



National Institute of Standards and Technology
Technology Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce

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MEMORANDUM for: Cigarette manufacturers and testing laboratories

From: Richard G. Gann, Ph.D.
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Subj: Request for comments on a standard reference cigarette

As part of its Standard Reference Materials (SRM) Program, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) is planning to offer a standard reference cigarette to support industry and government efforts to improve public safety through requirements for less fire-prone cigarettes.

The State of New York has promulgated a rule that all cigarettes sold in the State must meet a standard for low risk of igniting household furnishings. Other states and the U.S. Congress are considering comparable legislation. A similar bill has been enacted in Canada. A number of laboratories are performing the required standard test (ASTM E2187-02b) for product development, certification, and quality control.

Experience says that the test method is robust and that professional fire test laboratories should be able to perform the test reproducibly. A reference cigarette would enable any laboratory to "calibrate" itself.

NIST is planning to purchase from Philip Morris USA a supply of plain, non-commercial cigarettes with ignition strength near the NYS requirement. [It is not uncommon for a manufacturer to provide NIST with the material that becomes a SRM.] NIST will determine the cigarette performance and its variability in the same statistically valid manner that it certifies all its reference materials. The cigarettes will then be made available for purchase on the normal SRM cost recovery basis.

NIST will notify the interested community at this web site when the standard cigarettes are available, most likely toward the end of this calendar year.

Please send any comments on this planned SRM to me at: rggann@nist.gov.