

# Code of practice on consumer product safety related recalls and other corrective action

<b>Country:</b>	United Kingdom
<b>Level:</b>	National
<b>Topics addressed:</b>	Public Policy

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## Summary:

The objective of the case study is to show how the development of the publicly available specification (PAS) 7100 Code of practice on consumer product safety related recalls and other corrective actions has been used by the UK Government to enhance consumer safety by developing guidance for businesses and regulators on how to prepare for and manage product safety incidents.

This followed an independent review which identified large differences in the effectiveness of product recalls. While recalls are typically only about 10% to 20% effective, individual organizations have shown it is possible to achieve up to an 84% success rate.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) set up a Working Group on Product Recalls and Safety (WGPRS) to make recommendations to improve the effectiveness of recalls. The working group identified a need for guidance for businesses and market surveillance authorities on how to manage product safety incidents. This led BEIS to commission the development of PAS 7100– Code of practice on consumer product safety related recalls and other corrective action.

## Background:

PAS 7100 was created to guide businesses and regulators through the process of planning for and handling a

product safety incident. It was developed with the assistance of retailers, industry bodies, consumer groups, regulators and product recall experts.

The code of practice comes in two parts. The first provides guidance on the steps businesses should take to prepare a “product safety incident plan” – and how they should manage a corrective action if it is required. The second part is to help regulators, provide guidance and advice to enable businesses to meet their legal obligations and act in the public interest.

## Strategy:

The Working Group found that there was considerable guidance available on product recall and that there were many different approaches being taken to the issue. It also identified a need for businesses to be more prepared to manage an incident should one occur. The UK Government wanted market-led guidance to improve the effectiveness of product corrective actions. Due to concerns about consumer safety, there was a need to develop the guidance as quickly as possible.

A BSI PAS was considered to be the ideal solution. A PAS helps define good practice standards for a product, service or process. It is developed by a steering group of stakeholders, selected from relevant fields, and follows the same rigorous impartial consensus

driven processes as all standards of the national standardization body BSI.

To address the challenges identified by the BEIS Working Group, PAS 7100 covers two major areas.

Part one covers:

- Managing a possible safety related product recall or other corrective action
- Establishing mechanisms to monitor the safety of products
- Investigating any potential product safety issue
- Establishing mechanisms to deal with any product safety issue identified
- Reviewing corrective action programmes to ensure that product safety responsibilities continue to be met

Part two covers the assistance that should be available to businesses from regulators to support them in meeting their responsibilities in respect to consumer product safety issues. It covers how regulators can:

- Monitor incidents and analyse data
- Support businesses in the preparation of their 'product safety incident plan' (PSIP)
- Support businesses in their monitoring of incidents and their implementation of appropriate corrective action
- Respond proportionally where businesses fail to take appropriate and effective corrective action

### Results and Impact:

The Code of Practice provides guidance on how a business can monitor the safety of products and plan for a recall. It has been received positively by busi-

nesses and market surveillance authorities such as local authority Trading Standards departments. The PAS helps Trading Standards Officers to support businesses in the preparation of incident plans and the implementation of corrective actions. The UK Government has trained around 300 Trading Standards Officers across the country.

### Potential for Replication:

The development of the PAS, is a valuable example of how standards can support government policy; the standard maintains the independence of the national standards process by being used voluntarily, while at the same time delivering heightened value through government endorsement of the text. There is potential for similar standards in the future that can address industry issues and avoid the need for government to legislate.

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