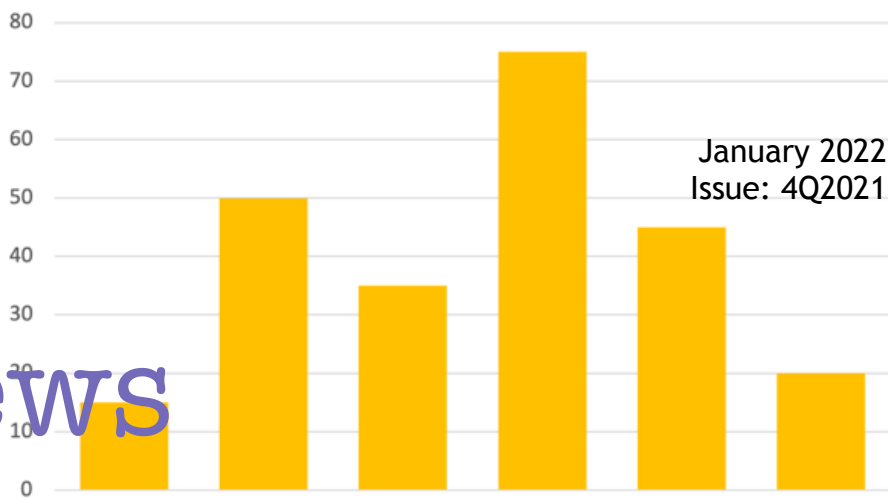




AFSL News



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AFSL Staff Meets with Feds and State Officials in Michigan

By Jerry Wingard

For two very cold and snowy days in December, the AFSL Team (me, Jay Howell, and BV's Chuck Rogers) held a training session at Camp Grayling on how to safely dissect, evaluate, and test the contents of fireworks devices to AFSL and Federal Standards. We were excited to share our expertise with several enforcement personnel from the Michigan State Fire Marshal Office, a member of the Detroit Police Bomb Squad, an agent from the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco Firearms and Explosives, a couple of members of Michigan State Police Bomb Squad, and a couple of EOD Specialists from Michigan Army National Guard. While conducting the hands-on portion of the training, we were visited by Kevin Sehimeyer, Michigan State Fire Marshal, and Joe Forro, Manager.



This training was put together at the request of Mick Dingman, who is the Unit Supervisor for the Fireworks Enforcement Section of the Michigan State Fire Marshal's Office.

Continued on page 2



AFSL Staff Meets with Feds and State Officials in Michigan - continued

Mick was looking for someone to help his agency deal with overloaded fireworks and advise them on how to safely dissect, separate, and weigh the pyrotechnic compositions in consumer fireworks that are believed to contain excessive amounts of pyrotechnic composition.

The Michigan Fire Marshal's Office furnished fireworks for the training that they believed to be overloaded and we had plenty of fireworks from which to choose. There were rockets, mine and shell devices, reloadable shell devices, and large firecrackers. As we demonstrated how to dissect, weigh, and analyze the contents of these devices, we found that all of the items provided by the Michigan Fire Marshal's Office exceeded the legal limits by large amounts, sometimes by over 100 grams. These regulators have clearly developed an eye for noncompliant product!

The items we tested were not consumer fireworks but illegal explosives that were masked as consumer fireworks. Many were found to be loaded with flash powder and some of the aerial devices had no effects, only reports. All the agencies taking part in this joint training were surprised to see the extent to which these items exceeded their legal limits. There was also concern expressed about the possibility of these items and their pyrotechnic compositions being used in a malicious manner.

This training helped to build relationships among the various Michigan agencies and AFSL as the participants came to understand that we had a shared public safety mission. We welcome the opportunity to assist and advise state and local authorities and will be working to expand this effort. If you are aware of an agency in your town that could use our help, drop us an email.

What Can You Learn From A Label?

By Jieli Tan



1 - CelebrateSafely.org

Happy New Year!

The AFSL team is always looking for ways to increase the value we provide our members. As we planned our projects for 2022, the opportunity to make useful information more readily available to our members presented itself. Several years ago, we experimented with incorporating a barcode into our security labels but could not find an economically viable approach. However, we believe that technology has advanced to the point that costs have dropped, so we put it back on the table.



2 - afsl.org

We have already started working with our label supplier to identify the label requirements and how technology, such as a QR code, can deliver the information we want from the label. We are envisioning things like managed access to the applicable test report and compliance certificate, lot information, and even photos/videos of the product that was tested and is supposed to be in the carton. As we work towards a new label for 2023, we want to hear from you. Please let us know what information you would like to access through the carton labels and what controls need to be established to manage access to the various types of information that will be available to those accessing the databases through the label technology.

In the meanwhile, our team is also working on updating our website and improving the functionality of various features. We are working with our website developer to give the website a fresh look, create a member-only section, and improve the Certificate of Compliance (COC) database. If there are any additional features that you would like to see on our website or in the COC database, please drop us an email.

Thank you very much for your support.

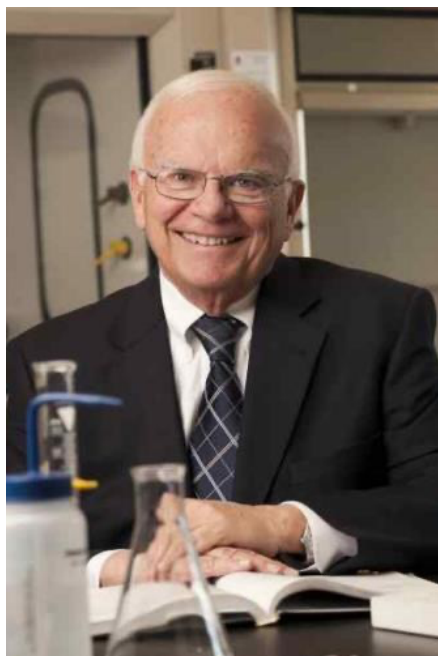
AFSL China Operations

By William Zhou

As we move into a new year, I want to take a few minutes to share a brief review of some AFSL China Team highlights of 2021. One of our greatest challenges was dealing with changes in the classification of big fireworks devices, such as canister shells and 3-inch cakes. China Customs Authorities insisted on enforcing the use of the Chinese National Standard GB10631 to regulate the exportation of all fireworks products. Big fireworks devices that used to be shipped to the USA as 1.4G devices were now being classified as 1.3G devices under GB10631, which created a problem for the fireworks factories and shippers. For those caught up in this issue, your shipment arrived with an extra wood board strapped on top of the shipping carton. However, we expect amendments to be made to GB10631, and published in March 2022, that will shift all of our devices back into the 1.4G category.

We set a new AFSL record in 2021, testing 12.6 million cases of consumer fireworks. From our perspective, the demand for consumer fireworks remains strong in the USA and we want to thank you for being a member of AFSL and allowing us to help you provide the safest and most compliant consumer fireworks products to your customers.

Looking forward, the Chinese Spring Festival, celebrating the beginning of the Year of the Tiger, begins February 1. To celebrate the Spring Festival, the Chinese fireworks industry will cease production from January 26 to February 8. Upon the return to production, we expect an all-out effort to fill your orders. If it was easy, anyone could do it; but it's not and they can't. As your source for consumer fireworks testing and certification, we are here to work with you and your suppliers to fill your orders with compliant product that is the safest on the market, when used as instructed and intended.



We are saddened to report that Dr. John Alexander Conkling passed away in Austin, Texas on Saturday, December 18, 2021. He will be remembered not only as the world's leading expert on fireworks, but as a devoted husband, loving father, and beloved grandfather.

Everyone loves fireworks, but few love them as much as did Dr. Conkling. Fireworks was his life's work for over three decades and his contributions to the industry will be seen for years to come by millions across the globe who are celebrating with fireworks.

Dr. Conkling is widely regarded as one of the world's foremost experts in pyrotechnics. He served as the Executive Director and Technical Director of the American Pyrotechnics Association for over thirty years and was instrumental in drafting many of the nation's fireworks regulations. He holds 8 patents and conducted Pyrotechnic Seminars at Washington College for nearly 3 decades. He is the author of *The Chemistry of Pyrotechnics: Basic Principles and Theory* and *BOOM! America's Ever-Evolving Fireworks Industry*.

We will miss him.

CPSC's New Online Tool is Now Mandatory for Firms Seeking a Fast Track Recall

By Jay Howell

Firms have long been required to report to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) all potentially hazardous or non-compliant products that they manufacture, distribute, import, or sell. In an effort to reduce paperwork and better track the reporting activity, the CPSC requiring all firms seeking a Fast Track recall to use their new online reporting system.

This updated Section 15(b) reporting system is available at www.saferproducts.gov/business, and reportedly has a user-friendly interface that includes features and guidance to help firms through the submission process. If you use the new site, you will receive email copies of all the information you submitted to CPSC, case updates, CPSC staff contact information, and deadline reminders. Businesses that participate in the Fast Track program will also be able to review and approve, a system-generated draft recall press release before submitting their report, to help expedite the overall recall process. However, if you are not comfortable with the language of the system-generated draft recall press release, don't feel that you have to approve it. You may instead wish to submit a revised draft to your compliance officer for their approval.

If you are new to the Fast Track process, or to CPSC reporting in general, you may wish to consult legal counsel before engaging with the CPSC. While most recalls are voluntary, you should be prepared to fulfill any commitments you make to the CPSC if you sign an agreement.

By the Numbers

By Jay Howell

99%

of the lots submitted for AFSL testing in 2021 were turned around within 72 hours. In 2021, 9 out of 10 lots were tested by Bureau Veritas and AFSL within 48 hours of your request.

12.6 MILLION

cases of fireworks were tested by Bureau Veritas and AFSL in 2021, up 53% from the 2020 volume of 8.2 million.

614,160

cases failed AFSL testing in 2021. The 4.9% non-compliance rate was up slightly from last year's 4.1% rate. When looking at the top 5 reasons that the lots failed, fuse failures (short and long burn times) led the way but has shown some improvement over the last 3 years (16% in 2021 vs. 22% in 2019). However, we are seeing a growing trend in devices that continue to burn after functioning. Over the last three years of testing, we have recorded failure rates of 4.8%, 7.5%, and 10.5% for this failure mode.

2,797

pounds was the weight of the largest aerial firework shell, according to Guinness World Records. The shell was 4'9" in diameter and required a mortar tube 5'2" in diameter and 26' deep to launch the shell. The shell closed the Steamboat Spring's Colorado 2020 Winter Carnival.