



November 3, 2023

Sent via email

On behalf of the undersigned consumer and parent organizations, we write to you regarding ASTM F2057-23, the safety standard for dressers and other clothing storage units (CSUs). Compliance with the performance requirements of this standard became mandatory on September 1, 2023, under a new federal law, the STURDY Act, which is being enforced by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). This mandatory standard helps protect children from injury and death by requiring strong and practicable stability tests and requirements based on real-world use. However, based on our visits to various furniture retail stores and conversations with sellers' customer care agents, we are very concerned that noncompliant furniture continues to be sold in stores and online, potentially creating confusion for consumers shopping for new furniture.

In December 2022, the STURDY Act passed through Congress with bipartisan support. The bill was endorsed by leading furniture manufacturers, retailers, and trade groups. The federal standard, ASTM F2057-23, is a consensus-based stability standard developed by parent advocates, furniture industry representatives, consumer organizations, and safety experts. Now, our organizations are evaluating how the furniture industry has responded to this federal standard.

Consumer Reports intends to continue evaluating furniture stability through comparative testing in the first half of 2024. In advance of these evaluations, we urge all retailers to offer for sale only those products that are compliant with the requirements of ASTM F2057-23. If you are selling compliant products, in the interest of safety, we strongly recommend that you make it clear for your customers which products those are. More generally, all furniture retailers should display prominent signage on dressers and other clothing storage furniture to inform consumers about the new standard, as well as the importance of properly anchoring furniture to prevent child deaths and injuries.

Too many families have already been harmed by unstable dressers and dangerous furniture tip-overs. According to the CPSC, at least 234 people died from clothing storage unit tip-overs from January 2000 to April 2022, and approximately 5,300 people are sent to the emergency department every year. Tragically, we continue to hear of fatal tip-over incidents, including the deaths this year of a three-year-old boy in May, and a one-year-old girl and a twenty-two-month-old girl in July.

Giving consumers the information they need to make informed decisions when shopping for furniture can help prevent future tip-over tragedies. For that reason, our organizations request that you respond to the following questions no later than Friday, November 17:

1. Is your company educating employees about the new law so they can help inform consumers of the serious safety risks posed by unstable furniture, and help consumers distinguish between compliant and noncompliant furniture for sale? If not, do you commit to taking this step for the sake of children's safety?
2. Are your stores displaying and promoting floor models that are compliant with the federal standard? If not, when do you plan to do so?
3. What is your company doing to directly inform consumers about the importance of installing anti-tip restraints (required by law to be sold with furniture within the scope of the standard)?
4. By what date does your company commit to cease selling noncompliant furniture, and sell only furniture that is compliant with the federal standard?

Our organizations plan to monitor compliance with the new standard and support the CPSC in holding accountable any company that fails to prioritize children's safety. We also welcome any opportunity we may have to discuss this matter further with you if we can help speed up your transition to selling only CSUs that comply with the performance requirements of ASTM F2057-23, and providing your customers actionable information, including how to properly anchor furniture, to keep their families safe.

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this letter and our questions. We hope you will work with us to ensure the goals of this lifesaving standard are fulfilled. Please note that we may make public the response or lack of a response that we receive from furniture retail leaders such as yourself. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Consumer Reports
Parents Against Tip-Overs
Kids In Danger
Consumer Federation of America

References:

Abc7 Eyewitness News, May 20, 2023: “3-year-old boy dies after furniture falls on him in Little Village, CPD says.” Online at: www.abc7chicago.com/boy-dies-little-village-south-pulaski-road-chicago-police/13270184/

Abc7 Eyewitness News, July 10, 2023: “1-year-old girl dies after furniture falls on her in West Englewood, Chicago police say.” Online at: www.abc7chicago.com/dresser-falls-on-child-chicago-news-police-furniture/13484919/

USA Today, July 31, 2023: “22-month-old girl killed after dresser tips over, trapping her.” Online at: www.msn.com/en-us/news/other/22-month-old-girl-killed-after-dresser-tips-over-trapping-her/ar-AA1eBDLD

Additional Resources:

Consumer Product Safety Commission Business Guidance, “Clothing Storage Units.” Online at: www.cpsc.gov/Business--Manufacturing/Business-Education/Business-Guidance/Clothing-Storage-Units

Consumer Product Safety Commission, “Anchor It!” Online at: www.anchorit.gov