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SGS Provides Regulatory Assistance to Toy Industry

With toy production regulations for both Europe and the US coming into force in 2011, SGS is ready to assist producers with regulatory transition, ensuring compliance across the toy life cycle.



With a 2011 expiry of both the stay of enforcement for the U.S. act and the transitional period for the European Directive, producers will soon need to ensure that they are fully compliant with the [European Toy Safety Directive 2009/48/EC](#) and the [US Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act \(CPSIA\)](#).

Given the extent of the new requirements, producers in the toy industry may need to invest significantly in the first years of implementation to ensure compliance. The level of spending required is likely to provide a significant challenge to many in the industry. Those that survive the coming implementation challenges do however stand to benefit significantly in the long run, as do consumers.

A key component to success for industry players may be the ability to ensure making wise choices as to timelines and levels of investment required for implementation of the new regulatory requirements. Those producers who do choose appropriately are likely to succeed, but those who are unable to effectively manage the transition process may not survive.

Existing Legal Framework

Under the [CPSIA](#), the requirement that products be tested by approved third party test labs for lead content in substrates, phthalates compliance and complete ASTM F963 Safety requirements will be applicable when the existing stay of enforcement expires on February 10, 2011. Besides these requirements, all other major aspects of the legislation have passed their implementation milestones and are already in effect.

The [chemical requirements](#) of the European directive involve a substantial increase in the number of restricted elements. For this reason, a transitional period of 4 years has been determined for these changes, meaning that they won't come into effect until July 20, 2013. However, elements of the directive related to packaging, warnings, and mechanical requirements will come into force on July 20, 2011. This date covers almost all parts of the directive.

Limited Timeframes

Potential advantages and rewards exist for those producers who can move quickly to satisfy new regulatory requirements. Those that do so will be in a position to claim superior product quality and safety standards. Given the sensitivity of the toy market, this superiority may give such producers significant leverage to improve the standing of their brands.

An important strategy for businesses will, therefore, be to implement as many of the new measures as feasibly possible within the shortest possible timeframe, even if this means doing so well before the new standards come into force. This will give producers time to gain experience with the new requirements, allowing them to monitor their progress with the aim of ensuring that all CPSIA and 2009/48/EC compliance requirements are fully met before such requirements become law. A further advantage is that such producers will be better able to cope with the usual seasonal variations in demand for their products.

How to Prepare

Both the US and European directives place significant new demands on the toy production process, potentially requiring many changes to be made to existing product development processes. Before producers devote resources to product redesign or redevelopment, it is important to examine how such work might impact product compliance with known safety rules, standards and regulations. It is essential to identify any potential hazards that could result in product recalls, or serious injury or death. As such, it is recommended that product risk assessments be undertaken as a part of a product concept feasibility review.

Though the new regulations can seem lengthy and complex, the full [product life-cycle compliance](#) services offered by SGS can ensure that your business is prepared for the regulatory changes ahead.

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