

Bouncing around

Malcolm Horner, Toy Technical Consultant at Bureau Veritas Consumer Products Services looks at the EU requirements for trampolines

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The majority of us have, or know someone who has, a trampoline in their backyard. They are perennially popular particularly as we are now in summer and our weather is as good as it is going to get. In this installment of his latest column, Bureau Veritas Consumer Products Services' Toy Technical Consultant, Malcolm Horner, takes a look at the vital safety aspects behind testing trampolines.

“Trampolines are generally split into four separate categories:

- **Gymnastic trampolines**
- **Fitness trampolines**
- **Trampolines used in a public recreation ground**
- **Domestic trampolines for use by children**

The Toy Safety Directive 2009/48/EC defines a toy as a product designed or intended, whether or not exclusively, for use in play by children under 14 years of age.

Of the four categories above, domestic trampolines for use by children (and only this category) are usually considered to be toys under the Toy Safety Directive (and indeed would have also been classed as toys within the scope of the 1988 Toy Directive). However, as yet, there is no Harmonised Standard for these toy trampolines. For more than 8 years now, a CEN working Group has been tasked with the job of creating a new standard for toy trampolines. Despite many setbacks, it would appear that the publication of the new EN 71-14 is approaching. The draft standard will shortly be launched for a Formal Vote and it is possible that the standard could be published either late this year or early 2015. However, this will depend upon the number of comments received from the National Standards Bodies and the time needed by the CEN Working Group to resolve those comments.

Currently, toy trampolines are required to go through the EC type examination procedure before being placed on the market.

The title of the new standard will be “Trampolines for domestic use” and the scope will be “requirements and test methods for trampolines for domestic use, their access devices and their enclosures, intended for outdoor and/or indoor use above ground level by one person at a time.” The standard will split the requirements into 3 categories of trampoline (Mini, Medium and Large), which will be based upon the frame size, the frame height and the maximum user weight. The scope will include the very small trampolines with a handle that are intended for quite young children, right up to the very large ones that are usually used in domestic back gardens.

Amongst other things, the standard will address aspects



such as enclosures, durability of materials, entrapment, pinching and crushing hazards, sharp edges and points, access devices, padding, strength, mat deflection, stability and warnings, marking and instructions.

It is expected however that some revisions will be made after the publication of the standard as some adjustments may need to be made.

Although a trampoline may comply with safety standards, it is worth emphasising that many accidents that happen to children whilst they are using toy trampolines may often be attributed to possible misuse.

The very nature of a toy trampoline and the type of activity for which it is used, means that it is a relatively and inherently high risk item. Children should always be closely supervised whilst using a trampoline and in particular, due to the potential risk of a collision, only one child should use the trampoline at a time.”

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