

**Minutes From Meeting with Consumer Product Safety Commission
4330 East West Highway, Bethesda, MD
October 2, 2015**

Present: CPSC Chairman Elliot Kaye, Jonathan Midgett; CPSC Senior Science and Policy Advisor, Arthur Lee; CPSC Directorate for Engineering Sciences, George Borlase; CPSC Associate Executive Director, Office of Hazard Identification and Reduction, Two others (Un-named) from CPSC, Devon Paullin; NEOFPA, Mike Girbino; NEOFPA, Dean Dennis; NEOFPA

Minutes Recorded By: Devon Paullin; NEOFPA

Meeting Started: 9:15 AM

Mike and Devon explained two main points.

1. The public needs to be aware of the differences in photoelectric and ionization sensor technology for the next two years before ionization alarms are off the market. This can be done through labeling of products or recalls. We explained the "Wall of Confusion".
2. 90% of existing residential homes are utilizing ionization smoke alarms. The fire service needs leverage to explain to our residents why those ionization alarms need to be replaced with photoelectric as soon as possible. For that leverage, we would like to have a document or statement from the CPSC indicating the dangers of stand-alone ionization smoke alarms.

Armed with a statement from the CPSC, the nation's fire service can become the foot soldiers to deliver that message to the general public in our jurisdictions. This will permit the faster removal of stand-alone ionization smoke alarms from existing homes.

We explained that ionization sensor technology is not flawed. It is just being misused as a "smoke sensor". It only detects byproducts from one stage of a fire, the flaming stage. In fact, a fire may never actually enter that stage. A fire can produce a deadly atmosphere without ever entering or before entering the flaming stage. Most firefighters have seen these incidents.

We offered that an ionization sensor should be labeled the same as any other flame or heat type of sensor. That it is "Not a Life Safety Device".

Chairman Kaye recommended that Devon, Mike and Dean continue to work with CPSC technical staff to create an agreeable solution to this. Also the fire service should continue to work with the major retailers to have ionization smoke alarms removed from their shelves. He advised us to tell the retailers not to wait for the CPSC but to follow the fire service recommendation to remove ionization smoke alarms now.

We reviewed the recent fire in Chagrin Falls, Ohio where a photoelectric smoke alarm saved the family, while two working ionization smoke alarms remained silent.

Arthur Lee offered that the new UL 217 smoke alarm tests had definitely passed. He did not believe that an ionization sensor would be able to pass the new tests which will start to be used in two years.

Arthur Lee recommended that the fire service check with the CDC. There maybe smoke alarm funding and grants available through that agency as well.

Arthur Lee explained what the CPSC will be doing over the next year regarding this issue:

He agrees that the consumer is confused and is probably purchasing the cheapest smoke alarm on the shelf. They don't know what they are buying off of the "wall of confusion".

The CPSC will conduct surveys of how consumers react or are informed regarding smoke alarm packaging. If better packaging information were available, will the consumer follow the labels?

They are considering a three rating system. A smoldering rating, a flaming rating and a nuisance resistance rating. This may include activation times as well. Would this be enough information for a consumer to make a choice? The label would be based more on performance, not on the technology. Would this work? Will the consumers read it?

(We discovered that the labeling process from start to finish can take 2 to 3 years. Unfortunately, ionization smoke alarms maybe off the shelves before any type of warning labeling can be added.)

The CPSC will direct the National Institute of Standards and Technology, (NIST) to perform testing of existing smoke alarms against the new UL 217 test criteria. They want to ensure that the thresholds in the new UL tests are in fact creating better performance. Depending on the results of these tests, the CPSC would change their recommendation statement regarding smoke alarm sensor technology. Their current statement is to use both technologies in each location.

(A resulting new statement may be exactly what the fire service needs as leverage to assist us convincing the public to replace their existing ionization smoke alarms.)

Mike and Devon introduced Earl Lee Warning, our photoelectric smoke alarm mascot, to the members and distributed samples of NEOFPA's brochures and bumper stickers.

Meeting Adjourned: 11:30 AM