More Calls for the Regulation of Glass Furniture by Media

With stories and reports about the breakage of glass tabletops surfacing on a regular basis, *Consumer Reports* magazine is again questioning why there are currently no regulations over the type of glass that should be used in furniture. Three years ago the Consumers Union, publisher of *Consumer Reports*, made a proposal to ASTM International that an industry standard for furniture glass be written. However, little has been done since regarding the development of a standard.

While the Glass Association of North America (GANA) has been involved with the development of a number of previous ASTM standards, Greg Carney, GANA technical director, says nothing much has developed from ASTM that would apply to glass furniture.

"At one point there was an [ASTM] effort to write a test procedure for glass in furniture … and supposedly the group was going to get a draft out, but we have not seen anything," says Carney.

The discussions have taken place within ASTM Subcommittee F15.42 on Furniture Safety, which reports to Committee F15 on Consumer Products.

Len Morrissey, ASTM manager of F15 on Consumer Products, told USGlass that his group has been reviewing a draft to cover this topic under Subcommittee F15.42 on Furniture Safety. Negatives received from a ballot sent out in January are awaiting review by committee members.

For some people in the industry, having a standard for furniture glass brings a concern. Why? Both tempered and laminated glass cost more than annealed glass, and some fear that could keep furniture manufacturers from using as much glass as they do now (*see June 2006 USGlass, page 24, for related article*).

In addition, the majority of furniture sold in the United States is no longer produced here and is instead imported from other countries, such as China. That means the glass coming in with the furniture was also most likely produced offshore and therefore having a standard for furniture glass produced here would not affect the majority of the U.S. glass fabricators.

Green Building Encourages Low-E Glass Use in Homes

Due to its tough requirements, the development of the 2008 National Green Building Standard (ICC-700) may help further promote the use of low-E glass. ICC says its standard is designed to provide guidance for safe and sustainable building practices for high-rise residential buildings as well as single-family homes.

The standard's rating system allows architects/designers, builders and communities to choose the levels of high-performance green buildings that best suit their needs. For example, one key provision of the standard is to offer energy performance starting at 15 percent above the baseline requirements of the 2006 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC).

"Whether they use the performance option (whole home 15 percent above the 2006 IECC) or the prescriptive path, the standard will reward lower solar heat gain coefficients (SHGC) in the south, and lower U-value in the north," says industry consultant Thomas D. Culp, Ph.D. "Both will promote low-E in all regions, and possibly some triple-glazing in the north. There are also credits for sun-tempered design, passive cooling design and passive solar heating design. These options reward builders for practices such as optimally orienting the building and glazing, using higher SHGC in the south, using larger overhangs or other methods of shading, placing operable windows for cross ventilation and using thermal mass. These can give from three to 13 additional points in the energy efficiency category, on top of points related to the basic window and building energy performance."

www.iccsafe.org

OSHA Extends Comment Period on Crane and Derrick Proposed Rulemaking

William Rapetti, the master rigger on the 200-foot-high tower crane that collapsed and killed seven people last March in New York City, was indicted in January on multiple charges of manslaughter, criminally negligent homicide, assault and reckless endangerment.

Given the number of cane-related accidents that have occurred in the past few years, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) currently is in the process of revising its 1971 cranes and derricks ruling. In early 2003 OSHA had announced it would move forward with the negoti-

OSHA is expected to review changes to and update its crane and derricks standard in the near future.

ated rulemaking process to update its cranes and derricks standard, but little work was done after that.

Then on October 9, 2008, OSHA published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking titled "Cranes and Derricks in Construction," which addresses the key hazards associated with construction cranes and derricks.

According to the proposed ruling, "Employers would first determine whether the ground is sufficient to support the anticipated weight of hoisting equipment and associated loads. The employer then would be required to assess hazards within the work zone that would affect the safe operation of hoisting equipment, such as those of power lines and objects or personnel that would be within the work zone or swing radius of the hoisting equipment. Finally, the employer would be required to warrant that the equipment is in safe operating condition via required inspections and employees in the work zone are trained to recognize hazards associated with the use of the equipment and any related duties that they are assigned to perform."

A comment period on the rule ended on January 22. OSHA is expected to review and update the proposed rule soon.

For contract glaziers, safety is of paramount importance when it comes to working on the jobsite.

"In Chicago we have not seen many crane accidents, but nationally there have been many issues," says Robert Martin, president of Arcadia Products Inc. in Northbrook, Ill. "Safety is absolutely our number-one concern. Our employees are our greatest asset and so safety in the field is a significant factor."

Martin says in order to ensure employees are safe, his company follows a specific, written safety program.

"We also have weekly safety meetings and focus on safety training in classes."

Don Earnheart, national design vice president for Trainor Glass Co. in Dallas, agrees that crane safety is a major concern for contract glazing companies

"We use cranes to lift our preglazed panels off our trucks and load them on floors. Safety issues with cranes are of paramount importance to our installation efforts," says Earnheart. "We certainly want safer cranes to ensure life safety issues for our employees as well as to eliminate potential damage to products."

One additional means companies may look to when in comes to crane safety is OSHA's National Crane Safety Initiative, which addresses safety hazards during construction crane operation. The initiative is designed to raise awareness on crane safety and increase enforcement of the current standards, including launching local emphasis programs in a number of regions to inspect high-rise construction, stakeholder outreach and additional training on crane safety. ■