



REGULATORY AGENCY ACTION

providers of signal dogs for the deaf and service dogs for the physically disabled. The Board is currently evaluating accessibility laws guaranteeing the rights of guide, signal, and service dog users to travel unimpeded and to enter all places of public accommodation. (See CRLR Vol. 9, No. 4 (Fall 1989) p. 59; Vol. 9, No. 1 (Winter 1989) p. 48; and Vol. 8, No. 4 (Fall 1988) p. 56 for background information.)

In addition to numerous hearings last summer and fall, the Board held public hearings on these issues on November 2 in Sylmar; November 3 in Santa Barbara; December 4 in San Diego; and January 17 in San Jose. The concerns presented at the hearings focused on statutory definitions of the terms "deaf," "physically disabled," "signal dogs," "service dogs," and "trainers" of those dogs; costs and burdens placed on schools and trainers if regulated by the Board; level of certification and licensing for schools and trained animals; and public accessibility of signal and service dogs and their owners.

The January 17 hearing concluded the schedule of public hearings. The Board is currently planning a meeting to discuss the issues raised at the hearings. The Board is to identify areas of the law requiring legislative attention, note its concerns, and make appropriate recommendations. The Board must complete its study and report back to the legislature on or before June 30.

FUTURE MEETINGS:

To be announced.

BUREAU OF HOME FURNISHINGS AND THERMAL INSULATION

Chief: Gordon Damant
(916) 920-6951

The Bureau of Home Furnishings and Thermal Insulation (BHF) is charged with regulating the home furnishings and insulation industries in California. As a division of the state Department of Consumer Affairs, the Bureau's mandate is to ensure that these industries provide safe, properly labeled products which comply with state standards. Additionally, the Bureau is to protect consumers from fraudulent, misleading, and deceptive trade practices by members of the home furnishings, insulation, and dry cleaning industries. The

Bureau is established in Business and Professions Code section 19000 *et seq.*

The Bureau establishes rules regarding furniture and bedding labeling and sanitation. To enforce its regulations, which are codified in Chapter 3, Title 4 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR), the Bureau has access to premises, equipment, materials, and articles of furniture. The Bureau may issue notices of violation, withhold products from sale, and refer cases to the Attorney General or local district attorney's offices for possible civil penalties. The Bureau may also revoke or suspend a licensee's registration for violation of its rules.

The Bureau is also charged with the registration of dry cleaning plants throughout the state. The registration process includes submission of information regarding the plant's onsite storage, treatment, and disposal of toxic wastes. The Bureau, however, has no enforcement authority regarding this function.

The Bureau is assisted by a thirteen-member Advisory Board consisting of seven public members and six industry representatives.

MAJOR PROJECTS:

Consumer Assistance Program. The Bureau recently completed a full restructuring of its Consumer Assistance Program. BHF Consumer Assistant Jo Hakala, with the assistance of Chief Damant, redesigned the way in which the Bureau responds to consumer complaints regarding furniture and bedding licensees. Hakala described the revamped system at the Advisory Board's December 5 meeting in Los Angeles.

Previously, consumer complaints regarding licensees were required to be submitted in written form. Once received, the Bureau would forward the complaint to the subject firm for its comments and possible solutions. The process proved to be time-consuming and generally ineffective. Under the new system, Hakala attempts to resolve all disputes over the telephone. Written complaints are not required unless the level of complexity demands it.

The restructured program should benefit both consumers and licensees. Consumers are now offered quicker and more effective assistance with their problems. Additionally, consumer complaints often involved expenditures of licensee time and money. The Bureau is now able to expedite resolution of the

dispute. Advisory Board Chair John McNeill requested that Hakala report back to the Board at a future meeting with specific numbers regarding the program's effectiveness.

Update on Other BHF Projects. During spring 1990, the Bureau plans to re-propose regulations regarding higher flammability standards for furniture used in public occupancy buildings. (See CRLR Vol. 9, No. 4 (Fall 1989) p. 59 for background information.)

In other action, the Bureau's long-awaited question and answer booklets were finally made available in December. (See CRLR Vol. 8, No. 3 (Summer 1988) p. 61 for background information.) The two booklets, entitled *Don't Remove The Tag* and *Check The Tag*, address the most common concerns of consumers and licensees.

RECENT MEETINGS:

At the Advisory Board's December meeting, Chief Damant announced that two recent disciplinary actions against product manufacturers have ended in settlement. Purofied Down Products of Ridgefield, New Jersey, and HTB Contemporary/Hickory Tavern Furniture of Conover, North Carolina, have agreed to pay \$47,000 and \$34,000, respectively, in civil penalties. The Bureau's inspectors found that although Purofied was labeling certain products as containing a minimum of 75% down, the products in fact contained on average only 50% of the fill material. Regarding HTB, the Bureau had charged the manufacturer with violating various furniture flammability and labeling requirements.

Also at the December 5 meeting, the Bureau's Advisory Board elected Raymond Curry as Chair and Valerie Celestin as Vice-Chair. The two will serve throughout 1990.

FUTURE MEETINGS:

June 12 in San Diego.
September 11 in San Francisco.
December 11 in Los Angeles.

BOARD OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

Executive Officer: Jeanne Brode
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The Board of Landscape Architects (BLA) licenses those who design landscapes and supervise implementation of design plans. To qualify for a license, an