The Portable Fuel Container Manufacturers Association

July 23, 2015

**BULLETIN: FLAME MITIGATION DEVICE STATUS**

To be abundantly clear, there is no science to back up any contention that flame arresters work safely in portable consumer fuel containers despite recent inaccurate and misleading media reports. Here's what we can tell you: No portable consumer fuel container sold today includes a flame arrester. As portable consumer fuel containers are currently manufactured, they are entirely safe when used properly and meet all applicable regulations (Congressional statutes, Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) regulations, EPA regulations, and ASTM International (ASTM) standards).

Despite these facts, some have suggested flame arresters be used without the science or thorough testing of potential consequences to back them up. There is no flame arrester currently available that has been proven to safely allow a portable consumer fuel container to function properly. We know this because of an independent research study on this issue, which is led by ASTM International, an international standards organization.

The CPSC has been part of this development process since it began. Despite this, in December 2013 the CPSC issued the statement you're seeing now in the media – expressing a desire to see flame arresters incorporated into portable consumer fuel containers. *Quite frankly, the industry was surprised by the CPSC's statement because the industry has yet to see the scientific research or study results to back up this request. The standards development process certainly has not reached this conclusion yet.*

Consumer gasoline containers are intended for residential use and are filled by consumers at the pump with gasoline transferred at high speeds, and as such are distinctly different than other products which utilize flame arrester technology. The ASTM independent research study has identified many potential safety issues which are being studied. Certain devices advocated by plaintiff lawyers have failed a flame mitigation protocol developed by ASTM. Other devices cause problems in pouring and filling a gasoline container, cause spills, and are unsafe for use in portable consumer fuel containers.

To be clear, regardless of the CPSC's statement, flame arresters or mitigation devices have yet to be part of a safety standard or rule because the independent testing, which the CPSC and other non-industry members of an ASTM subcommittee may review, has not yet identified a flame mitigation device that is safe and effective for portable consumer fuel containers. The industry will continue to actively work with the CPSC and ASTM on this matter. I assure you that should a new safety standard or rule be promulgated, the industry will embrace it, but to add a flame arrester now, before the independent testing process has found a design that is safe and effective, would be irresponsible and dangerous.

And remember, gasoline and fire do not mix. No flame mitigation device would ever make it safe to misuse a portable consumer fuel container to start a fire with gasoline or expose gasoline to a flame or other ignition source. In these situations, external vapor ignition is the likely cause of gasoline explosions – after all, gasoline vapors can easily ignite close to or even when many yards away from a flame or an ignition source. A flame arrester would not ensure safety in such situations.