LEAD & METAL-CORE WICKS

Lead wicks were banned from the U.S. marketplace by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission in 2003 to address the lingering presence of lead wicks in some imported candles.

Lead wicks had not been a concern in domestically produced candles for many years. NCA-member manufacturers voluntarily discontinued using lead wicks in the mid-1970s and by 2000, had asked all U.S. candle manufacturers to join NCA’s members in signing a formal pledge not to use lead wicks.

Despite the fact that lead-wick candles have been outlawed in the U.S. for a decade, many consumers and website bloggers continue to falsely believe that lead-wick candles are sold in the U.S., or that metal-cored wicks are manufactured from lead. This has needlessly created fears of harmful health impacts from burning candles with metal-core wicks.

Today’s metal-core wicks, sometimes used in container candles and votives to keep the wick upright in the wax pool, are typically made of zinc or tin. Scientific studies have shown both zinc- and tin-core wicks to be safe.

Metal-Core Wick Certification
Under the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008, any shipment of metal-core wicks, or candles made with metal-core wicks, must carry certification indicating that these products have been tested and contain less than 0.06% lead by weight in compliance with the Consumer Product Safety Commission’s 2003 ban on lead wicks (16CFR § 1500.17(a)(13). The regulation applies to zinc- and tin-core wicks because all nonferrous metals contain naturally-occurring traces of lead impurities.

The metal-wick certification notice moves along the manufacturing chain from wick supplier to candle manufacturer to the retailer accepting the shipment. The notice of certification, which is typically attached or affixed to the shipping carton and included in transmittal documents, does not need to appear on the finished product at retail.

Contact NCA headquarters for guidance in carrying out metal-core wick and metal-core candle certification.