
FLASHBACK!

Bits and Pieces

INDUSTRY STATS: “Twenty-eight major match companies and scores of tiny companies provide billions of covers per year for cover seekers.” *[January 1966 RMS Bulletin] [Ed. Note: now there are four domestic manufacturers]*

“NBS SEEKING “CHILD-PROOF” MATCHES: To encourage the match industry to make safer products, NBS *[Natural Bureau Standards]* along with the Bureau of Product Safety (BPS), Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, is presenting proposals to the industry requesting (1) immediate adoption of standards similar to those recently certified by Canada, and (2) development of safety matches that are “child-proof.”

NBS had commissioned Trident Engineering Associates, Inc. to develop design modifications for book matches and for cigarette lighters. In all, 15 modifications were proposed and rated for safety.

Among the suggested designs were:

- A matchbook with a sleeved striker, requiring the insertion of a thin match and coordinated action by both hands.
- Matches that require two actions within 4 or 5 seconds.
- One that would limit burning time to about 4 or 5 seconds and will die out when dropped.

One or more of the suggested designs, if adopted, would lead to increased safety for the entire population...

Among the Canadian requirements are the following:

- (1) Matches must be difficult to ignite accidentally; with covers that enclose matches completely.
- (2) The staple holding the match cover to the base of the match cluster must not interfere with the striker’s grip.
- (3) All book matches sold in Canada will have the striker strip on the back rather than the front of the cover. (Effective January 1, 1974)
- (4) Ignition compounds must be uniformly applied to match tips. The tips must not be chipped, split, cracked, crumbled, or be stuck to the tip of another match.
- (5) After a match flame has been extinguished, the splint of the match must not have an afterglow that lasts longer than 3 seconds.

Most fires involving children playing with matches are caused by the child striking the match and then dropping it onto his clothing. A “child-proof” match, therefore, would be one that is difficult, if not impossible for a child of less than 5 to light; and if struck, would extinguish, instead of starting a fire, when dropped.

Because studies show that children under 5 cannot perform two successive acts in less than 5 seconds, a design requiring two such motions might render a match “child-proof”...

If good standards can be developed by these voluntary procedures, they will be submitted to the new Consumer Product Safety Commission for approval as mandatory standards.” *[Jul/Aug 1974 RMS Bull]*