid that it is rather typical of the Opposition to assume that unless there is public money, and public money that is always growing, it is impossible to enforce rights. Trading standards services are merely one of the enforcement mechanisms for consumer rights. Consumers can enforce their own rights, as established by the Consumer Rights Act, and trading standards services are working more efficiently across the country.

HC Deb 15 March 2016 c781

[Domestic Appliances: Fires](#)

Asked by: Richard Burden

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what recent representations he has received on faulty tumble dryers causing fires; and when his Department was first made aware of safety concerns related to such tumble dryers.

Answered by: Anna Soubry | Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

Manufacturers, distributors and retailers are legally required to inform their Local Authority Trading Standards Department if they have placed unsafe products on the market under the General Product Safety Regulations 1995. Trading Standards work with the businesses concerned to manage any corrective actions accordingly.

In December 2015, Trading Standards made my Department aware of the safety concerns relating to particular brands of tumble dryer, as part of the formal notification procedure of the EU Rapid Alert system for unsafe products. In addition, my Department has received correspondence from consumers of these products, who have been directed to Trading Standards.

29 February 2016 | Written questions | 27576

7. Organisations and further reading

Library briefing

[The importation of faulty electrical goods](#), Commons Library Debate pack CDP-2016-0072, 21 March 2016

Government and Parliament

UK Government and Parliament Petition, [Call on the Government to urge Whirlpool UK to recall all faulty tumble dryers](#), Deadline 1 May 2017

[Government response](#) to this Petition

There have been [14 other Petitions](#), a number of which were rejected because they did not meet Petition standards

Lynn Faulds Wood, [UK consumer product recall: an independent review](#), Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, February 2016

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, [UK consumer product recall review: the government response to the independent recall review by Lynn Faulds Wood](#), BIS, February 2016

[All-Party Parliamentary Home Electrical Safety Group](#)

London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority

London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority, [Westminster Hall debate: Whirlpool and the product safety system](#), Parliamentary Briefing, April 2017

Industry

Hotpoint, [Safety notice - tumble dryers](#), Webpage

Campaigns

Electrical Safety First, [Hotpoint, Indesit, Creda, Swan and Proline tumble dryers](#), Webpage

[Electrical Safety First](#) acts as the secretariat to the [All-Party Parliamentary Home Electrical Safety Group](#)

London Fire Brigade

[Total Recalls campaign](#)

Which? [Whirlpool tumble dryer safety alert, what are my rights?](#)
Webpage

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