SOUTH COAST HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

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IN THIS ISSUE

South Coast HOA – 20th Anniversary Meeting
Understanding your Association's Financial Statements
The Art of Delivery: Mail, Posting or Personal Delivery
Federal Pool Safety Act Affects HOA Pools/Spas
2009 Condominium Bluebooks in Stock
Newsletter Sponsors

SOUTH COAST HOA 20TH ANNIVERSARY MEETING

In January 1989, the first South Coast HOA meeting was held after a fall 1988 mailing to area associations indicated an interest in forming such a group. Twenty years later, it is our mission to continue to provide current, relevant and useful information to help volunteer board members manage and operate their homeowner associations. While much has changed in the past 20 years, many of the same issues and concerns that existed then, exist now.

2009 Law and Legislative Update

Date - Wednesday, January 28, 2009

Time – 6:30 – Registration/Catered Hors D'oeuvres and Desserts 7:00 – Program

Place – Encina Royale Clubhouse 250 Moreton Day Lane, Goleta (Hwy 101 at North Fairview Exit)

Speakers – James Smith, Esq., Grokenberger & Smith, Attorneys at Law David Loewenthal, Loewenthal, Hillshafer & Rosen

Come early to enjoy some extra special treats and an opportunity to network and socialize. Our attorneys will cover new state laws that are effective in 2009, significant court cases from 2008 and other legal topics of current interest. We will leave some time for our popular moderated question and answer session. These annual updates are among our most popular and well-attended programs. Mark your calendars. No cost to attend.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ASSOCIATION'S FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

By: Michael J. Gartzke, CPA

Board members have a fiduciary duty under California law to review financial statements and bank reconciliations of their association on a periodic basis. As defined in California Civil Code Section 1365.5, board members are required to:

- Review a current reconciliation of the association's operating and reserve accounts at least quarterly
- Review the current year's actual reserve revenues and expenses compared to the current year's budget at least quarterly
- Review an income and expense statement for the association's operating and reserve funds at least quarterly
- Review the latest account statements prepared by the financial institutions where the association has its operating and reserve accounts

Accurate financial reporting is highly prized by all members, not just board members. On the pages that follow, I will outline some basic information that you should understand and look for as a board member and how to spot potential problems and action areas.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND METHODS OF ACCOUNTING

There are a wide variety of financial statements that can be presented and several methods of accounting used to prepare them. It is important to know what kinds of statements you're looking at and how they were prepared. This discussion will focus on the monthly statements provided by your treasurer, bookkeeper or management company as opposed to the year-end financial statements provided by your CPA.

BALANCE SHEET: A statement showing assets (what the association owns), liabilities (what the association owes) and fund balances or equity (assets minus liabilities)

INCOME STATEMENT: Also called a Statement of Revenues and Expenses or Profit and Loss – a statement showing association revenues (assessments, etc.) and expenses for the year-to-date.

Other statements that are provided are varieties of the balance sheet and income statements. These would include:

DETAIL SCHEDULES: The most common detail schedule is a schedule of delinquent and prepaid assessments. This listing, by member, supports the assessment receivable amount on the balance sheet. Detail schedules can be used for any item on the balance sheet or income statement such as reserve fund expenses, a maintenance schedule, utility expense detail, certificate of deposit schedule, etc.

COMPARATIVES: Comparative financial information can compare from month-to-month, current month to year-to-date, prior year to current year, etc. Comparatives are useful for spotting trends, differences and potential problems.

BUDGET VS. ACTUAL: Compares the income and expense information against a pro-rata portion of the budget to help explain net income or loss for the period. Examining variances in actual versus budgeted income/expenses can help pinpoint problem areas. Analysis of Budget vs. Actual reports should be reviewed throughout the year.

CPA REVIEWED OR AUDITED STATEMENTS: In addition to a balance sheet and income statement, the reviewed/audited statements will include a statement of cash flow (converting net income to the change in cash), notes explaining elements of the financial statements and other important information, and a supplementary schedule summarizing reserve study information.

METHODS OF ACCOUNTING

There are three methods of accounting that are common to association financial statements:

CASH BASIS: Assessments and other revenues are shown on the income statement when received or deposited into the bank. Expenses are shown when the check is written to pay the bill. It is the simplest method of accounting but in some circumstances can be misleading.

ACCRUAL BASIS: Assessments and other revenues are shown on the income statement when earned (when the association is entitled to the revenue. Expenses are shown when the expense is incurred which can be days or weeks before the bill is paid. The accrual method is the generally accepted method of accounting referred to in the Civil Code for reviewed/audited year-end statements for associations with at least \$75,000 in revenues.

MODIFIED ACCRUAL BASIS (Hybrid): Revenues are shown on the accrual basis and reconciled to assessments receivable or prepaid. Expenses are shown on the cash basis when paid.

Some interim statements prepared by treasurers, bookkeepers or management companies will be prepared on the cash basis of accounting. Civil Code no longer allows cash basis statements. Many managers and bookkeepers will use a modified accrual basis to present financial information. It is rarer for interim statements to be prepared on a full accrual basis due to the extra time involved in the preparation.

Most associations maintain two funds, operating and reserves. Balance sheet and income statement information is segregated between these two funds. Sometimes, this information will be presented in separate columns. Other times, income and expense for both funds are maintained separately but shown in a single statement or column due to software limitations.

Shown on the next page is sample balance sheet information under the three methods of accounting previously described:

SAMPLE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION BALANCE SHEET – JUNE 30, 2008

ASSETS	Cash Basis	<u>Hybrid</u>	<u>Accrual</u>
Cash in Checking Cash in Savings Cash in CD Assessments Receival Prepaid Taxes Prepaid Insurance Due from Operating Fu		\$ 981 35,019 10,000 500	\$ 981 35,019 10,000 2,500 400 2,091 5,000
TOTAL ASSETS	\$46,000	\$46,500	\$ 55,991
LIABILITIES			
Prepaid Assessments Accounts Payable Due to Reserve Fund			3,000 4,091 5,000
TOTAL LIABILITIES			\$ 12,091
FUND BALANCES Operating Fund Reserve Fund	\$ 981 45,019	\$ 1,481 45,019	\$ (6,119) 50,019
Total Fund Balances	\$ 46,000	\$ 46,500	\$43,900
TOTAL LIABILITIES AFUND BALANCES	ND \$46,000	\$ 46,500	\$55,991

NOTES:

Cash basis statements generally show cash only. They could show loans and payroll tax withholdings. They might show loans between funds.

Hybrid statements would show net accounts receivable. A detail schedule should be requested to support the net receivable amount shown.

Accrual basis statements should show all assets and liabilities. Most commonly, these would include any prepaid expenses such as insurance and taxes and any monies borrowed by one fund from another. Prepaid assessments should be segregated from delinquent assessments.

Some Observations – Balance Sheet Information:

- 1) Is there really only \$981 in the operating checking account? The accrual statement shows that the operating fund also owes the reserve fund \$5,000, so only the accrual statement captures this key information.
- 2) \$2,500 of assessments receivable are outstanding as of the end of the month. A cash basis balance sheet would not have disclosed that fact. Under all methods, a detailed schedule should be reviewed to determine why there are \$2,500 of assessments outstanding. Are delinquent balances being followed up and what is the status of collection activity? Were checks received but not deposited until after the first of the next month?
- 3) The July-September insurance premium was paid in June, resulting in prepaid insurance. This asset would not be shown on a cash basis statement.
- 4) \$5,000 had been transferred from reserves to pay operating expenses. What is the repayment schedule? Have members been notified of this loan from reserves?
- 5) There are \$4,091 in outstanding bills (accounts payable) and only \$ 981 in the bank at the end of the month. Why is there a cash flow problem?
- 6) Because of all the liabilities, the operating fund balance is negative (in the hole) \$6,119 on an accrual basis while it is a positive amount on the cash basis.

SAMPLE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

INCOME AND EXPENSE STATEMENT AND CHANGE IN FUND BALANCE OPERATING FUND SIX MONTHS ENDED JUNE 30, 2008

INCOME:	Cash Basis	<u>Hybrid</u>	<u>Accrual</u>
Assessment Income Other Income	\$ 34,600 ¹ 	\$ 36,000 <u>1,200</u>	\$ 36,000
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 35,800	\$ 37,200	\$ 37,200
EXPENSES Utilities Common Area Maintenance Insurance Administration and Taxes	\$ 6,350 20,600 6,272 ³ 4,500	\$ 6,350 20,600 6,272 4,500	\$ 7,400 ² 22,750 ² 4,182 4,500
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ <u>37,722</u>	\$ <u>37,722</u>	\$ <u>38,832</u>
NET INCOME (LOSS)	(\$ 1,922)	(\$ 522)	(\$ 1,632) ⁴
BEGINNING FUND BALANCE	2,903	\$ <u>2,003</u>	(\$ <u>4,487</u>)
ENDING FUND BALANCE	\$ 981	\$ 1,481	(\$ 6,119)

SAMPLE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

INCOME AND EXPENSE STATEMENT COMPARED TO BUDGET – CASH BASIS OPERATING FUND

SIX MONTHS ENDED JUNE 30, 2008

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Variance</u>
Assessment Income Other Income	\$ 34,600 	\$ 36,000 	(\$1,400) ⁵
Total Income	\$ 35,800	\$ 37,200	(\$1,400)
Utilities Common Area Maintenance Insurance Administration and Taxes	\$ 6,350 20,600 6,272 4,500	\$ 7,000 21,000 4,400 <u>4,800</u>	(\$ 650) (400) 1,872 (300)
Total Expenses	\$ 37,722	\$37,200	\$ 522 ⁵
Net Income (Loss)	(\$ 1,922)	0	(\$1,922)

Some Observations – Income and Expense Statements

- 1) Cash Basis income less than accrual basis amount by \$1,400. Coupled with the \$2,500 assessments receivable at the balance sheet date might suggest a collection problem.
- 2) \$1,050 of additional utilities have been accrued than paid during the year as well as \$2,150 of additional common area maintenance has been accrued Total \$3,200. These higher amounts would warrant further investigation. Was the budget reasonable? Were unexpected costs incurred?
- 3) Insurance expense much higher than accrued amount. Is some insurance prepaid? Was a duplicate payment made? Did premiums increase after the budget was approved?
- 4) Losses have been incurred using all three methods, especially noticeable under the accrual method. Again, was the budget realistic?
- 5) Cash basis income, \$1,400 under budget; expenses \$ 522 over budget Net loss \$1,922. On an accrual basis, income is on budget, whether or not it is collected. Accrual basis expenses are \$1,632 over budget. (\$38,832 minus \$37,200).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Q. The information contained in the balance sheet and income statement is summary information. Where do I find the detail information to investigate the issues raised through the analysis of these financial statements?
- A. Nearly all accounting programs allow you to print a general ledger, the detail listing of every transaction posted into the accounting system (Note: Quicken Transaction Report by Category). Information will be sorted by account (e.g. cash, accounts receivable, assessment income, electric expense, etc.). Within the account, entries will be sorted by date and the source of the transaction. Each transaction will have two postings. For example, a check for paying insurance will have a charge (debit) to insurance expense and a credit to the checking account. Look for postings to capital accounts such as retained earnings. There should seldom be any postings there. For monthly expenses such as utilities, look to see if there as many months' worth of expenses (in our example, 6) as there are months elapsed in the year. When, in doubt, ask your treasurer, manager, bookkeeper or CPA.
- Q. Our treasurer provides us with an income statement but never a balance sheet. He says we don't need all the extra reports. Why do we need a balance sheet?
- A. The best accounting systems will integrate the balance sheet with the income statement by adding the net income from the income statement to the fund balance at the beginning of the year to balance the balance sheet. Some years ago, I reviewed the financial statements for an association where the property manager provided an income statement but no balance sheet. Reserve transfers were shown as a subtraction from income on the income statement. One month, the reserve transfer was made but deposited into another association's account. The property manager did not notice the error because no balance sheet was produced. If a balance sheet was produced, then the reserve account amount on the balance sheet would not agree with the reserve account bank statement and reconciliation. It was only through the year-end review that this error was detected (over \$4,000).
- Q. Why do the financial statements that our CPA provides differ from the ones we receive from our management company?
- A. Your CPA will provide reviewed or audited accrual basis statements under generally accepted accounting principles in accordance with state law. It takes time to do the additional accounting to convert from cash basis or modified accrual basis statements. Accruing payables, for example, will affect a number of different expense accounts. As shown in the earlier examples, accrual financial statements recognize more assets and liabilities than the other methods which can result in differences in the financial results shown.

BOOKS FOR SALE AT SOUTH COAST HOA

We have a number of the 2009 Condominium Bluebooks in stock – Now \$18/each – a \$5 savings – tax and postage included. Consider having copies for your entire board and/or your association's reference library.

In addition, we have a few copies left of the *Condo Owners Answer Book* by attorney Beth Grimm. A copy was distributed to each association and professional member in July. These are available for \$18/each tax and postpaid.

THE ART OF DELIVERY: MAIL, POSTING, OR PERSONAL DELIVERY? DOCUMENT AND NOTICE DELIVERY TO MEMBERS

By Jeffrey A. Beaumont, Esq. And Christina C. Gaspar, Esq. Rapkin, Gitlin & Beaumont

Editor's Note: Mr. Beaumont is a Past-President of the Channel Islands Chapter of CAI and this article appeared in their magazine, *Channels of Communications*. It is reprinted here with their permission. The authors' office is in Woodland Hills, CA. They can be reached at 818-884-9998.

A number of provisions of the Davis-Stirling Common Interest Development Act, governing the operation and management of homeowners associations in California, require the distribution of various documents and notices to the membership. The precise manner in which those documents are distributed is of utmost importance. Failure to comply with the manner of distribution of a given document has wide-ranging effects, from the invalidation of the document to monetary sanctions against the association. The following is a checklist of the legal requirements for the distribution of key documents to the membership.

<u>Alternative Dispute Resolution</u> - *Civil Code* Section 1369.520 requires that the association and members seek to submit certain disputes to alternative dispute resolution, which shall be served via personal delivery, first class mail, express mail, facsimile transmission, or other means.

Amendment to the Governing Documents - Civil Code Section 1355 requires that they be distributed by first class mail postage prepaid or by personal delivery.

<u>Association Records and Books</u> - *Civil Code* Section 1365.2 requires that the association's records and financial statements be distributed to the members upon their request via first class mail, only if the member requests that they be sent to him/her.

<u>Ballots and Other Voting Materials</u> - *Civil Code* Section 1363.03 requires ballots and other voting materials to be distributed to members via first class mail <u>or</u> personal delivery.

<u>Board Meeting Notices and Agendas</u> - *Civil Code* Section 1363.05 requires that notice and the agenda of board meetings be posted in a prominent place in the common area of the association <u>and</u> sent by mail only to those members who have requested notification of board meetings by mail. The association may also distribute such notice and agenda of board meetings by personal delivery and/or inclusion in the association newsletter.

<u>Disciplinary Action</u> - *Civil Code* Section 1363(h) requires that notice of a board meeting at which the board will decide whether to impose disciplinary action must be distributed to the member to be disciplined by first class mail <u>or</u> personal delivery. The same method of delivery applies to notice of disciplinary action.

<u>Fine Policy</u> - *Civil Code* Section 1363 requires that fine policies be distributed by first class mail <u>or</u> by personal delivery.

<u>Liens</u> - *Civil Code* Section 1367.1 requires that a pre-lien letter be issued to a delinquent member via certified mail. Further, a copy of a Notice of Assessment Lien recorded against a member's residence must be mailed to that member via certified mail to every person whose name appears as an owner of record.

<u>Membership Meeting</u> - *Corporations Code* Section 7511 requires notice of membership meetings to be distributed via personal delivery, electronic transmission (only if the member has previously agreed to such manner of transmission), <u>or</u> by mail to the last address appearing on the association's books for that member.

Operating Rules - Civil Code Section 1357.130 requires that written notice of the rules, including the text, be distributed by at least one of the following: personal delivery, first class mail postage prepaid, electronic distribution (if the member has previously agreed to such manner of delivery), publication in a document that is circulated primarily to the association's members (e.g. the association newsletter), television programming to the members, or with a billing statement.

<u>Pro Forma Operating Budget</u> - *Civil Code* Section 1365(d) requires that the pro forma operating budget be distributed to members who request same via first class mail.

<u>Temporary Relocation of Owners</u> - *Civil Code* Section 1364 requires associations to maintain common area, which occasionally requires the temporary vacation of owners from their separate interests. Notice must be given to an owner that he/she must temporarily vacate his/her residence via (1) personal delivery to the occupants <u>and</u> first class mail to the owner of the residence or (2) first class mail to both the occupants and the owner of the residence, if different than the occupant.

<u>Termination or Suspension of Memberships</u> - *Corporations Code* Section 7341 requires notice to be given to a member regarding his/her membership termination or suspension via first class mail <u>or</u> registered mail.

In other words:

Document/Notice	Manner 1		Manner 2	Legal Authority
Alternative Dispute Resolution	Personal delivery Express mail OR	Civil Code Section 1369.520		
Governing Document Amendment	First class mail postage prepaid	OR	Personal delivery	Civil Code Section 1355
Records and Books	First class mail only			Civil Code Section 1365.2
Ballots and Voting Materials	First class mail	OR	Personal delivery	Civil Code Section 1363.03
Board Meetings and Agenda	Posting in Common Area	AND	First class mail to owners who have requested receipt by mail	Civil Code Section 1363.05
Disciplinary Action	First class mail	OR	Personal delivery	Civil Code Section 1363(h)
Fine Policy	First class mail	OR	Personal delivery	Civil Code Section 1363
Liens and Pre- Lien Letters	Certified mail only			Civil Code Section 1367.1
Membership Meetings	Personal delivery Electronic distributions owner for same)			
Operating Rules	Personal delivery Electronic distribution owner for same) television programs statement	Civil Code Section 1357.130		
Operating Budget	First class mail only			Civil Code Section 1365(d)
Relocation of Owners	To occupant - personal delivery <u>or</u> first class mail	AND	To owner - first class mail	Civil Code Section 1364
Termination or Suspension of Membership	First class mail	OR	Registered mail	Corporations Code Section 7341

It should be noted that "personal delivery" is defined by the California *Code of Civil Procedure* as being the actual physical service of a given document to the person to be served. See, e.g., *Code of Civil Procedure* Section 415.10. Accordingly, dropping notices off at an owner's doorstep or leaving the notice in an owner's mailbox is arguably a violation of the "personal delivery" requirements for the documents noted above as upon owner-occupants. Such delivery methods would not be an actual physical service of the document. As such, associations must weight the potential liability that may arise by delivering notices by dropping notices and other documents at an owner's doorstep (if "personal delivery" is required) against the cost to engage in a mailing or other method of delivery as authorized by the pertinent Code section.

The foregoing is a summary of some of the many distribution requirements for homeowners associations. We hope that this article assists you in navigating through the complexities associated with delivering legal notices and documents. Should you have questions regarding additional documents or notices, we strongly recommend that you contact your association's legal counsel.

FEDERAL POOL/SPA SAFETY ACT AFFECTS HOA SWIMMING POOLS AND SPAS

By: Michael J. Gartzke, CPA

Editor's Note: I was made aware of this new law back in the spring and had attempted to get additional information regarding its applicability to associations. **Disclaimer: I am NOT a pool expert.** If your association has a pool, check with your pool contractor and attorney to determine if you need to modify your pool and how to minimize your liability.

On December 19, 2007, the Federal <u>Virginia Graeme Baker Pool & Spa Safety Act</u> was signed into law. Named after the granddaughter of former Secretary of State James Baker, Miss Baker drowned in 2002 after the suction from a spa drain entrapped her under the water. The act attempts to address the danger posed by filter intake drains in pools and spas. Such drains and intakes can exert substantial suction when the plastic cover is removed or broken. The act specifies that by December 19, 2008, swimming pool and spa drain covers must meet specific requirements. Public swimming pools, wading pools, spas and hot tubs must meet requirements for requirements for installation of compliant drain covers or other mitigation measures such as safety vacuum release systems (see text of law below). This would include homeowner association pools and spas.

A December 16, 2008 Associated Press story noted that up to 80% of the nation's pools would have to close until new drain covers are installed, at a cost of \$1,000 to \$15,000 per pool. The Federal Consumer Product Safety Commission has indicated that it will prioritize enforcement of the new law based upon the greatest risk to children. Specifically, wading pools, pools designed specifically for young children and in-ground spas where they use flat drain grates and single main drain systems.

We emailed the AP story to all associations on our South Coast HOA email list that day, after receiving it from Skip Daum of Community Associations Institute (CAI-CLAC). Numerous

responses were generated. One association indicated that their pool professional wasn't concerned. Another has been trying to get guidance from the County pool inspectors (Environmental Health Services) with limited success. More than one manager stated that their pools would be closed until the repairs could be made. (There is a limited amount of people that can make these repairs).

David Loewenthal, an attorney member and speaker at our January 28 law update, responded with the following:

"My firm's position is that if there is any question as to whether the pool meets the federal guidelines, the pool should NOT be used. The board needs to retain qualified pool consultants to evaluate the pool to determine if it is compliant or not. If not compliant, the pool needs to be closed. While you are waiting to have your pool checked to determine if it meets the guidelines, it should be closed. I know that this is dramatic, however, the liability that a board, association, manager, etc. can face if there is an injury is too large to simply disregard. I will be speaking at length during the January 28 law update seminar on this law and liability issues."

The actual text of the law follows.

Sec. 1404. FEDERAL SWIMMING POOL AND SPA DRAIN COVER STANDARD.

- (a) Consumer Product Safety Rule.--The requirements described in subsection (b) shall be treated as a consumer product safety rule issued by the Consumer Product Safety Commission under the Consumer Product Safety Act (15 U.S.C. 2051 et seq.).
- (b) Drain Cover Standard.--Effective 1 year after the date of enactment (12/19/08) of this title, each swimming pool or spa drain cover manufactured, distributed, or entered into commerce in the United States shall conform to the entrapment protection standards of the ASME/ANSI A112.19.8 performance standard, or any successor standard regulating such swimming pool or drain cover. If a successor standard is proposed, the American Society of Mechanical Engineers shall notify the Commission of the proposed revision. If the Commission determines that the proposed revision is in the public interest, it shall incorporate the revision into the standard after providing 30 days notice to the public.
- (c) Public Pools.—
- (1) Required equipment.----
 - (A) In general.--Beginning 1 year after the date of enactment of this title—
- (i) each public pool and spa in the United States shall be equipped with anti-entrapment devices or systems that comply with the ASME/ANSI A112.19.8 performance standard, or any successor standard; and
- (ii) each public pool and spa in the United States with a single main drain other than an unblockable drain shall be equipped, at a minimum, with 1 or more of the following devices or systems designed to prevent entrapment by pool or spa drains that meets the requirements of subparagraph (B):

- (I) Safety vacuum release system.--A safety vacuum release system which ceases operation of the pump, reverses the circulation flow, or otherwise provides a vacuum release at a suction outlet when a blockage is detected, that has been tested by an independent third party and found to conform to ASME/ANSI standard A112.19.17 or ASTM standard F2387.
- (II) Suction-limiting vent system.--A suction-limiting vent system with a tamper-resistant atmospheric opening.
 - (III) Gravity drainage system.--A gravity drainage system that utilizes a collector tank.
 - (IV) Automatic pump shut-off system.--An automatic pump shut-off system.
 - (V) Drain disablement.--A device or system that disables the drain.
- (VI) Other systems.--Any other system determined by the Commission to be equally effective as, or better than, the systems described in subclauses (I) through (V) of this clause at preventing or eliminating the risk of injury or death associated with pool drainage systems.
- (B) Applicable standards.--Any device or system described in subparagraph (A)(ii) shall meet the requirements of any ASME/ANSI or ASTM performance standard if there is such a standard for such a device or system, or any applicable consumer product safety standard.
- (2) Public pool and spa defined.-- In this subsection, the term "public pool and spa" means a swimming pool or spa that is—
- (A) open to the public generally, whether for a fee or free of charge;
- (B) open exclusively to—
 - (i) members of an organization and their guests;
 - (ii) residents of a multi-unit apartment building, apartment complex, residential real estate development, or other multi-family residential area (other than a municipality, township, or other local government jurisdiction); or
 - (iii) patrons of a hotel or other public accommodations facility; or
 - (C) operated by the Federal Government (or by a concessionaire on behalf of the Federal Government) for the benefit of members of the Armed Forces and their dependents or employees of any department or agency and their dependents.
 - (3) Enforcement.-- Violation of paragraph (1) shall be considered to be a violation of section 19(a)(1) of the Consumer Product Safety Act (15 U.S.C. 2068(a)(1)) and may also be enforced under section 17 of that Act (15 U.S.C. 2066).

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