

MEMORANDUM TO: The Vision Council Members

FROM: Rick Van Arnam, Esq.
Regulatory Counsel to The Vision Council

DATE: March 20, 2014

RE: New EU Sunglass Standard Implementation Date Pushed Back

Sunglass companies doing business in the European Union are familiar with the requirement that sunglasses meet the health and safety criteria of Directive 89/686/EEC – Personal Protective Equipment. Historically, compliance with this Directive meant satisfying the European sunglass standard, EN 1836.

However, after years of negotiating, last year the International Standards Organization (“ISO”) published two new ISO standards covering sunglasses: ISO 12312-1-2013 and ISO 12311-2013. The EU moved quickly to replace EN 1836 with these new standards, and by operation of EU procedures replacement of EN 1836 with the new ISO standards was scheduled for implementation on February 28, 2014.

This turn-around was rapid when compared with the adoption and implementation by the EU of other ISO standards, which usually took years rather than months. Typically, an adequate roll-out time period is provided so that affected products already in inventory or distribution channels can be sold. That did not occur here, meaning that products sold after February 28th would have had to comply with the new ISO standards in order to be compliant with Directive 89/686/EEC.

Fortunately industry, including The Vision Council, voiced concern with this untenable implementation time period. As a result the implementation date has been pushed back one year until February 28, 2015. It appears that until that date continued compliance with EN 1836 will suffice to satisfy the Personal Protective Equipment Directive.

Questions can be directed to Rick Van Arnam, The Vision Council’s regulatory affairs counsel, at rvanarnam@barnesrichardson.com or (212) 725-0200 ex. 126; Jeff Endres, TVC’s Senior Director of Technical Service at jendres@thevisioncouncil.org, or Jason McElvaney, TVC’s government and regulatory affairs liaison, at jason@mcelvaneypublicaffairs.com or (512) 751-5555.