



SOUTH CAROLINA STATE FIRE

a Division of South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation

Office of State Fire Marshal

141 Monticello Trail • Columbia, SC 29203

(803) 896-9800

www.statefire.llr.sc.gov

June 30, 2026

The Honorable Thomas C. Alexander
President
South Carolina Senate
213 Gressette Building
Columbia, SC 29201

REDUCED CIGARETTE IGNITION PROPENSITY STANDARDS AND FIREFIGHTER PROTECTION ACT REPORT

The following report is provided by the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM), a program area of South Carolina State Fire, which is a division of the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, pursuant to S.C. Code of Laws section 23-51-30(N):

Development and Objective:

South Carolina Code of Laws, Title 23, Chapter 51, the “Reduced Cigarette Ignition Propensity Standards and Firefighter Protection Act,” (the “Act”) became effective January 1, 2010. The Act requires that cigarettes sold in South Carolina meet certain criteria designed to reduce the likelihood of cigarettes becoming an ignition source for upholstered furniture, mattresses, and bedding. These items accounted for about 80 percent of the cigarette-related fire deaths in the 1980’s. At that time, feasibility studies began to evaluate the value of reducing cigarette ignition propensity (creating “fire-safe” cigarettes). “Fire-safe” is how these types of cigarettes are commonly known but they are more accurately described as “less fire-prone” or of “reduced ignition propensity.” The most common fire-safe technology used by cigarette manufacturers is to wrap cigarettes with two or three thin bands of less-porous paper that act as “speed bumps” to slow down a burning cigarette. If a fire-safe cigarette is left unattended, then the burning tobacco will reach one of these “speed bumps” and self-extinguish.

Testing:

Cigarettes are tested using American Society of Testing Materials (ASTM) E2187-04, “Standard Test Method for Measuring the Ignition Strength of Cigarettes.” In a performance test, a lit cigarette is placed on a standard substrate made of a stack of 10 extremely thin filter papers, which act as a small heat sink. If the cigarette burns strongly, it will continue burning despite this heat loss, potentially being capable of igniting an actual mattress or piece of upholstered furniture. If the cigarette burns weakly, even the small heat loss to the test substrate will lead to the cigarette extinguishing. This test procedure is repeated 40 times, and the number of full-



Our mission is to be the focal point for service and support to save lives and property.

length burns is recorded. In the actual test, no more than 10 of the 40 tested cigarettes (of a given brand style) may burn their full length. This test procedure was initially adopted by the State of New York, which was the first state to require reduced cigarette ignition propensity standards. These cigarettes are commonly known as Fire Standards Compliant (FSC) cigarettes. All 50 states now have a FSC program.

FSC Program Major Requirements:

The provisions of the Act require that cigarettes sold in South Carolina conform to the performance standards and manufacturers provide copies of test results to the State Fire Marshal, upon request. Each cigarette manufacturer must submit an initial application for their product, attesting compliance with the Act, and recertification every three years thereafter. Cigarette packages, cartons, and cases must be marked to specific standards, normally consisting of the letters “FSC” on each component. Section 23-51-60 establishes the penalties for the sale of uncertified cigarettes and provides for the forfeiture of unmarked cigarettes. The State Fire Marshal is charged with the responsibility for operating the program in the areas of application processing, performance testing, program enforcement, and program oversight.

Funds generated by the certification of FSC cigarettes are to be deposited to a special fund in the State Treasury and made available to the State Fire Marshal to support the processing, testing, enforcement, and oversight activities required by the Act. Any monies recovered as penalties are to be deposited into a special fund in the State Treasury and made available to the State Fire Marshal to support fire safety and prevention programs.

Actions Taken by OSFM to Date:

The program is managed jointly by the OSFM’s Licensing and Permitting and Community Risk Reduction sections. The Office of State Fire Marshal’s Information Management System (IMS) is used to collect Fire Standard Compliant Cigarette applications. Each manufacturer submits the required application, with the supporting documentation, in the IMS. OSFM staff evaluates the application and supporting documentation, including test results. When a cigarette brand style is found to be in compliance with the law and referenced testing standards, it is approved for sale in South Carolina. The manufacturers are notified of the approval or disapproval of their application within the IMS. A list of approved brand styles and their certification expiration date is found on the IMS landing page and is viewable by the public. If a manufacturer adds or changes a brand style, a supplemental application and supporting documents are submitted for review and approval. Publication is the same as for an initial approval. Recertification of all approvals is required every three years (products initially approved in 2010 were due for recertification in 2013, 2016, 2019, 2022, and 2025). At the end of fiscal year 2026, there are 20 manufacturers with 536 brand styles certified for sale in South Carolina as FSC, registered in the IMS database.

Program Effectiveness:

The ultimate measure of effectiveness is the reduction of cigarette-initiated fires. Based on information provided by South Carolina fire departments through the National Fire Incident Reporting System, cigarettes were reported as the known cause of more than 3% of all fires in South Carolina, prior to the FSC program’s inception. Since the implementation of the FSC program in 2010, cigarette-initiated fires have remained at less than 1% of all fires, with the



Our mission is to be the focal point for service and support to save lives and property.

highest number reported in 2022 (297). This decrease in cigarette-related fires can be attributed to the effectiveness of the FSC program. Still, cigarettes are an ignition source for fires in SC. During the last 10 years, cigarette-initiated fires ranged from 179 (2025) to 297 (2022), with the average being 239 per year (0.73% of all fires). From 2016 to 2025, smoking was listed as the most probable cause of 133 fire fatalities in 121 fires, making cigarettes one of the leading causes of fatal fires (14% of fire fatalities caused by cigarettes).

Planned Program Adjustments:

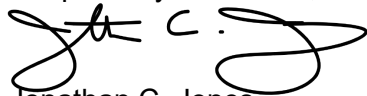
In FY26, Community Risk Reduction staff collaborated with the SC Office of Attorney General to ensure that our program goals and actions are aligned across the two agencies. The State Law Enforcement Division has been made aware of the required FSC labelling for cigarette cartons and packages and will be including random inspections of cigarettes offered for sale during their alcohol enforcement activities.

In 2025, a Cigarette Fire Data Collector was released at the Fire Investigative Approaches Training Conference, where local and private fire investigators were invited to contribute incident-specific data related to cigarette-initiated fires. In the future, the data collected will help inform decision making regarding education and prevention efforts. The use of the Cigarette Fire Data Collector will continue to be promoted throughout the fire service, so that more data can be collected and conclusions can be drawn from a larger data sample. Data entered by local fire investigators into the Cigarette Fire Data Collector will be audited for accuracy and completeness, by Deputy State Fire Marshals, to ensure that the data is reliable. This program will be overseen by the Senior Deputy of Community Risk Reduction.

The Community Risk Reduction Section of OSFM monitors data provided by reporting systems in regards to smoking-related fire events. The State Fire Community Loss Education and Response (CLEAR) Team assists local fire departments with determining the most probable cause of fatal fires. When the fire-related death is considered to be attributable to smoking, the CLEAR Team collects additional information about the cigarette brand style involved and examines packaging (if possible) for the proper FSC markings.

It is anticipated that these internal program implementations will increase awareness and compliance with the existing law. No legislative recommendations are submitted at this time.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jonathan C. Jones
State Fire Marshal

