

1.10. Information about consumer injuries, damage and complaints in Saudi Arabia and the information processing system

The Team had difficulties in getting information about the subject and did a lot to try to understand the actual situation of the subject. As electric/electronic products, tires and textile products are the product groups for the in-depth study, the Team studied the subject in the following four fields.

- 1) Fire accidents especially caused by troubles in electricity and related to flame retardant ability of textile products such as tents, curtains and carpets
The main source of information : The Civil Defense (CD)
- 2) Traffic accidents especially caused by troubles with tires
The main source of information : The Traffic Police (TP)
- 3) Consumer complaints due to inferior and unsafe products and unfair trade
The main source of information : The Ministry of Commerce (MOC)
- 4) Actual market study (Market visiting survey and tests for samples purchased in the market by the Team members and SASO staff mainly in Riyadh)

1.10.1. Fire accidents

Fire accidents in Saudi Arabia has been increasing from 14,063 fires in 1990 (1411 H) to 16,675 fires in 1994 (1415 H). Among the number of fires in 1994, fires in houses (3,624 fires, 22% of total), fires in tents (648, 4%), fires in electrical cabinets and wires (950, 6%) and fires in vehicles and motorcycles (2,711, 16%) were closely related to consumer injuries and damage. (Source : Statistical Yearbook, Thirty-first issue 1995).

Figure 1.10.1.-1. shows the distribution of causes of fires in 1994.

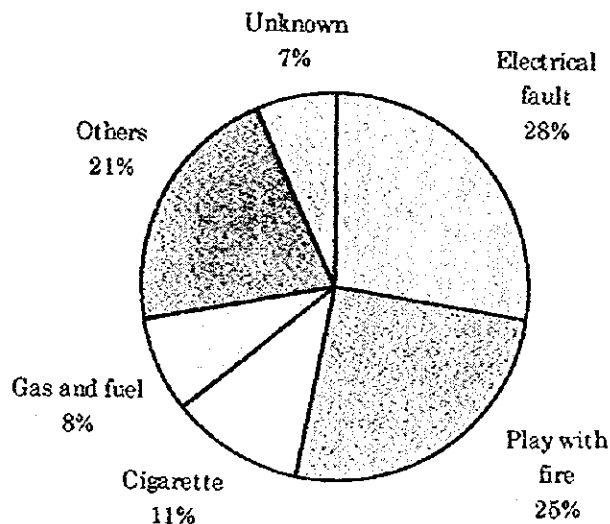


Figure 1.10.1.-1. The distribution of causes of 16,675 fires in 1994(Source : MOInt.)

The figure reveals that fires by electrical cause occupies a big portion. According to CD, more than half of house fires were caused by electricity.

The Safety and Fire Protection Dept. in the Civil Defense provided the Team with detailed analysis of electrically caused fires. *Figure 1.10.1-2* is distribution of causes for 1,073 fires in electric switch boxes and wiring in 1995. The major cause of the fires in electrical cabinets and wires was improper wiring such as mismatching between wire sizes and protection breakers, loose connections, etc. As internal wiring in private houses is not controlled in Saudi Arabia, improper wiring is very common throughout the country.

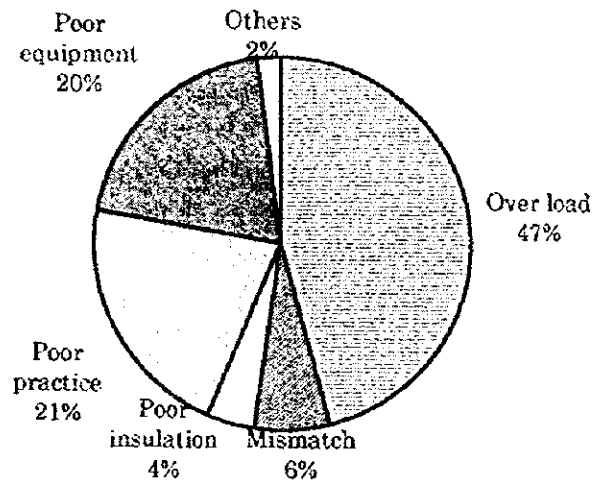


Figure 1.10.1-2. Distribution of 1,073 fire causes due to wiring(1995)(Source : CD)

Figure 1.10.1-3 is the distribution of causes for 5,100 fires due to electricity in buildings and houses in 1995.

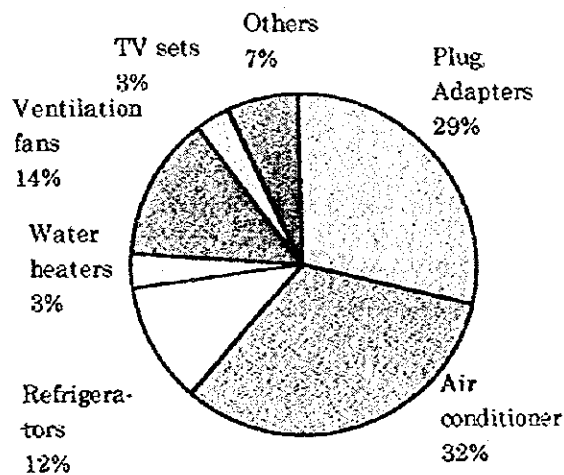


Figure 1.10.1-3. Distribution of 5,100 fire causes due to electricity (1995)(CD)

Among approximately 1,600 fires caused by air conditioners in the figure, fires caused by improper wiring related to air conditioners could be included. Approximately 1,500 fires caused by plugs and adapters shows common use of inferior plugs and adapters throughout the country.

Quality and proper use of flame retardant fabrics are of great importance to this country. For fires in tents, the flame retardant ability of tent fabrics is very important. Taking the dry climate in most part of Saudi Arabia into consideration, curtains, carpets and other textile products and garments are very flammable. The Civil Defense decided to use a new fire resistant material for Haj tents, and is planning a new regulation which stipulates use of flame resistant curtains and carpets for specific social facilities such as hospitals.

Information processing

The occurrence and information about each fire is stored in a computer in CD. The general statistics about fire accidents such as the number of fires by region, month and property types are written up in the Statistical Yearbook. But the causes of fires are not investigated closely. For instance, the specifications of equipment which causes fires and the mode of failure of the equipment are not investigated and recorded for statistical analysis.

1.10.2. Traffic accidents caused by tires

Traffic accidents in Saudi Arabia have increased from 122,140 in 1994 to 176,000 in 1995. About 3,000 people died and 30,000 injured in the traffic accidents in 1995. In Saudi Arabia, cars are indispensable for every day life. Every man, sometimes a boy under the age of 18, must drive a car daily. So it is a very important issue how to prevent and reduce car accidents.

Figure 1.10.2-1 shows the distribution of the causes for traffic accidents in 1992.

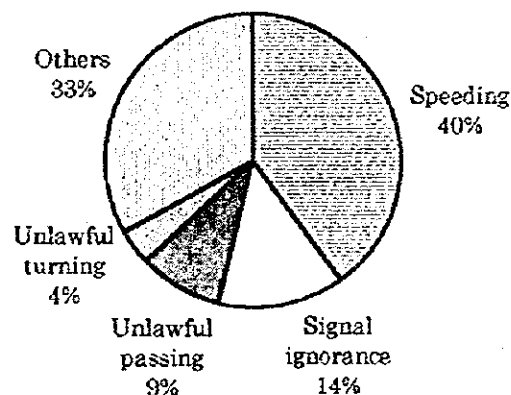


Figure 1.10.2-1. Distribution of causes of traffic accidents (Source : MOInt.)

As shown in the figure, unlawful driving is a major primary causes of traffic accidents. *Table 1.10.2-1* shows the number of cars involved in traffic accidents by type and shows that about 60% the of cars involved in the traffic accidents are passenger cars. A reduction in traffic accidents is a very important issue for consumer protection of the country.

Table 1.10.2-1. Number of cars involved in traffic accidents in 1995 by types
(Source : Traffic Police)

Type	Passenger cars	Trucks/Buses	Light Trucks	Others	Total
Number	114,854	41,003	28,598	16,001	200,456
Ratio(%)	57.3	20.5	14.3	7.9	100.0

At the present moment, the number of traffic accidents caused by tires is not disclosed to the Team, but the burst of tires is related definitely to many traffic accidents in Saudi Arabia. Newspapers in July 1997 reported two traffic accidents caused by tire burst(refer to Appendix 1.7). A causal flow diagram of car accidents caused by tires is shown in *Figure 1.10.2-2*.

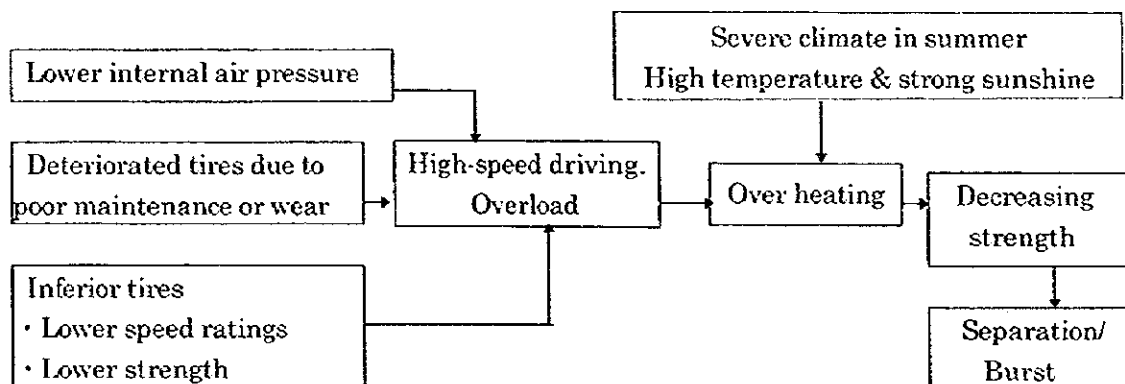


Figure 1.10.2-2. Causal flow diagram of tire burst.

As for tires, the situation in Saudi Arabia is as follows:

- 1) Consumers are apt to buy cheap tires with lower speed ratings.
- 2) Usage and maintenance of tires are improper (High-speed driving with lower internal air pressure, no position change, etc.)
- 3) High temperature and strong direct sunlight deteriorates the rubber of tires.

The Traffic Police and many knowledgeable people suggest that many tire bursts are related to car accidents. By the explanation from engineers in SASO, about 90% of traffic accidents are caused by the bad manners of the drivers, and major troubles are separation/burst of tires used at low air pressure and high-speed driving by the drivers. Among the traffic accidents in a year, about 4,500 cases of cars rolling over were reported. This fact also suggests that many tire troubles are related to traffic accidents because cars rolling over is a typical phenomena caused by tire burst.

From the overall consideration described above, major objective for consumer

protection is to prevent separation/burst of tires. A specialist for tires said that the car accidents could be reduced by about half if tire burst could be prevented. In order to prevent the tire troubles, a proper selection and proper use/maintenance of tires are of greater importance than in other countries because Saudi Arabian natural and social environment requires more careful use of tires.

Regarding retread tires which may cause more trouble than new tires, use of retread tires is seldom at the present moment for passenger cars in Saudi Arabia because of the following reasons:

- Import of retread tires is small in number.
- Saudi Arabia has three retread tire manufacturers only for trucks/buses. A retread tire manufacturer in Riyadh is at a very good level for quality assurance system.

However, in 1997, a SSA was established for retread tires in which the specifications of retread tires for passenger cars was included. In the near future, use of retread tires might become more common for passenger cars. This issue should be handled with great care.

Information processing

The traffic police are analyzing the causes and other elements for each accident through the use of computers. But causal analysis for car parts, which induces accidents such as bursts of tires is not being carried out.

1.10.3. Consumer complaints filed in the Ministry of Commerce

A lot of consumer complaints and commercial disputes have been brought to the Ministry of Commerce under administration of the Deputy Minister of Commerce for Supply. As there is no procedure to decide which side of the dispute is right, most of the complaints and disputes are settled by arbitration. Sometimes, illegal enterprises are confiscated with their illegal products, ordered to make compensation, fined, with their names being put in a newspaper and jailed.

The record of each complaint and dispute is not stored in computers nor analyzed statistically. Such an information system is still in the planning stage. The Team handed a material describing the analysis of consumer complaints in Japan to the ministry.

The ministry provided typical examples of consumer complaints regarding each product field of the in-depth study. They are summarized as follows :

1) Electric/Electronic products

- a) Inferior plugs and receptacles with extension code cause fires.
- b) Wires with a smaller diameter than the specifications are being used for internal wiring.
- c) Product's life is too short for radios of low quality.

2) Tires

- a) Deterioration of tires after a long period of parking due to the hot condition in Saudi Arabia and one point loading on the tires.
- b) Life of tires is shorter than the guaranteed period.
- c) Troubles due to improper storage
- d) Use of tires that should be used for agricultural vehicles to passenger cars because the retailer is cheating

3) Textile products

- a) Color change after washing
- b) A care method for special washing is not indicated.
- c) Fabrics with indication of 100% silk are proved to be not made of silk.
- d) Yarn slippage in garments
- e) Fake indications on the country of origin some of which are labeled in Saudi Arabia.

In addition to the above information, the ministry provided the Team with a material which shows typical problems and complaints about electric/electronic appliances and ministry's suggested solutions. *Table 1.10.3-1* shows the contents of the material translated into English.

Though information from MOC is not statistically analyzed, it supports the findings by the Team regarding consumer accidents and complaints in Saudi Arabia.

Table 1.10.3-1. Statement on the problems and complaints about electric/electronic appliances and the ministry's suggested solutions to them
(Source : MOC)

Type of problem	Case description and suggested solutions
<p>① Appliances broken down because of electrical reasons</p> <p>Due to voltage change</p> <p>Due to oscillation of electric current</p> <p>Appliance being operated for a period longer than its rated time duration</p>	<p>An appliance becomes out of order when the user connects the appliance plug to wrong voltage by mistake. The solution is to use a transformer with the appliance to transform voltage automatically.</p> <p>An appliance becomes out of order because of higher or lower electric current. To avoid this an current regulator should be attached to the appliance to regulate the input current.</p> <p>Non-stop operation of an appliance for a period longer than its rated operating time duration results in increasing the appliance heat and causes damage to some of its part. The optimal solution is to use a safety device to stop the appliance when it reaches its maximum load point.</p>
<p>② Improper placement of appliance as far as cleanliness, ventilation and the weather are concerned</p>	<p>The appliance should be placed in a clean and dust free spot. Proper ventilation and appropriate weather are to be considered.</p>
<p>③ Appliance life expectancy</p>	<p>There have been complaints about appliance's out of order or about spare part shortage. It has been shown that its life expectancy is 10~15 years. Such are the cheap domestic ones available in many models. It is recommended to attach a card to the appliance stating its life expectancy together with the manufacturer's commitment to provide its spare parts.</p>
<p>④ Appliance body</p>	<p>Some appliances have bodies not proportional to their weight, importance, sensitivity or at least to some important component parts which have no hard cover against mist or expected fall. An appliance should have a strong body and extra protection should be accorded to some important parts which should also be installed in safe space.</p>
<p>⑤ Disintegration and installation</p>	<p>Some appliances are disintegrated and installed in a sophisticated way requiring special tools. Thus, disintegration and installation should be facilitated and the tools needed should be available in the market.</p>
<p>⑥ Method of operation, maintenance and guarantee</p>	<p>Although some appliances are accompanied by booklets on operation and maintenance, it is preferable that the methods of operation and maintenance be stated on a card attached to the appliance because such booklets are liable to loss or damage by time.</p>

1.10.4. Findings on electric and electronic products from market survey and test of samples purchased in the market

1) False and misleading indication

There are many products having an improper label which leads to misunderstanding of country of origin and brand by the design imitation of package shape and/or product itself, in the market, as found in the market survey and in the test at SASO's laboratories.

Figure 1.10.4-1 shows examples of misleading indication.



Figure 1.10.4-1. Examples of misleading indication

- a) Particularly the indication of country of origin is not appropriate. When famous trademark products are shipped from an overseas factory, their trade marks are written in large letters (ex. SONY) and their country of origin in small letters (ex. Made in Malaysia). Some products have their country of origin not on their bodies but on their packages by a sticker. Sometimes they can easily be peeled off. Salesclerks emphasize a trademark.
- b) There are some products having their trademarks, color and external view completely or partially similar to original ones (ex. "interNATIONAL," "Sunny," "Designed in Japan"). In a shop we asked a salesclerk about country of origin of a table lamp which looked poorly-made but have a sticker stating "Made in Japan." He said "It's Made in Japan" and sold it as "Made in Japan" because it was so written although he thought it could have been made in China in his heart.
- c) The victims by false labeling and cheap, inferior-quality products are not only consumers but also conscientious local manufacturers. Two large- and medium-sized lighting fixture manufacturers the team visited both complained that some local competitors sell cheap, inferior-quality products of same rating and unfairly take away some portion of the market. One of such local competitors sells a 40W-fluorescent lamp fixture at 16 Riyals which one of the manufacturers sells at 26 Riyals. Although the both manufacturers buy ballast for the lamps from Germany not from Japan because those of Japan are too expensive and reduce competitiveness

in price, the competitors' lamp fixtures are attached with ballast having stickers marked with "Made in Japan." One of the manufacturers the team visited tested six different kinds of ballast marked with "Made in Japan," attached to the competitors' lamp fixtures picked up in the market and it was found that all ballast tested had the output ranging from 21 to 33W against the output specified as the minimum requirement which is $92.5\% \times 40W$ in IEC. The stickers can be easily peeled off and the ballast were probably not made in Japan.

Figure 1.10.4.-2 shows examples of stickers attached to the ballast.

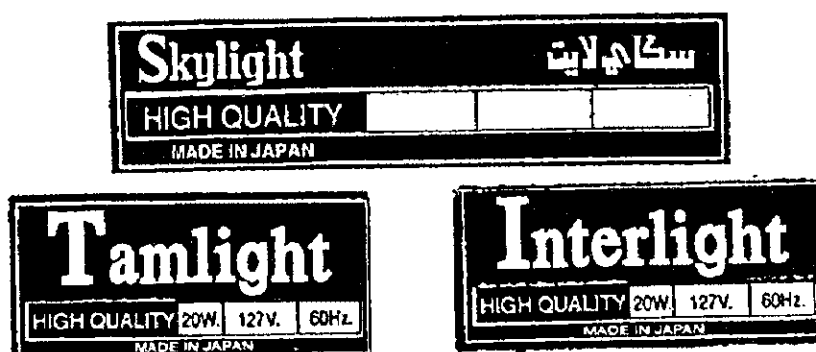


Figure 1.10.4.-2. Stickers attached to the ballast

- d) As shown in the tests at JET, most of the plugs inspected do not comply with SSA in their shape or/and dimensions. Some products have power cords of insufficient cross sectional area for the rated current. Refer to Annex 1.6.1 Test report (Electric and Electronic products). Problems and causes are summarized in Table 1.10.4.-1.

Table 1.10.4.-1. Problems and causes (Indication)

Problems	Causes
False and misleading indication of country of origin, trademarks and ratings	1) Some importers don't feel much responsibility for the products which they deal in. 2) Consumers rely much on the labeling of products in choosing them and do not confirm if the descriptions are true and the products have good quality.

2) Warranty

Almost all the low-price products in a small shop have no warranty and the shop does not guarantee them. Customers buy those products with their knowledge.

3) Instruction manuals

Most of the instruction manuals attached to the samples purchased for test are not written in Arabic but in English. It is very doubtful, however, if such people as to buy those cheap products can read English manuals and realize how to use and maintain the products. SSA specifies instruction manuals should be written in Arabic.

The instruction manual of an air-conditioner manufacturer the Team visited is written in both English and Arabic, and gives detailed explanations to its product.

Problems and causes are summarized in *Table 1.10.4.-2*.

Table 1.10.4.-2. Problems and causes (Instruction manuals)

Problems	Causes
Many instruction manuals are not written in Arabic but in English.	Manufacturers, importers, distributors and consumers don't pay much attention to instruction manuals.

4) Wrong use of voltage between 127V and 220V

Wrong use of voltage is not an exceptional but common practice.

- a) The quarterly magazine "The Consumer" published by GSMO repeatedly carries the articles to ask consumers that they should make sure their products are made for 127V or 220V and wrong application of voltage may damage the products. It shows wrong use of voltage often happens.
- b) The Team was also told at the meeting with big importer-distributors that there were many cases of wrong application of voltage which blew the fuse of a vacuum cleaner (rated voltage 127V) and other appliances, and burnt its motor and others, and that if it were corrected, the number of troubles and complaints related to household appliances would decrease to half.
- c) Sophisticated products such as Videos and TVs which one of such big importer-distributors deals in have such special specifications that they can be operated under extended voltage range, but air-conditioners, refrigerators, etc. do not have such special devices.
- d) "Questionnaire to the SASO staff on the dual voltage system and its connecting apparatus" (hereinafter referred to the "Questionnaire") was conducted to know actual conditions of interior wiring and connecting apparatus. The total number of answers was 19. The data obtained in the questionnaire is extremely valuable for SASO as well as for the Team. It shows that eight of nineteen persons (8/19=42%) have experienced wrong use of voltage. Six persons of them (6/8=75%) had to make the damaged products repaired. Refer to Annex 1.5 Questionnaire to SASO

5) Dual voltage system and its connecting apparatus

Wrong use of voltage has close relationship with the dual voltage system and its connecting apparatus as well as with consumers' mistake.

- a) Each consumer is supplied with 127/220V, 60Hz, 3 phase 4 wires. To meet this voltage system, some products are provided with an external changeover switch of 127/220V outside their bodies. This may cause wrong application of voltage.
- b) The "Questionnaire" shows that two of 19 persons questioned have 110V line, 17 persons 127V line, 18 persons 220V line and one person have no 220V line. Refer to *Table 1.5.1.-1* in the Annex.
- c) The "Questionnaire" shows that the ratio of the outlets for 127V use which do not comply with SSA to the total is 12/19 (63%) and for 220V use 6/15 (40%).

They are two-round-pin type (B), three-pin type (D) and British type (E) for 127V, and two-flat-pin type (A) and three-pin type (D) for 220V. In four cases, three-pin type (D) are used for 220V line and British type (E) for 127V line. In one case, only British-type outlets are used for both 127V and 220V. Refer to the following *Figure 1.10.4.-3* and *Table 1.5.1.-2* in the Annex.

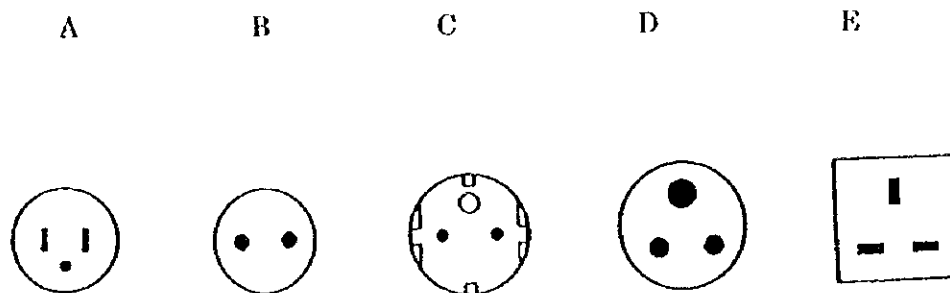


Figure 1.10.4.-3. Various shapes of outlets

- d) Most of power plugs attached to the products are two-rounded pin type, which do not comply with SASO standard (SSA 444/1985 Plugs and Sockets-Outlets for Household and Similar General Use). Some products of the rated 220V have plugs with flat pins only approved for 127V products.
- e) The "Questionnaire" shows that many products have plugs not specified in SSA and two-round-pin plugs are widely used irrespective of the rated voltage of the products. Refer to *Tables 1.5.1.-3, -4 and -5* in the Annex. To meet the products with plugs which do not comply with SSA, various kinds of configuration adapters are on the market, which may result in the wrong use of voltage between 127V and 220V. The following figure shows the shapes of plugs.

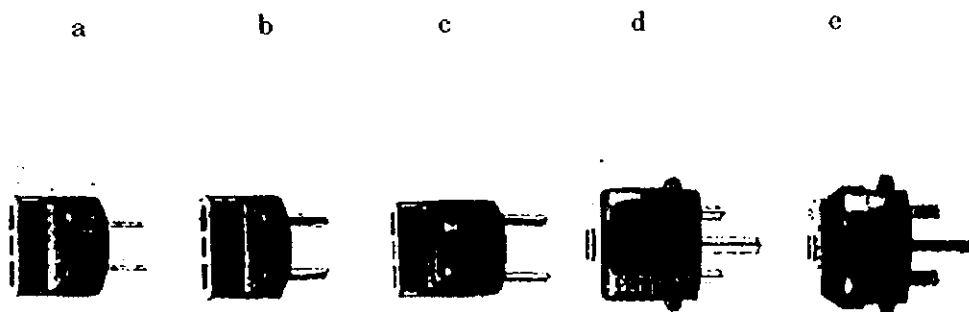


Figure 1.10.4.-4. Various shapes of plugs

- f) The "Questionnaire" shows that 10 of 19 (53%) persons use configuration adapters and 13 of 19 (68%) persons replace the plugs attached to products with another plugs bought in the market. It means most of the products cannot directly be connected to the outlets. Problems and causes are summarized in *Table 1.10.4.-3*.

Table 1.10.4.-3. Problems and causes (Wrong use of voltage between 127 and 220V)

Problems	Causes
Wrong use of voltage between 127 and 220V	1) It is basically caused by the dual voltage system. 2) There are many types of outlets, plugs and configuration adapters which can be inserted into both 127V and 220V outlets. 3) Wrong connection by consumers' carelessness.

6) Bad interior wiring

There is a lot of bad interior wiring, which is one of main causes of fires.

- a) According to the article of "The Consumer" quarterly published by GSMO, the following common errors as shown in *Table 1.10.4.-4* are repeatedly pointed out. The article warns consumer that these error may cause a lot of fires. Of the following items, a), b), c) and f) are due to bad interior wiring.

Table 1.10.4.-4. Common errors when using power supply and household appliances

a) Use of wires of improper cross-sectional area,
b) Use of wires and fuses of improper capacity for large-capacity electric appliances,
c) Use of extension cord of low quality and performance,
d) Wrong use of voltage between 127V and 220V,
e) Use of improper fuses and circuit breakers,
f) Improper grounding connection.

- b) According to the Civil Defense, causes of electricity-related fires are classified into the items as shown in *Figure 1.10.1.-2* and *-3* in *Clause 1.10.1*. All items of 1,073 fires in 1995 in *Figure 1.10.1.-2* are related to bad interior wiring including wiring apparatus. Problems and causes are summarized in *Table 1.10.4.-5*.

Table 1.10.4.-5. Problems and causes (bad interior wiring)

Problem	Cause
1) Electric sparks and sometimes fires caused by loose contact between outlets and plugs	1) There are various types of inferior-quality outlets and plugs in the market.
2) Fires related to electric products	2) Use of wires having an improper capacity
3) There are many bad interior wiring.	3) Incomplete SSA for and insufficient control of interior wiring.

7) Voltage fluctuation

Answering the "Questionnaire," voltage was measured three times a day (morning, evening and night) with regard to 127V and 220V lines together with the place of living. Measured values were within the tolerance range (127V ± 5%, 220V ± 5%). Refer to *Table 1.5.1.-6* "Measured values of voltage in the housing" in the Annex.

8) Troubles and complaints resulting from wrong use of home appliances

There are many troubles and complaints reported from the "Questionnaire," N sole agent and S air-conditioner manufacturer.

- a) The "Questionnaire" shows that 42% of persons questioned have an experience of wrong use of voltage when connecting their household electric appliances and 75% of persons had the experience had to have the products repaired. Refer to Q-6 of Annex 1.5.1.
- b) Wrong application of power supply voltage caused the motor of a vacuum cleaner to burn. (N sole agent)
- c) Not changing a dust bag of vacuum cleaner caused the motor of a vacuum cleaner to burn. (N sole agent)
- d) Loose connection of plugs caused sparking and high current, resulting in the damage of compressors of refrigerators and air-conditioners. (N sole agent)
- e) Starting refrigerators and air-conditioners immediately after switching off caused high gas pressure and damaged compressors. (N sole agent)
- f) Wrong selection of installation place for air-conditioners caused compressors to overheat. (N sole agent)
- g) Wrong selection of installation place for air-conditioners and direction of outlet air to the wall caused the wall to cool and dew condensation. (S air-conditioner manufacturer)

Others

- a) Damp conditions caused mechanical damage to a video tape recorders. (N sole agent)
- b) Due to salty air in coastal areas and sand storm containing salt in inland areas, service life of sheet metal is relatively short. (S air-conditioner manufacturer)

Note) N sole agent : a big importer-distributor dealing in Japanese famous brand electric and electronic products

S air-conditioner manufacturer : a manufacturer having a technical tie-up with a Japanese famous manufacturer

1.10.5. Findings on tires from market survey and test of samples purchased in the market.

According to market survey and test of samples purchased in the market, the major causes of tire troubles are improper usage of tires and insufficient education for consumers about tires.

The findings on tires, their problems and causes are as follows :

1) Quality of tires

a) New tires

The new tires are all imported and inspected under ICCP. Most of the new tires sold in the market conform with the relevant SSA. The two tire samples from the market were tested in the SASO laboratory and proved to conform basically with SSA (refer to Annex 1.6.2). The Team selected the samples with lower reputation and cheaper price for evaluation. Their characteristics are rather inferior to ones with established reputation but satisfy the specification.

b) Retread tires

At the moment, the use of retread tires is limited in Saudi Arabia. The amount of import is very small and there are only three productive retread tire manufacturers mainly for trucks and buses. The Team visited one of them in Riyadh. Their production process and quality system are very well controlled.

The retread tires should be used with special care in Saudi Arabia, as the quality assurance of retread tires has many difficulties and many countries set some limitation on their use. In 1997, SSA for retread tires is established. In near future, retread tires for passenger cars, buses and trucks can be imported and manufactured more freely based on the new SSA.

c) Used tires

Though not many used tires are sold in the market, they are not preferable from the view point of safe drive.

The problems in quality of tires and their causes are tabulated in *Table 1.10.5-1*.

Table 1.10.5-1. Problems in tire quality and their causes

Problems	Causes
Retread tires can be imported and manufactured more freely in near future. The use of them for passenger cars and buses is not preferable.	Saudi Arabian natural and social environment is not well reflected in the newly established SSA.

2) Consumer education

a) Labeling and instruction manuals

Tires are sold without any instruction manuals(cards) in Arabic. The record of production and the characteristics are printed on the side wall of the tires. But the numbers and symbols on the side wall are difficult for users to understand.

b) Proper maintenance and use of tires

Most of the owner drivers of passenger cars do not much care about proper use and maintenance of tires in the following points.

- ① Air pressure is lower than the specified value
Continuous high speed driving with lower pressurized tires will lead to tire troubles due to excess heat generation in tires.
- ② No mounting position change of tires
Scheduled position change of tires prevent tires from irregular wear.
- ③ No check of remaining groove depth of tires

c) Education

Retailers do not give necessary information to their customers. Many customers do not have sufficient knowledge of tires to select proper tires and to use them properly.

The problems in consumer education and their causes are listed in *Table 1.10.5.-2.*

Table 1.10.5.-2. The problems in consumer education and their causes

Problems	Causes
1) Usage and maintenance of tires are improper.	1) Poor education for drivers
2) Retailers do not give necessary information to their customers.	2) Poor education for retailers and no guidance from authorities to give necessary information to customers and to attach instruction manuals (cards)

3) Retail of tires

a) Storage in retail shop

The tires should be stored properly to prevent their deformation and deterioration. SSA specifies requirements for tire storage, but many retailers do not follow the SSA and the SSA do not prohibit piling up of excess number of tires in storing.

b) Sales of used tires

The import of used tires is not allowed now, but their sales are not prohibited. As quality of used tires can not be assured practically, sales of used tires are not preferable and causes tire troubles in driving.

Problems in retail of tires and their causes are tabulated in *Table 1.10.5.-3*.

Table 1.10.5.-3. Problems in retail of tires and their causes

Problems	Causes
1) Storage method of tires is improper.	1) SSA is not well enforced and is insufficient.
2) Sales of used tires	2) Lack of relevant laws or regulations

4) The problems of tire test in the SASO laboratory and their causes

Sample tests and technology transfer on retread tire evaluation conducted by the Team together with the SASO laboratory staff reveals necessity of strengthening of facilities and skills in the SASO laboratory for tire testing. For increase of testing equipment and testing items, and improvement of testing skills, refer to the description in **Clause 3.7.4.** in this report.

1.10.6. Findings on textile products from market survey and test of samples purchased in the market

The problems found at the visiting in the market survey and at the sample test are introduced below.

1) Unfair Indication and improper labeling

They say that many unfair indications of fiber composition were found at the inspection performed by the Ministry of Commerce 10 years ago. Even now in Saudi Arabia, many kinds of textile products are distributed with unfair indication, misleading representations and improper labeling, including imitation and sham, because the products from the specific countries of origin, such as Japan, USA, and European countries, and the specific material, like silk and high quality polyester, are dealt in at high price. In particular, many products with a double description of the country of origin, "Made in USA" in the hang tag (a paper label on the product) and "Made in China" in the sewed label on the product, and Ebayas, silk fabric rolls and bolts without any labeling of composition, care method and country of origin are found.

For example, Ebaya purchased for a sample test had no labeling. Instead the sales clerk of a retailer gave the oral information to be labeled on the product properly that "the product is made of 100% silk, the material is made in Japan and the washing shall be done by hand or dry cleaning". In fact, it was found at the sample test that the fiber composition was not 100% silk, but 100% polyester and other five kinds of silk fabrics purchased for the test samples also showed the same situation. Refer to Annex 1.6.3. Test report (Textile products).

If there are no indication of country of origin and fiber composition, consumers cannot help but believe in what salesclerks explain. As a result, it leads to unfair trade.

The problems and causes are described in the *Table 1.10.6.-1*.

Table 1.10.6.-1. The problems and causes (Indication)

Problems	Causes
Many products with improper indication or no indication are distributed in the market, especially silk fabric rolls, bolts and garments.	a) When importing textile products, submission of fiber composition certificate is not necessary. b) No market surveillance. c) Some importers are low in moral. d) Many silk fabric rolls and bolts in the market have no indication of country of origin and fiber composition.

Figure 1.10.6.-1 shows the photo of an example of indication of polyester fabrics bolt. SSA 784/1994 specifies that the fiber composition and country of origin shall be indicated in the conspicuous location. As shown in the photo, the indication of most of the fabrics complies with the SSA 784/1994, and markings are indicated on the fabric roll end. But, the information of the fiber composition and country of origin is orally given by the salesclerk when the end of the roll is sold. As a result, it leads to unfair trade.



Figure 1.10.6.-1. Photo of indication of polyester fabrics bolt in Saudi Arabia

2) Quality control

There are few enterprises concerned to textile products which have an organization for quality control and conduct the quality control voluntarily in Saudi Arabia. Since most enterprises do not perform the quality control of the goods they handle, they are apt to handle the goods with unfair indication or improper labeling and receive complaints from the consumers about color change and shrinkage after washing.

In sample test of the men's under wear of 100% cotton, the shrinkage after washing reached 14.3% (9.7 cm) in body length and the result of color fastness test failed to meet the SSA. This is because the quality control is not performed. Refer to Annex 1.6.3. Test report (Textile products)

The problems and causes are described in the *Table 1.10.6.-2*.

Table 1.10.6.-2. The problems and causes (Quality control)

Problems	Causes
1) Some consumers complain about color change and shrinkage.	a) Many importers and retailers do not conduct quality control. b) Many shops do not care about quality of products. c) Many importers and retailers do not request test report from supplier before contract.
2) Some domestic manufactures do not conduct quality control voluntarily.	Conscientious manufacturers have difficulty in price competitiveness of their products against cheap and inferior ones.

3) Safety

a) Skin trouble

A law or standard that control the use of harmful substances causing skin trouble is not established in Saudi Arabia. Such a law or standard is especially important for the baby's suite to protect the weak skin against harmful substances and for the under wear to touch directly to the skin. Japan has "Law for the Control of Household Products Containing Harmful Substances", mainly against formaldehyde and Germany "New Regulation for Use of Pigment Contained in the Household Insecticides and Textile Products".

Formaldehyde was not found at the sample test, but it is necessary to establish a law and standard to control the use of harmful substances to cause skin trouble. Refer to Annex 1.6.3. Test report (Textile products).

b) Flame retardant ability

The standard (SSA645/1994) has been established in Saudi Arabia for the flame retardant ability of tents. The test of tents is strengthened from the instructive experience of the tent fire which caused many casualties in 1997 in Mecca. In the present situation, however, the quality confirmation of all tents distributed is not implemented completely.

The Civil Defense Law covers flame retardant ability only for tents, but not for curtains and carpets. It is regrettable that there is no movement in the governmental level to prepare a stricter legal system and perform the control properly. SASO only handles the matter at the request of the enterprises for the voluntary test and at the request of governmental authorities.

The fire law in Japan strictly stipulates specific products which should be fire retardant and the specific places where fire retardant products shall be used. The specific products stipulated in the law are drape curtains, etc. and the specific places are high-rise buildings, underground centers, theaters, hotels, etc.

Flammability test results of fire retardant tent fabric samples were good. Refer to Annex 1.6.3. Test report (Textile products).

The problems and causes are described in the *Table 1.10.6.-3.*

Table 1.10.6.-3. The problems and causes (Safety)

Problems	Causes
<p>1) No regulation and SSA to control harmful substances.</p> <p>2) Flame retardant ability.</p> <p>a) There is no description of flame resistant ability of object buildings and object items in Civil Defense Law.</p> <p>b) SSA are not enough about flame resistant ability of object items.</p> <p>c) Fraud fire retardant tent fabric is distributed in the market.</p>	<p>There is no control scheme under MOH.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Civil Defense is preparing the regulation about flame resistant ability of object items. • The Civil Defense law covers flame retardant ability only for tents. • Some importers do not follow the mandatory SSA. • Flame retardant ability is not conformed at the import inspection.

1.11. Consumer education

Consumer education is conducted in schools and governmental organizations, but it is not enough considering present conditions of consumer life. The consumer in Saudi Arabia are rather immature regarding their consumer life.

The present situation of school education is described in Clause 1.11.1. and consumer education by governmental organizations is described in Clause 1.11.2.

1.11.1. School education

1) Consumer education (General)

MOE provides fundamental knowledge about consumer life to the pupils in elementary schools and intermediate schools through the curriculum. In elementary schools, basic safety knowledge about electric dangers, such as accessing to live electric parts, making short circuit, touching an electric switch while in the bath tub, and about basic traffic rules, such as traffic signs, playing in the road, etc. is given. In intermediate schools, they are given basic knowledge, such as the method of how to operate an extinguisher.

2) Consumer education for electric and electronic products

Electricity-related dangers are well taught in the schools, but additional knowledge such as how to use electric household appliances is necessary in practical daily life. Therefore, more consumer information is needed.

3) Consumer education for tires

Consumer education for tires is not conducted in the schools. However, considering that there are many traffic accidents caused by tires in Saudi Arabia and that all Saudi Arabian males have to drive cars for their daily life, the consumer education for proper tire usage and maintenance is necessary in the high schools.

4) Consumer education for textile products

For women, basic education for clothes is taught in the schools. However, ordinary Saudi consumers do not have enough knowledge about fiber compositions, and also about the balance between cost and quality of the textile they have bought.

5) Home education for children

As for home education, in typical Saudi Arabian homes, usually the head of the family (Male) purchases the goods. He is a male of relatively high education and supposed to have ability for proper selection of goods. However, because of rapid modernization in Saudi Arabia, the import of products of various kinds of functions and performances, change of country of origin and change of exporting countries due to their industrial development, it seems that consumers as well as distributors can not cope with these changes.

1.11.2. Consumer education by governmental organizations

1) Consumer education in Traffic Police and Civil Defense

Fire, traffic and other accidents as well as human injuries and property damage due to them in Saudi Arabia have been increasing as described in Clause 1.10. In order to prevent traffic accidents, the Traffic Police prepare various kinds of materials and carry out young people education, driver's education and various traffic safety movements intensively. For example, pamphlets describing air pressure of tires are distributed with "The Consumer" magazine. It is very useful information for drivers. However, the number and frequency of the publication are limited. Considering the number of accidents caused by tires are increasing, a lot more frequent campaigns are necessary for proper use of tires. The Civil Defense conducts almost the same activities to prevent fires as the Traffic Police.

For more effective consumer education, cooperation among related organizations including SASO will be necessary. It is desirable that comprehensive usage of media such as TV, newspapers, magazines, etc. and comprehensive measures such as setting or revising related standards, accreditation, surveillance or control on the spot should be carried out under a unified strategy.

2) Consumer education in SASO

a) Public relation and news releases

SASO is very active in their public relations and consumer education through news releases to newspapers, exhibitions/seminars and TV programs.

b) "The Consumer" magazine

GSMO which is actually administrated by SASO publishes a quarterly magazine "The Consumer" since 1993 for consumer education and protection. SASO intends to make the magazine more useful for the consumer as a main channel of SASO for its consumer protection activities. However, present circulation of 3,000 in governmental organizations including GCC and of 9,000 in the public through book stores is too small compared with the approximate number of 2,800,000 homes in Saudi Arabia. Ten-fold of present circulation through book stores will be a good target for this purpose.

Quarterly publication (not monthly), some limitations in contents because of governmental publication and two-sided characters of the magazine for consumer education and activity report of GSMO will be an obstacle for expansion of circulation.

3) Consumer education in consumer support organization

As described in Clause 1.3.3. 8), there is no consumer support organization representing the consumer in Saudi Arabia. Many countries have the consumer support organization, because it is indispensable for the consumer education from the consumer standpoint.

1.12. Summing-up of the problems and their causes described in Chapter 1 and major issues regarding each product group

The problems and causes in this chapter are summarized in Clause 1.12.1. and major issues regarding each product group for the in-depth study are listed in Clause 1.12.2.

1.12.1. Summing-up of the problems and their causes described in Chapter 1

The problems and their causes are listed in *Table 1.12.1.-1* in the following pages.

1.12.2. Major issues in each product group for in-depth study

The problems regarding each product group and causes for them are listed in *Table 1.12.2.-1* for electric/electronic products, in *Table 1.12.2.-2* for tires and in *Table 1.12.2.-3* for textile products in the pages following *Table 1.12.1.-1*.

Table 1.12.1.1-1. Problems and their causes described in Chapter 1

Problems	Causes
<p>1. Total consumer protection scheme and the related legal system</p>	
<p>1) Lack of fundamental laws which protect the consumer safety</p>	<p>At the present moment, the concept is thought to be included in MII.</p>
<p>2) Lack of country-wide policies for consumer protection and guidance for cooperative implementation among the related governmental organizations.</p>	<p>Lack of Consumer Protection Fundamental Act makes responsibility of government, companies and consumers unclear and unconscious for them. There is no central body to administrates all related governmental organizations.</p>
<p>3) Safety of products is not fully guaranteed under the current legal system.</p>	<p>Only conformity with the relevant SSA is mandatory.</p>
<p>4) Standards and regulations for implementing proper interior wiring are on the way of completion as an effective enforcing system.</p>	<p>Enforcement of the relevant SSA is insufficient and the current regulations are not complete</p>
<p>2. Information system on consumer injuries, damage and complaints</p>	
<p>1) Data retrieval systems for fire and traffic accidents are not so efficient.</p>	<p>Closer causal analysis of accidents is insufficient.</p>
<p>2) Data collection and analysis system for consumer complaints and commercial disputes are not constructed.</p>	<p>At the present, settlement by arbitration is MOC's major method and consciousness for better consumer protection based on statistical data is low.</p>
<p>3. Domestic and imported products and their distribution in the market</p>	
<p>1) The middle- or small-size manufacturers do not have enough test facilities</p>	<p>Because of the size of the enterprise</p>
<p>2) Fake or imitated inferior materials and parts are very common</p>	<p>Inspection system is incomplete for imported products not covered by ICCP program. Certification system for domestic products is not compulsory. Market surveillance is not enough.</p>
<p>3) Most consumers are only conscious about price and country of origin.</p>	<p>Consciousness and knowledge of consumers to select the right product at reasonable price are low.</p>

Problems	Causes
<p>4) Skills of repair technicians in small repair shops in E/E products is sometimes not enough.</p> <p>4. Inspection/Test system</p> <p>1) Many fake or inferior products in the market</p> <p>5. Consumer education and public relations</p> <p>1) Insufficient consumer's intention of getting necessary products information and using them for better life</p> <p>2) Lack of information for and from the consumers</p> <p>6. Qualification system</p> <p>1) Unskillful workers do jobs for which technical skills are necessary, such as for electrical wiring installations and repair for electric/electronic commodities.</p> <p>7. SASO activities</p> <p>7.1. Standards</p> <p>1) Lack of necessary standards for E/E products and components such as for configuration adapters. Many standards lack harmonization with IEC Stds.</p> <p>2) Important items for proper storage, maintenance and use of tires are lacking in the relevant SSA.</p>	<p>Insufficient vocational training</p> <p>The same causes for problem 3. 2)</p> <p>Consumer's consciousness is on the way to becoming mature and retailers do not explain to the customers well about merchandises</p> <p>The school education system is well prepared but insufficient regarding some points.</p> <p>Indications and instruction manuals are insufficient or improper</p> <p>No consumer support bodies to help consumers</p> <p>Qualification system of labors for their technical skills is not yet fully established or enforced.</p> <p>Limited capability for a big demand</p> <p>Lack of statistical data on traffic accidents and the market situation causes delay for necessary action regarding improvement in the standards.</p>

Problems	Causes
<p>3) Lack of necessary standards for textile products such as for garments, harmful substances, toxic gases and static electricity as well as some textile standards need to be improved such as the standards for silks.</p>	<p>Limited capability for a large demand</p>
<p>7.2. Certification/Registration/Accreditation</p>	<p>Promotion of the system and public awareness to the system are not enough.</p>
<p>1) The number of Q mark granted manufacturers are limited at the moment. (Approx. 100 manufacturers)</p>	<p>A lack of applicable SSA and of quality control facilities among the small manufacturers</p>
<p>2) The number of companies registered by SASO for ISO9000 is rather small (12 companies)</p>	<p>A national level accreditation system regarding ISO9000 registration and certification activity by SASO has just started.</p>
<p>3) The number of accredited laboratories is rather small (10 laboratories)</p>	<p>Efficient use of external laboratories is insufficient</p>
<p>7.3. Laboratories</p>	<p>At the moment, they are not in the scope of SASO laboratories.</p>
<p>1) Facilities and testing skills are not enough for causal analysis of consumer accidents and losses.</p>	<p>Current tendency and market situation are not being properly thought of.</p>
<p>2) Items for test of product conformity with standards are insufficient for electric/electronic products and tires.</p>	<p>Lack of testing equipment and testing personnel</p>
<p>3) Data related to tests is not utilized for laboratory management</p>	<p>Necessary data are not well collected and processed.</p>
<p>7.4. Consumer education and public relations</p>	<p>The publishing interval and semi-governmental character of the magazine limit the circulation.</p>
<p>1) Circulation of "The Consumer" is not enough to have any influence on the public.</p>	<p>Other ministries do not join in the editing work of the magazine</p>
<p>2) Communication between editing staff and other ministries' educational groups is not enough.</p>	<p></p>

Problems	Causes
<p>7.5. Human resources development</p> <p>1) Accumulation of necessary education and experiences among specialists, technicians and managers are insufficient.</p>	<p>Career development system has not yet been established.</p>
<p>7.6. Organization and management</p> <p>1) Information about consumer protection does not reach to SASO, and is not used for SASO activities.</p> <p>2) SASO's technical and scientific expertise are not fully used for c.p. in close cooperation with relevant ministries.</p> <p>3) Certification, registration and accreditation and test/inspection works in SASO do not conform with the relevant international rules or guides.</p>	<p>The information system among the ministries and agencies is not enough.</p> <p>Lack of aggressiveness to get information</p> <p>Lack of coordination, budget, manpower and aggressiveness</p> <p>Lack of international coordination and aggressiveness</p>

Table 1.12.2.-1. Problems in electric/electronic products and causes for them

Problems	Causes
1) False and misleading indication of country of origin, trademarks and ratings	Some importers and retailers do not feel much responsibility to the products which they deal in.
2) Many instruction manuals are written in English.	Consumers rely too much on the labeling of products to choose them and do not confirm if the descriptions of the label are true and the products are of good quality.
3) Wrong use of voltage between 127/220V	SSA specifies instruction manuals should be written in Arabic but it is not well enforced. Manufacturers, importers, distributors and consumers do not pay much attention to instruction manuals.
4) Electric sparks and sometimes fires caused by loose contact between outlets and plugs	There are many types of outlets, plugs and configuration adapters which can be inserted into both 127V and 220V outlets. Also, due to the dual voltage system and wrong connection as a result of consumer carelessness.
5) Fires related to electric products	There are various types of inferior-quality outlets and plugs being sold in the market
6) There are many bad interior wiring	Use of electrical wires having an improper capacity Incomplete SSA for and insufficient control of interior wiring.

Table 1.12.2.-2. Problems in tires and causes for them

Problems	Causes
1) Retread tires for passenger cars, buses and trucks can be imported or manufactured. The use of retread tires for passenger cars and buses is not preferable.	The newly established SSA based on British standards specifies the retread tires for passenger cars and buses. Saudi Arabian natural and social environment is not well reflected in the standards.
2) Usage and maintenance of tires are not good.	Poor education for drivers.
3) Retailers do not give necessary information to their customers and many customers are not knowledgeable enough to select the proper tires and their proper usage.	Poor education for retailers and no guidance from the authorities to give necessary information to their customers. Instruction manuals (cards) are not being attached to the tires
4) Storage method of tires in retail shops is improper.	The relevant SSA are insufficient and not well enforced.
5) Sales of used tires without any guarantee on quality	Lack of relevant laws or regulations.
6) Testing items and skills for tire analysis in SASO laboratory are insufficient for evaluation of conformity with the standards and causal analysis.	Lack of equipment and skills.

Table 1.12.2.-3. Problems in textile products and causes for them

Problems	Causes
<p>1) Many products with improper indication or no indication are distributed in the market, especially regarding silk fabric rolls, bolts and garments.</p>	<p>When importing textile products, submission of fiber composition is not necessary. No market surveillance. Some of importers are low in moral. Many silk fabric rolls and bolts in the market have no indication of the country of origin and fiber composition.</p>
<p>2) Some consumers complain about color changes and shrinkage.</p>	<p>Many importers and retailers do not request test report from supplier before contract. Many shops do not care about the quality of their products. Many importers and retailers do not conduct quality control.</p>
<p>3) Some domestic manufacturers do not conduct quality control voluntarily.</p>	<p>Conscientious manufacturers have difficulty in price competitiveness of their products against the cheap and inferior ones.</p>
<p>4) No regulations or SSA to control harmful substances.</p>	<p>There is no control system under MOH.</p>
<p>5) Flame retardant ability.</p>	
<p>a) No description of flame retardant ability of objective buildings and objective items in the Civil Defense Law.</p>	<p>Civil Defense is preparing the regulation about flame resistant ability of object items.</p>
<p>b) SSA are not enough about flame retardant ability of objective items.</p>	<p>When importing fire retardant tent fabric, a certificate is not necessary.</p>
<p>c) Fraudulent fire retardant tent fabrics are distributed in the market.</p>	<p>Some of importers do not follow the mandatory SSA specifications.</p>

Chapter 2.

Objectives of consumer protection strengthening in Saudi Arabia

CHAPTER 2. Objectives of consumer protection strengthening in Saudi Arabia

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Chapter 2. Objectives of consumer protection strengthening in Saudi Arabia

In this chapter, the comprehensive objectives for strengthening total consumer protection in Saudi Arabia is described. The objectives contain strengthening of a legal system and activities of many relevant ministries and organizations including SASO.

The total consumer protection scheme should be strengthened (refer to Clause 2.1.) in coordination with the legal system including the legislation of "Consumer Protection Fundamental Act," "Product Safety Law," "Indication Law" and their enforcement (refer to Clause 2.2.).

The systems of information processing, inspection/test, consumer education and qualification should be reinforced based on the total consumer protection scheme and the strengthened legal system (refer to Clause 2.3., 2.4. and Clause 2.5.).

In Clause 2.6. it shows how consumer protection will be improved for each product group under the proposed scheme.

The master plan for SASO activities for consumer protection is described in Chapter 3.

2.1. Total consumer protection scheme in Saudi Arabia

Basic activities in consumer protection scheme

Generally the basic activities for consumer protection are classified into following five steps.

- Establishment of the legal system for consumer protection
- Inspection of products in the upstream stage of production or imports
- Market surveillance of products in the downstream stage of distribution
- Consumer education for proper selection, use and maintenance of products
- Causal analysis of accidents and prevention of recurrence

The problems collected at the first and second field works of the Team are described in Clause 1.12., and they are classified into following four groups from the parties concerned.

- 1) Problems in the ministries and governmental organizations
- 2) Problems in the manufacturers and constructors
- 3) Problems in the importers and distributors
- 4) Problems in the consumers

Figure 2.1.-1 shows the "problems," "measures" to be taken, and "objectives" to be achieved regarding each party concerned.

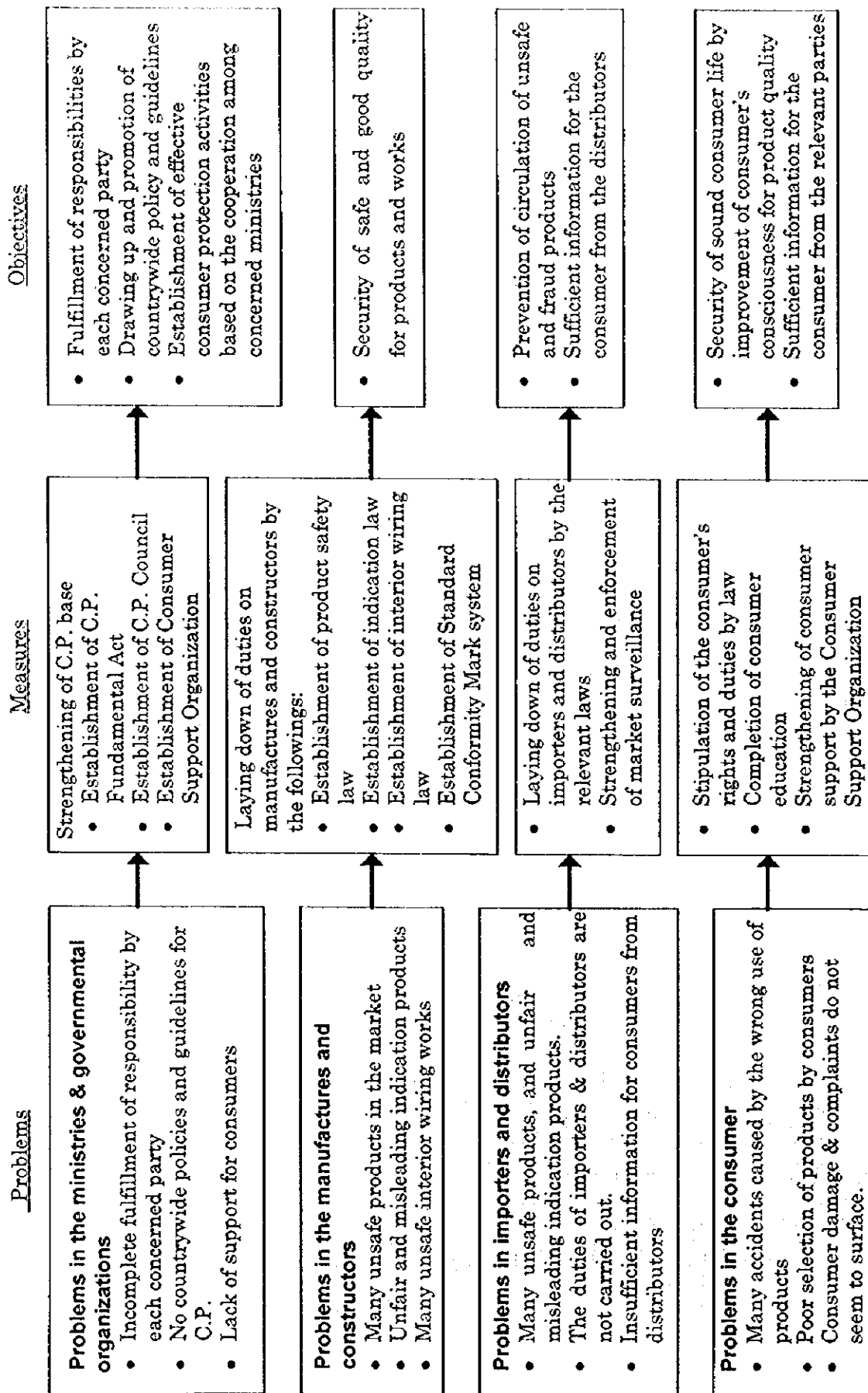


Figure 2.1-1. Total scheme for consumer protection in Saudi Arabia

"Measures" to solve "problems" and "objectives" to be accomplished for each "problem" are described in the following.

1) Measures to solve problems in the ministries and governmental organizations

As the objectives of consumer protection are to protect the consumer in a weak position by the authority, the role of government is very important. Measures to solve problems in the ministries and governmental organizations are as follows.

- Completion of the legal system
- Formulation of a countrywide policy and guidelines for consumer protection
- Strengthening of support for the consumer

Each of the above measures is described below in detail.

a) Completion of the legal system

Firstly, the government should establish "Consumer Protection Fundamental Act" to clarify the responsibility of the government, enterprises, and consumers.

The responsibilities of each party are as follows:

- The government should complete a legal system.
- Enterprises should bear the responsibilities in manufacturing, importing, distributing and selling consumer products.
- Consumers should perform their duties of careful use and proper maintenance of consumer products.

At present, there is no law to stipulate consumers' responsibilities. If the responsibilities of each concerned party is fulfilled based on "Consumer Protection Fundamental Act," consumer protection can be improved remarkably.

b) Formulation of a countrywide policy and guidelines for consumer protection

Secondly, the government should establish "Consumer Protection Council" to formulate a countrywide policy and guidelines through the cooperation among concerned ministries for consumer protection.

The reasons why the Consumer Protection Council is necessary are as follows:

- ① At present, consumer protection activities are conducted by ministries and agencies separately but there is no countrywide policy and guidelines to encourage cooperation among governmental organizations.
- ② As described in Clause 1.2., consumer protection is conducted on the basis of Royal Decree No.M/11 and SSA. But it is not enough from a legal point of view. For example, Royal Decree No.M/11 stipulates that all the products distributed in Saudi Arabia should conform with mandatory SSA, while enforcement of SSA is actually insufficient.
- ③ It is necessary to review comprehensively what kind of laws/regulations are necessary for implementing standards and which part of laws/regulations should be strengthened for consumer protection.

c) Strengthening of support for the consumer

Finally, the government should establish "Consumer Support Organization" (refer to Clause 2.2.5.) The final goal for consumer protection is to satisfy the consumer. The consumer position is weak and their demands are difficult to reach the concerned parties. The main point for consumer protection is to collect consumer needs and complaints in their consumer life, to satisfy their needs and to solve their complaints.

MOC or other ministries are supporting the consumer, but they cannot really act for the interests of the consumer because their activities are restricted. Therefore "Consumer Support Organization" should be established to collect consumer information, represent weak consumers, appeal to the government and enterprises, and hold a seminar for the consumers on knowledge about products and how to use products properly. Other countries have consumer supporting organizations as shown in *Table 2.2.5.-1*.

2) Measures to solve problems in manufacturers and constructors

Measures to solve problems in manufacturers and constructors are as follows.

- Prohibition of the manufacture of unsafe products and products with false or misleading indication
- Prohibition of bad interior wiring

Each of the above measures is described below in detail.

a) Prohibition of the manufacture of unsafe products and products with false and misleading indication

Measures to solve problems in manufacturers are to establish "Product Safety Law" and "Indication Law." As described in Clause 1.12.1., there are many unsafe electric products and connecting apparatuses in the market, because the safety of the products is not sufficiently secured by the existing laws, which leads to many fires. There are many products with false and misleading indication in the market, with which many consumers are palmed off.

Security of safety of products and fair indication are important for consumer protection. For that purpose, the existing legal system based on Royal Decree No. M/11 and SSA is not sufficient. Therefore, "Product Safety Law" and "Indication Law" should be established to prohibit the manufacture of unsafe products and products with false and misleading indication. These laws will clarify the duties of the manufacturers. As a result, good-quality products are manufactured and distributed in the market.

b) Prohibition of bad interior wiring

Measures to solve problems in the constructors are to establish "Interior Wiring Law." As described in Clause 1.12., there are many fires because of bad and unsafe interior wiring work. Safe and good-quality interior wiring work is indispensable for preventing fires.

Now SASO is establishing "Saudi Application Guides" on low voltage electrical installations in buildings and residential premises as mentioned in Clause 2.2.4. In addition to the guides, it is necessary to establish "Interior Wiring Law" in order to oblige and to enforce constructors to do wiring work in accordance with the guides.

Moreover, the qualification system for interior wiring workers should be reviewed and strongly enforced to secure good-quality interior wiring work.

3) Measures to solve problems in importers and distributors

Measures to solve problems in importers and distributors are as follows.

- Prohibition of import and sale of unsafe products and products with false or misleading indication
- Supply of necessary information from importers and distributors to consumers

Each of the above measures is described below in detail.

a) Prohibition of import and sale of unsafe products and products with false or misleading indication

Measures to solve problems in importers and distributors are to establish "Product Safety Law" and "Indication Law" as described for manufactures in Clause 2) a). There are many unsafe products and products with false or misleading indication in the market. The duties of importers and distributors are not being fulfilled. Even if unsafe products and products with false or misleading indications are produced, their import and sale should be prevented by fulfilling the duties of importers and distributors.

Product Safety Law and Indication Law should specify the duties of the importers and distributors to certify their dealings not to be fraud to surveyors at market surveillance. The laws will make market surveillance easy. Though Royal Decree No. M/11 stipulates that fraud products should not be distributed, it does not stipulate a detailed method to prevent them from being distributed, such as to put importers and distributors under an obligation to certify their dealings not to be fraud to surveyors at market surveillance. This fact makes market surveillance very difficult.

b) Supply of necessary information from importers and distributors to consumers

Importers should check if descriptions necessary to consumers are in Arabic, and distributors including retailers should be obliged to supply consumers with necessary information from the viewpoint of consumer protection. Information about proper use of consumer products to secure safety and good performance is very important for consumers. Especially, information about proper use of tires from retailers to consumers is expected to reduce tire accidents.

4) Measures to solve problems in the consumer

Measures to solve problems in the consumer are as follows.

- Prevention of wrong use of consumer products
- Improvement of consumers' capability to select products
- Collection and proper handling of information about troubles and complaints

Each of the above measures is described below in detail.

a) Prevention of wrong use of consumer products

Measures to prevent the wrong use of consumer products are to establish "Consumer Protection Fundamental Act" and to clarify the rights and duties of the consumer regarding consumer life. The percentage of troubles and accidents caused by consumers' wrong use of electric products is very high compared with Europe, U.S.A. and Japan. Most of the tire troubles are also caused by careless handling of tires by consumers.

In order to avoid this situation, it is necessary for consumers to learn the proper use and maintenance of consumer products.

For that purpose, it is necessary to establish "Consumer Protection Fundamental Act" and give consumers the rights and duties to properly use and maintain consumer products.

b) Improvement of consumers' capability to select products

Measures to improve consumers' capability to select products are to give consumers necessary information about consumer products on every occasion. In order to select suitable products fit for their needs from the various kinds of consumer products, it is necessary for consumers to have correct knowledge of consumer products and to inform retailers of their needs in detail.

c) Collection and proper handling of information about troubles and complaints

Measures to collect and properly handle information about troubles and complaints are to establish "Consumer Support Organization", to establish the database of consumer complaints and losses, to make their causal analysis, and to give the results to consumers. Although there exist troubles and complaints in Saudi Arabia, their statistics do not exist. This is because the consumer do not pay much attention to product quality, and do not complain to the authorities. In addition, the contact points for consumer complaints are not enough for managing of their complaints.

The government should collect the information about accidents, troubles and complaints and take necessary measures regarding them to achieve consumer protection. For this purpose, as mentioned above, the "Consumer Support Organization" should be established, to take part in collecting consumer complaints and give necessary information and consumer education by using all kinds of media and taking every occasion to carry out this.

2.2. Consolidation of legal system and its enforcement

As described in Clause 2.1., it is necessary to consolidate and enforce a legal system for consumer protection. In Clause 2.2., the necessary laws and regulations are provided. For consumer protection, it is necessary to establish the following laws or regulations, or other equivalent measures.

2.2.1. Consumer Protection Fundamental Act and legal system

Consumer Protection Fundamental Act

In order to strengthen consumer protection, a fundamental law, what is called the "Consumer Protection Fundamental Act," should be established, as mentioned in Clause 2.1., and the roles of the government, enterprises and consumers for consumer protection should be clarified. It is indispensable for consumer protection that the government, enterprises and consumers should understand their roles and carry out their duties.

The outline of Consumer Protection Fundamental Act is shown in *Figure 2.2.1.-1.*

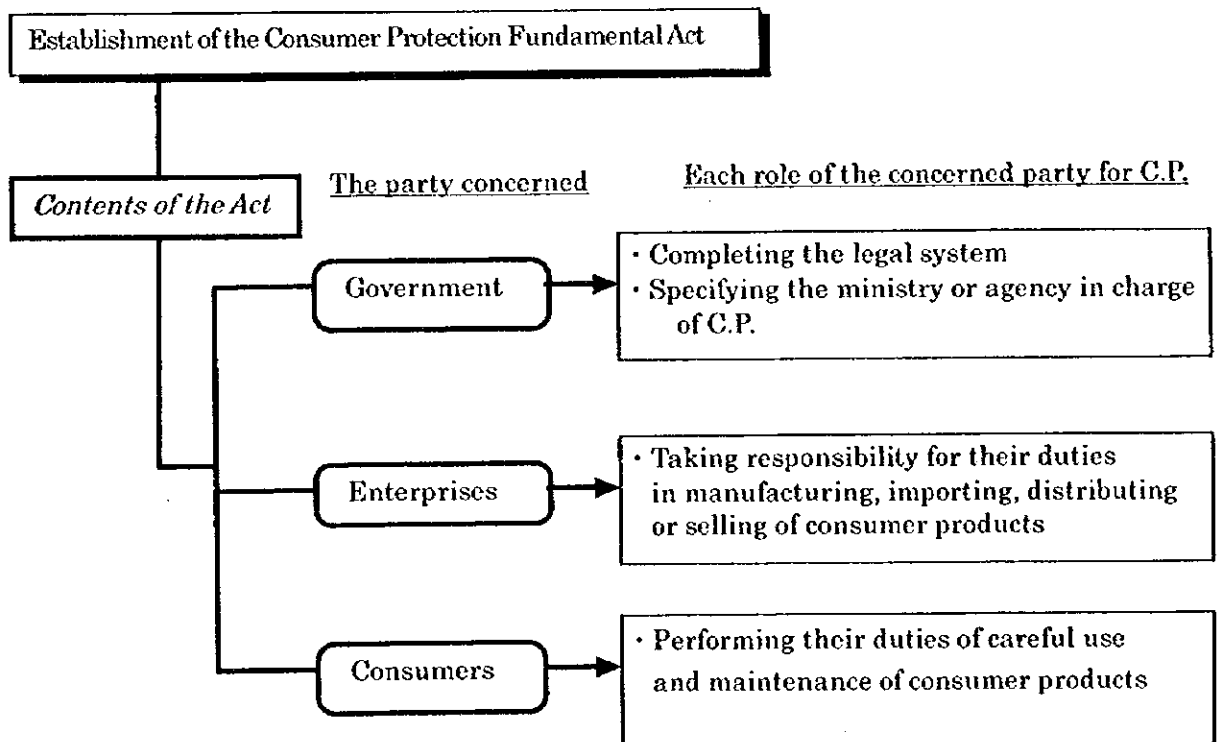


Figure 2.2.1.-1. Outline of Consumer Protection Fundamental Act

The act specifies the roles of the government, enterprises and consumers for consumer protection as shown below.

- 1) The government's role is to complete the legal system necessary for consumer protection and specify the ministry or agency in charge of consumer protection.
- 2) Enterprises' role is to take the responsibility for their duties in manufacturing, importing, distributing or selling consumer goods giving consideration to consumer protection.
- 3) Consumers' role is to perform their duty of careful use and maintenance of consumer goods in their daily lives acquiring necessary knowledge of consumer goods.

Consumer Protection Council

Moreover, based on this Act, "Consumer Protection Council" should be founded to promote unified consumer-oriented administration integrating the ministries and governmental agencies related to consumer protection, Consumer Support Organization, Representative of Enterprises, etc.(refer to Clause 1.2.2. 2)). Because at present, consumer protection activities are conducted by individual ministries and governmental agencies. However, there is not sufficient coordination in Saudi Arabia. That is because there is no basic law or organization to integrate the ministries and governmental agencies related to consumer protection and to promote unified consumer-oriented administration. It is also indispensable for consumer protection that the ministries and governmental agencies related to consumer protection should cooperate with each other very closely.

Figure 2.2.1.-2 shows the Organization Structure of Consumer Protection Council.

Consumer Protection Council plays the following roles.

- Drawing up and promoting of total nationwide planning for consumer protection in the wide ranged administration field
- Adjustment of problems among the ministries and governmental agencies concerned with consumer protection

The chairman in the figure represents the ministries and governmental agencies related to consumer protection.

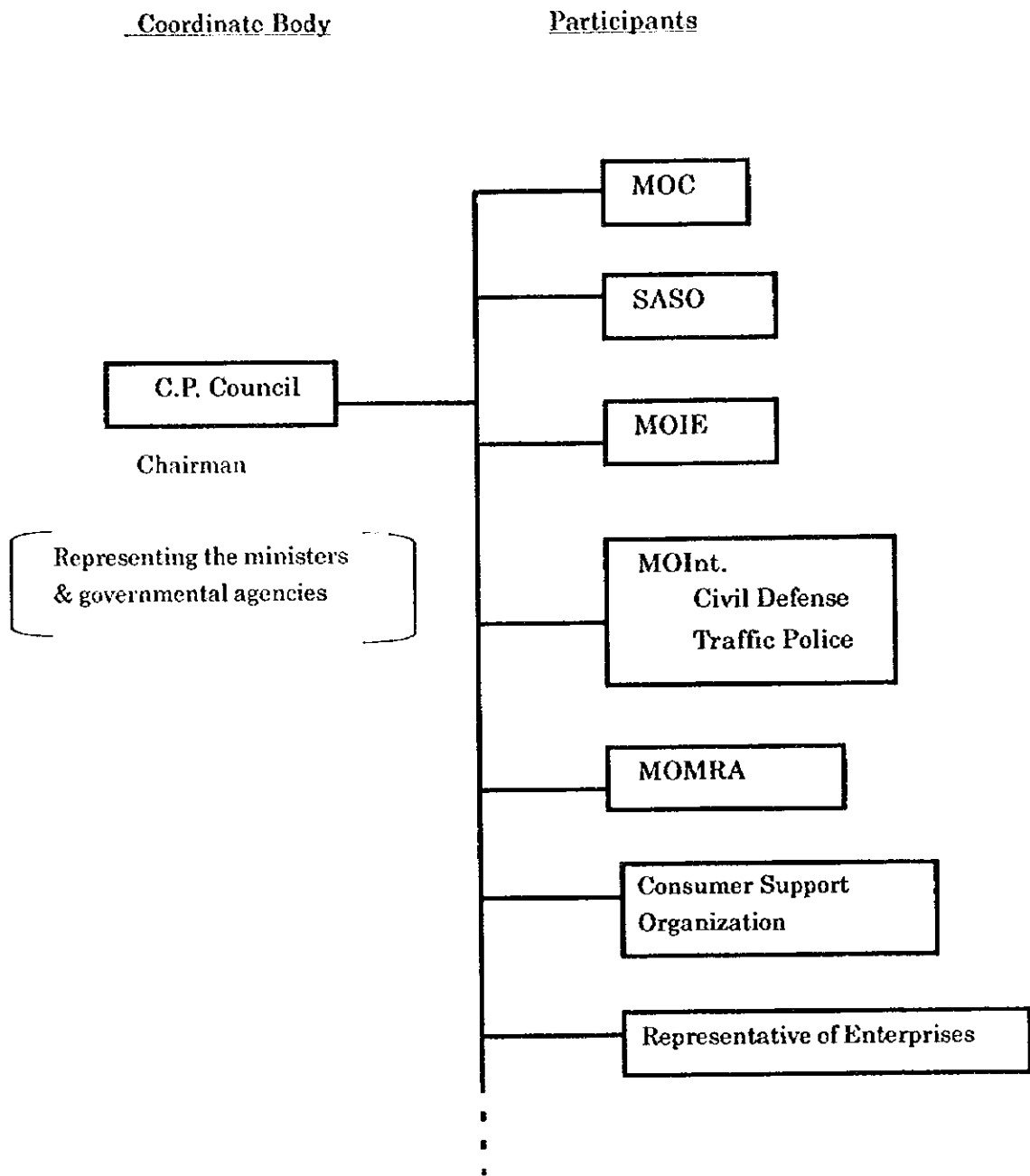


Figure 2.2.1.-2. Organization Structure of Consumer Protection Council

Legal system for consumer protection

In order to enhance the consumer protection, it is necessary to have "Product Safety Law" and "Indication Law" enacted, under the Consumer Protection Fundamental Act.

Figure 2.2.1-3 shows the structure of the legal system for consumer protection.

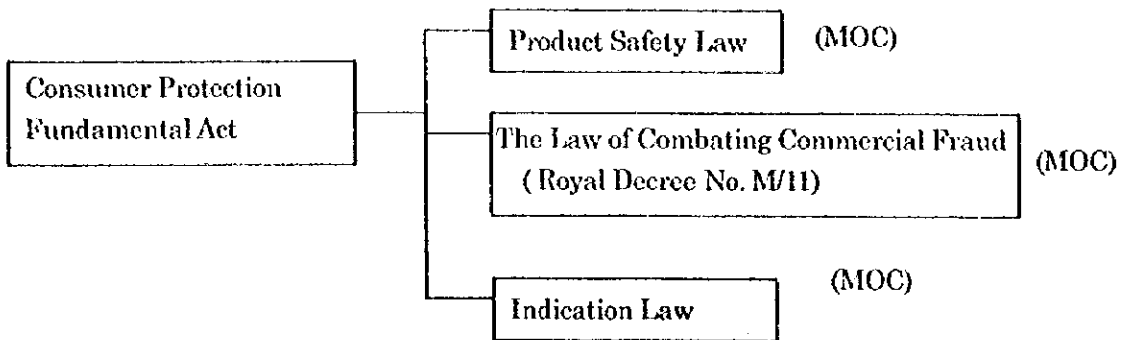


Figure 2.2.1-3. The structure of the legal system for consumer protection

As described in Clause 1.2., the legal system for consumer protection should have at least three basic laws under Consumer Protection Fundamental Act, i.e., product safety law for assurance of product safety, indication law for proper indication, and fair trading law for assurance of fair competitive market. Now, there is the Royal Decree No. M/11 (The Law for Combating Commercial Fraud) for fair trade in Saudi Arabia. In addition, the product safety law and indication law should be established. The details are shown in Clause 2.2.2. and 2.2.3.

2.2.2. Product Safety Law

The Product Safety Law should have the following important contents to solve the problems not protected by Royal Decree No. M/11 as shown in Figure 2.2.2-1. (Refer to Table 1.2.2-1).

- Manufacturers should make their products comply with the essential safety requirements, whether there are safety standards or not.
- Importers and distributors should import and circulate their merchandise to comply with the essential safety requirements and supply necessary information for the consumer.
- Not only the manufacturers but also the importers and distributors should be responsible to certify that their goods comply with the essential safety requirements

The problems not protected
by Royal Decree No.M/11

- There is no guarantee for products which have no standards for safety.
- The products which comply with SSA cannot be eliminated from the market, even if they are unsafe.
Because distributors have no responsibility to certify their goods as safe, samples picked up at the market surveillance should be tested in the laboratory, and it takes a lot of time and cost for market surveillance.

Important contents
of Product Safety Law

- It is necessary to stipulate that
- manufacturers should make their products comply with the essential safety requirements, whether there are safety standards or not.
 - importers and distributors should import and circulate their merchandise complying with the essential safety requirements and supply necessary information for the consumer.
 - not only manufacturers but also importers and distributors should be responsible to certify that their goods comply with the essential safety requirements, and that it makes easy to find goods which are safe or not during market surveillance or consumer purchase.
 - an offender against the law should be punished.

Figure 2.2.2.-1. Important contents of the Product Safety Law

The safety of the products is a fundamental objective of the consumer protection. Many countries legislate the laws related to product safety, whereby the essential safety conditions are specified and the ministries and agencies are designated to be responsible for surveillance over the product safety and to execute the laws. As mentioned in Clause 1.2., in Europe, the United States and Japan, the laws regulating product safety have been enacted. As for the electrical appliances, as an example, the following laws have been legislated.

Britain : "Consumer Protection Act" and "Electrical Equipment Safety Regulation"

Germany : "Equipment Safety Law" and "Equipment Safety Regulation"

U.S.A. : "Consumer Product Safety Act"

Japan : "Electrical Appliance and Material Control Law"

The product safety law should stipulate the following duties for each concerned party as mentioned in *Figure 2.2.2.-1.*

- 1) The manufacturers are enforced to make their products comply with essential safety requirements, and practically with the relevant standards.

There may occur accidents sometimes even if the products comply with safety standards. Also, it is impossible to prepare standards for all products, especially for new products. In order to protect consumers from such risks, the "Product Safety Law" should be legislated to decide the essential safety requirements and demand compliance with the requirements in designing and production so that the manufacturers are obliged to make products free from any dangerous defects. However, it is requested to comply with the relevant standards in practice.

At present in Saudi Arabia, compliance with SSA or the like which SASO recognizes are required as a duty to observe product safety. However, the product without applicable standards cannot be controlled on account of nonconformity. In order to overcome this difficulty, comprehensive essential safety requirements should be included in the law.

In Europe and U. S. A., the standards for the product safety are prepared for actual use and the product conforming to the relevant standards is regarded as being safe. If any product should be found be unsafe, it can be eliminated from the market according to the essential safety requirements of the "Product Safety Law".

As described in Clause 1.2.2. 3), the standards are only the technical specifications and testing methods, and are not suitable to define the obligations to be fulfilled by the manufacturers, distributors, consumers and other related parties and to define the contents of controlling, which should be stipulated in the "Product Safety Law".

- 2) The importers and distributors are obligated to supply safe products and necessary information about the products to the consumers.
- 3) The manufacturers, importers and distributors are obligated to verify the safety of the products they deal in.

Each of the manufacturers, importers or retailers is required to have evidence to substantiate safety not only to the purchaser but also to the officers of the ministry or agency responsible for the market surveillance, if so requested. Such a requirement will enable the government to conduct the market surveillance effectively. If the request should not be met, it constitutes a breach against the "Product Safety Law".

However, since the distributors in Saudi Arabia are presently not obliged to verify the conformity to the essential safety requirements, there is no legal reason to prove the conformity, even if an apparently nonconforming product is found. If an evidence to prove nonconformity must be produced forcibly, a lot of manpower and expense will be demanded. Thus, the activity to prove nonconformity does not function in Saudi Arabia at present.

- 4) The consumers are also required to confirm the safety of the products at the time of purchase on their own responsibility and follow the instructions for safe and keep maintenance procedures.

2.2.3. Indication Law

As described in Clause 1.12., there is no indication law in Saudi Arabia. It is necessary to establish an indication law and the details must be determined by SSA. MOC is responsible for establishing regulations against misleading indications and monitoring the market.

The activity to prove nonconformity does not function in Saudi Arabia at present. However, indications and labeling which do not conform to the regulations or standards can be easily recognized at the time of market surveillance. So market surveillance is an effective way to eliminate fraud and misleading indications from the market.

In the indication law, the following items should be specified.

- Basic items necessary for the consumer to purchase products in the market
Example: rated voltage, frequency, size, weight and usage
- Indication of the product quality which is difficult to identify
Example: fiber composition of the textile
- Indication of the name and address of the responsible person or enterprise

In addition, the position of the indication, indication method, and other details and punishment in case of violation of the specification should be specified. Especially, examples of misleading indication should be described in SSA. This law can be applied even to products like garments for which SSA has not been established yet.

2.2.4. Safety laws/regulations for each product category

As mentioned in Clause 2.1., it is necessary to enact the laws/regulations as shown in *Table 2.2.4-1* to supplement and consolidate this legal system.

Table 2.2.4.-1. Enactment of safety laws/regulations for each product category

Product	Law/Regulation	Criteria (Standard)	Ministry/Agency responsible
Electrical Electronic Product	Interior Wiring Law	SSA203 "Safety Measures for Electrical Installation in Residential Premises" in use "Saudi Application Guides on low voltage electrical installations in building and residential premises" in future	MOIE
Tire	Traffic safety regulations of vehicles & tires	SSA for tire maintenance, retread tires, etc. to be added or revised	MOInt. (Traffic Police)
Textile Product	Harmful Substance Regulation	Residual Harmful Substance Standard to be added	MOH
	"Fire Retardant Regulations" to be added to the "Civil Defense Law"	SSA645 "Requirements for Fire Retardant Tent Fabrics" in use. SSA Std. of flame retardant ability to be extended for curtains & carpets.	MOInt. (Civil Defense)

The safety laws/regulations for each product category are described in detail as follows.

1) Interior Wiring Law

Now, SASO is establishing "Saudi Application Guides" on low voltage electrical installations in the buildings and residential premises in cooperation with Gimelec (French Electrical Equipment & Industrial Electronics Manufacturers' Association).

In order to enforce the Guides, Interior Wiring Law should be established by MOIE. And the law should stipulate following items:

- Interior wiring law should stipulate interior wiring rule and standards, such as Saudi Application Guide.
- Interior wiring should comply with the relevant wiring rules and standards.
- Interior wiring work should be conducted by qualified technicians.
- Penal regulations should be stipulated against any breach of the wiring rules and standards.

A qualification and inspection/consultant system are necessary for safe and proper interior wiring.

It goes without saying that the standard to avert the mixed use of 127V and 220V should be prepared to solve the present persistent problems. SSA 203/1980 "Safety Measures for Electrical Installation in Residential Premises" is in use as the standard. The standard should be better suited for practice if it stipulated installation method in detail in the same way as those of the NEC (National Electrical Code) of the United States and the Wiring Code of Japan.

Furthermore, even though plugs and socket outlets for 127V and 220V are specified by SSA, they do not comply with SSA in practice. Then it is necessary to stipulate in the Interior Wiring Law that the relevant SSA should be applied to wiring work.

2) Traffic safety regulation for vehicles, tires, etc.

As for tires, it is recommended that traffic safety regulations be legislated to stipulate the requirements for the motor vehicle tires and be enforced by the Traffic Police to constitute the appropriate law system.

The law should stipulate that the circulation of all the used tires are forbidden and that tire retailers should explain to the customers the method of tire usage and maintenance.

It is also recommended that the safety requirements stipulated by the said law be made concrete by SSA. The conformity to the standards which specify the detailed specifications and proper use and maintenance of motor vehicle tires is regarded to satisfy the safety requirements stipulated in the law.

3) Safety regulations of textile products

It is recommended that "Harmful Substances Regulation" be enacted to control harmful residues regarding textile products and be enforced by MOH as the responsible ministry.

It is also recommended that the flame resistibility regulation be added to the present "Civil Defense Law" and that SSA be established on more diversified products such as curtains and carpets.

2.2.5. Establishment of Consumer Support Organization

There is no consumer support organization representing the consumer in Saudi Arabia as described in Clause 1.3.3. 8). It is said that the consumer interests are adequately represented by the related ministries and agencies, but they would not be able to act in actual fact to the interests of the consumer.

It is necessary in Saudi Arabia to establish the Consumer Support Organization(CSO), actively supporting and representing the consumer standing as in other countries shown in *Table 2.2.5-1*.

Table 2.2.5-1. Consumer support organizations of other countries

Country	Name of Consumer Support Organization	Nature of Organization
U.K.	Consumers' Association	Private sector
Germany	German League of Consumer Organization	Private sector
U.S.A.	Consumer Union	Private sector
Japan	Consumer Information Center	Semi-governmental organization

The above organizations are private or semi-governmental depending on the situation of each country. Japan has the Consumer Information Center, a semi-governmental organization. According to a newspaper, such an organization is required and its foundation under consideration in Saudi Arabia.

The Consumer Support Organization should conduct the following various activities from the standpoint of the consumer.

- a) Participation in the discussion about consumer protection regulation and standard, such as in the discussion of the Consumer Protection Council
- b) Conduct of consumer education, such as holding seminars on consumer protection activities for rural municipality and enterprise staff concerned with consumer protection
- c) Product tests for consumers to select products properly and publication of its results
- d) Cooperation with governmental organizations concerning consumer protection
- e) Establishment of an information network for consumers, participation in collecting consumer complaints and analysis of them
- f) Release of consumer protection information to mass media
- g) Representation of consumers for the sake of the consumers

The Consumer Support Organization should be established under SASO as a semi-governmental organization. SASO is suitable organization to establish and support CSO based on the following reasons:

- ① Administration of consumer have a connection with various ministries and agencies, and is necessary close cooperation among them. SASO has already conducting its jobs with various ministries and agencies.
- ② When publishing reports such as a test result of products for consumers' proper selection, it is easy for CSO to publish it on neutral ground through SASO's technical support.
- ③ When technical tests, analysis or investigation is necessary, it is easy for CSO to get SASO's assistance.

CSO should increase contact points for consumers gradually not only in Riyadh, Jeddah, Damman, but also in various municipalities.

CSO should publish its own magazine and give various information to consumers like "Which" in U.K., "Consumer Report" in U.S.A. and "TASHIKANA ME (reliable eyes)" in Japan. SASO should study to entrust CSO with the editing and publishing of the separated volume of "The Consumer" from GSMO (refer to Clause 3.5.) for the middle-term objective.

In conjunction with establishment of the Consumer Support Organization, "Consumer Protection Department" should be established in MOC to deal with the consumer's problems.

2.2.6. Strengthening of functions of Saudi Arabian ministries and governmental agencies in mutual collaboration

Cooperation among the ministries and governmental agencies concerned is indispensable in consumer protection activities. But at present, the cooperation is insufficient for consumer protection in Saudi Arabia. Closer cooperation leads better enforcement.

The ministries and governmental agencies in charge should tighten the regulations against such things as fires and traffic safety and security of textiles from harmful substances, etc. and should strengthen the enforcement of laws and regulations with mutual cooperation. Measures for strengthening of the functions of Saudi Arabian ministries and governmental agencies in mutual collaboration are described below in detail.

1) Appointment of representative ministry for conducting the total consumer protection management

It is necessary to appoint a responsible ministry as a representative one, and to give the ministry the rights and duties for conducting the total consumer protection management in cooperation with other ministries concerning consumer protection. The ministry should play the role as secretary of the Consumer Protection Council.

2) Strengthening measures for electrical and electronic product safety

It is recommended that the "Product Safety Law" will be enacted and the related safety standards be established and be enforced by MOC as the responsible ministry as aforementioned. For both the domestic and imported products, the conformity to the essential safety requirements stipulated in the Product Safety Law shall be proven by the responsibility of the manufacturers, importers and/or distributors.

It is necessary to inspect if manufacturers, importers or distributors are fulfilling their responsibilities. Therefore, the market surveillance should be intensified by all means as is conducted for food. In other words, the officers of MOC in charge or the party assigned this duty shall conduct the market surveillance, demand responsible suppliers to prove the conformity to the essential safety requirements, get rid of unfit products out of the market and take other necessary measures, the results of which shall be made public using mass media.

In the above mentioned procedures the market surveillance may be conducted by the assistance of the municipality, increasing or decreasing the frequency of the surveillance and the number of surveyors depending on the number of nonconformity cases. If the market surveillance should find cases requiring technical analysis, the investigation shall be proceeded in cooperation with SASO.

3) Strengthening measures for interior wiring

The Interior Wiring Law should be established and the standards shall be put it into practice by SASO. MOIE would be appropriate to carry out the procedures as a responsible ministry. The cooperation among the related ministries and agencies such as MOIE, SASO, MOMRA, etc. would be required to enforce the compliance with the laws and standards in the design and construction or renovation of buildings in future.

On the other hand, the interior wiring being liable to the aging deterioration, the electric power company shall conduct a periodical inspection to affirm the safety in the service territory.

4) Strengthening measures for tire safety

The laws on motor vehicle, etc. for road traffic safety shall be enacted and the related standards are to be intensified and the Traffic Police shall enforce the compliance as the responsible agency in collaboration with MOC, SASO, etc.

Since the accidents related to tires often happen due to the improper use of tires, consumer education is required. It is important to call the special attention of the consumer to prevent tire accidents through cooperation of tire stores, gasoline stations, etc. It is useful to inspect tires at the time of roadside inspections with the help of CCI.

5) Strengthening measures for textile product safety

The "Harmful Substances Control Law" shall be established to control harmful substances such as formaldehyde and the relative standards be established. The law shall be enforced by MOH as the responsible ministry.

As regards flame resistibility, it is recommended that the regulation of flame resistibility of textile products be added to the current "Civil Defense Law" and SSA regarding flame resistibility be expanded to curtains, carpets and so forth in the same way as tents have.

6) Strengthening measures for indication problem

To realize the appropriate indication it is necessary to intensify the market surveillance of indication items by delegating the task to the market inspectors assigned by the municipality. (The market surveillance inspectors having other duty of their own may cooperate temporarily, but adequate number of the inspectors should be assigned by MOC if it is necessary.)

As regards indications, it is comparatively easy for the consumer to judge that it is proper or not. If the practice is established to take a prompt action on the receipt of the complaints and to make public the facts of the breach, the effect must gradually take shape.

7) Strengthening activities of SASO

SASO is responsible for technical support of the activities of the ministries and governmental agencies for consumer protection. To fulfill its responsibility, SASO should try to enhance its function such as standard preparation, testing, certification and especially investigation of the causes of troubles and complaints.

SASO should establish Consumer Support Organization as a semi-governmental organization under SASO for strengthening consumer protection activities in Saudi Arabia, as described in Clause 2.2.5. In conjunction with this organization, SASO should establish what is called Consumer Protection Coordination Department in charge of consumer protection, which is directly linked with the Director General, builds up closer cooperation with other ministries and governmental agencies and coordinates the activities of the departments concerned. Detailed measures for strengthening activities of SASO are described in Chapter 3.

The main measures for strengthening consumer protection activities by ministries and governmental organizations are described as follows.

Representative Ministry for conducting the total consumer protection management

- Establishment of the Consumer Protection Fundamental Act
- Foundation of the Consumer Protection Council

Consumer Support Organization (New agency)

- Participation in the discussion of C.P. regulations & standards
- Conduct of consumer education
- Product test & publication of its results
- Cooperation with governmental organizations concerning C.P.
- Establishment of information network, participation in collecting consumer complaints and analysis of them
- Release of C.P. information to the mass media
- Representation of consumers for the sake of the consumers

MOC

- Establishment of Product Safety Law
- Establishment of Indication Law
- Strengthening of effective certification system and inspection
- Establishment of Standard Conformity Mark System
- Strengthening of market surveillance
- Establishment of Consumer Protection Department to deal with the consumer's problems

MOIE

- Establishment and enforcement of Interior Wiring Law
- Examination of the dual voltage system
- Establishment of an approval system for interior wiring
- Review and enforcement of an electrician qualification system for interior wiring

The Civil Defense

- Investigation of the cause of fires
- Revision of the Civil Defense Law for use of flame retardant material and the places
- Strengthening of consumer education activities

The Traffic Police

- Review of traffic safety regulations for vehicles & tires, etc.
- Conducting of roadside inspection for tires
- Strengthening of consumer education activities

MOH

- Review of safety regulation against harmful substances of textile products

SASO

- Establishment of the Consumer Support Organization
- Increase and review of standards
- Rapid harmonization with international standards
- Improvement of testing & inspection ability
- Increase of inspection and enforcement of standards
- Completion of testing & inspection devices
- Strengthening of the function for investigating the cause of accidents
- Rebuilding of SASO so as to conform to ISO/IEC guides, promote cooperation with overseas certification bodies
- Increase of activities of Q Mark and ISO 9000 registration
- Strengthening of market surveillance
- Training of engineers, technicians & managers of various sectors
- Setting up the Consumer Protection Coordination Department
- Providing of C.P. information

8) Total scheme for strengthening of consumer protection in Saudi Arabia

Figure 2.2.5-1 shows the ministries and governmental agencies responsible for implementing the above-mentioned measures, the content of the measures and their relationship. Items to be strengthened for consumer protection are described in the circular frames, organizations in charge in the thick square frames and concrete measures in the thin frames.

Figure 2.2.5-2 shows the flow of products & information and government's control in Saudi Arabia.

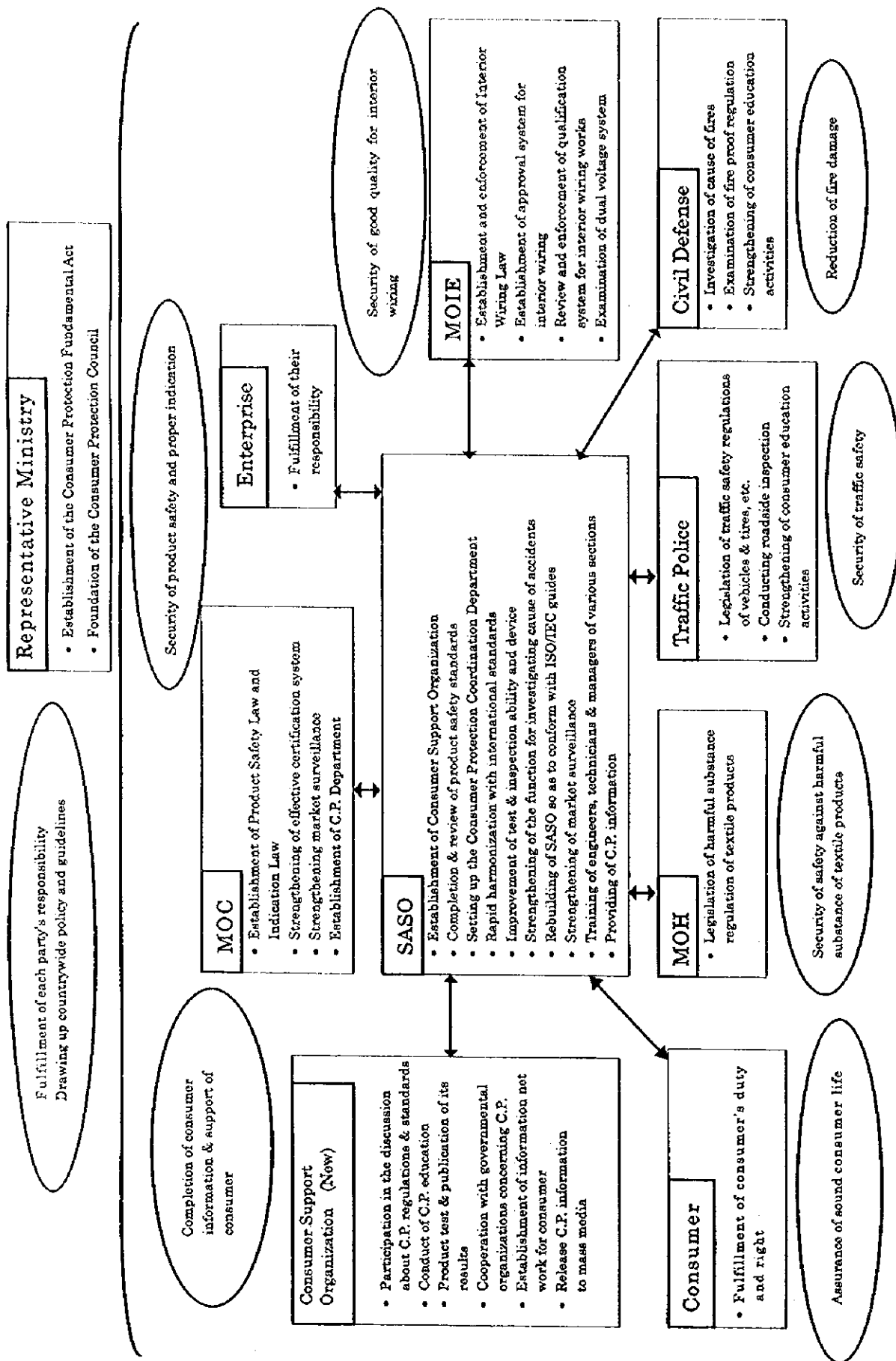


Figure 2.2.6.-1. Scheme for strengthening consumer protection in Saudi Arabia

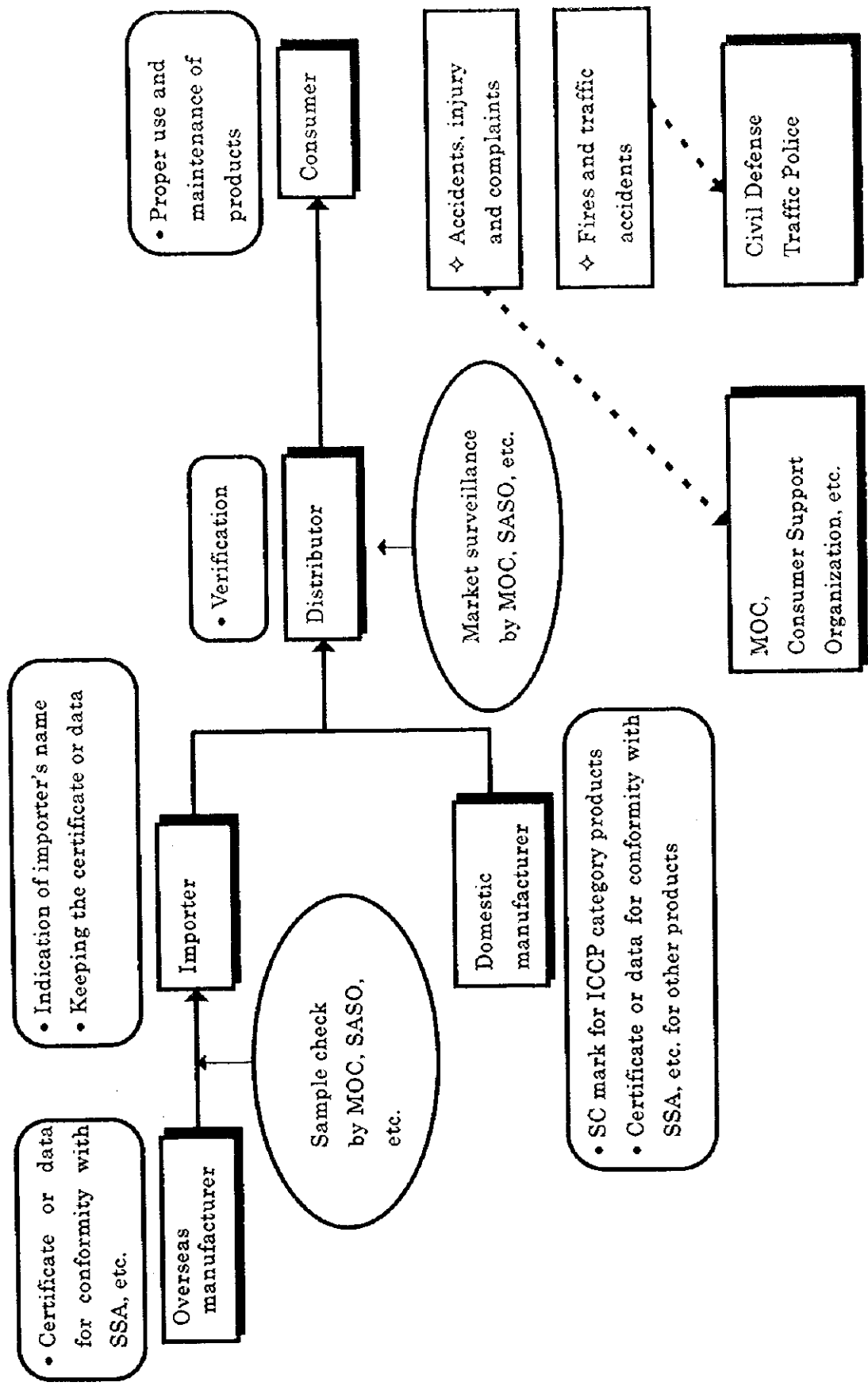


Figure 2.2.6.-2. Flow of products & information and government's control in Saudi Arabia

2.3. Collection, analysis and effective use of information regarding consumer injuries, damage and complaints

It is needless to say that exact information and its statistical and causal analysis are essential for doing everything. As pointed out in *Table 1.12.1-1, 2. 1),2)*, the information system in Saudi Arabia has to be improved.

A proposed information system for consumer injuries, damage and complaints is shown in *Figure 2.3-1*.

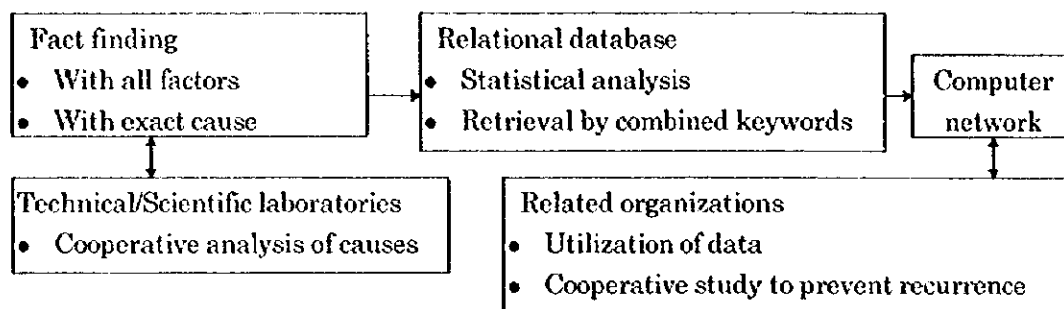


Figure 2.3-1. Information system of consumer injuries, damage and complaints

Information system for consumer protection should have the following features.

- 1) Collecting exact information as much as possible and analyzing the cause
- 2) Storing information in a relational computerized database
- 3) Providing fast and easy data retrieval through a computer network

Each of the following ministries or organizations should establish its own database and link it up to a communication network.

Civil Defense : Developing a fire accident database

Traffic police : Developing a traffic accident and roadside inspection database

MOC : Developing a consumer complaint and commercial dispute database and a market surveillance data base

A recommended information processing flow is shown in *Figure 2.3-2*.

Besides arbitration of disputes, MOC should strengthen causal analysis and make manufacturers and importers report to MOC regarding defective products.

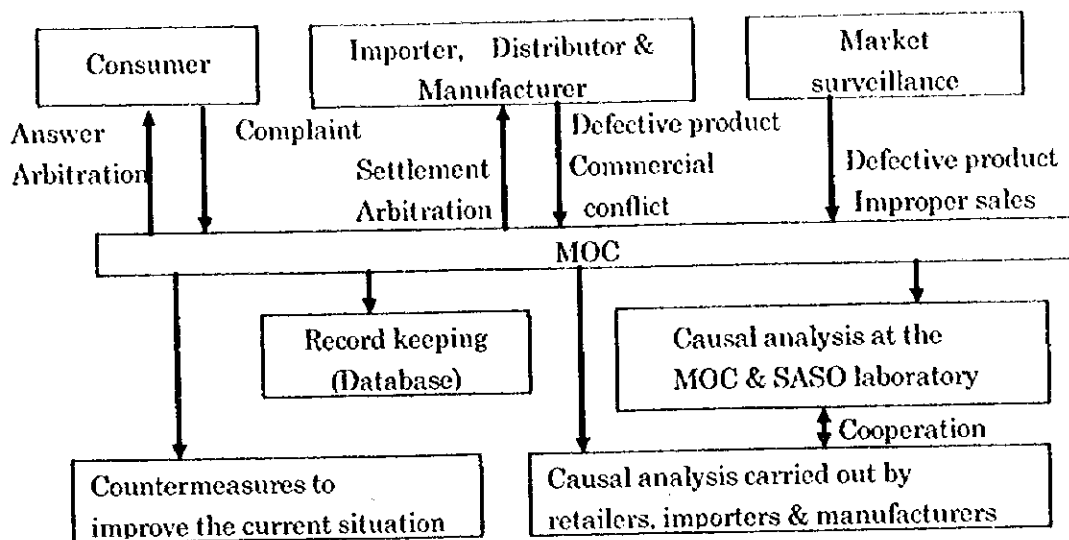


Figure 2.3.-2. The recommended information processing in MOC

Consumer support organization : Developing a consumer complaint database with an in-depth survey on each complaint

Other organizations : Establishing consumer complaint and loss database in each specific field in charge

The necessary steps to have a good database are as follows :

1) **Collecting exact and actual data with all concerned factors**

Data input is the basis of the system. If original data is not exact and do not contain necessary factors, then the system is so-called 'garbage in garbage out' system.

Inspectors who prepare original data should be trained and manuals for the original reports should be carefully prepared. Recommended input items for electrically caused fires, traffic accidents in which tires are involved and consumer complaints for textile products are as follows.

a) **Input items for electrically caused fires**

Identification of equipment or installations	
1) Manufacturer's name and/or importer's name or installer's name	
2) Type and name of equipment or installations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution wiring (H.V.) • Watt hour meter • Breaker • Receptacle • Plug • Outdoor switch • Electric heater 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution wiring(L.V.) • Control panel • Internal wiring • Extension code set • Configuration adapter • Electric cooking heater
(The table continues to the next page)	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electric range • Water cooler • Desert cooler • Electric fan • Fluorescent lamp • Neon tube, wiring • Others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water heater • Air conditioner • Refrigerator • TV set • incandescent lamp
Mode of firing(The way in which the fire was caused)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short circuit(of wiring) • Tracking • Sparks • Faulty switch on • Overheat due to half break • Grounding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metal contact overheat • Contact of combustibles • Dielectric breakdown • Overheat due to overload • Leaving in operation
Responsibility	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defective products • Misuse or improper maintenance of products • Wrong installation 	

b) Input items for traffic accidents in which tires are involved

It is difficult to identify the original cause of an accident. The following information is useful for a causal analysis.

History of driving	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speed and driving mileage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loading(A mount of load carried)
Tires and their maintenance	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manufacturer's name and/or importer's name • Record of manufacture • Internal air pressure • Wear of tread • Position change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date of purchase • Residual groove depth • Cracks and cuts
Tire defects	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burst • Puncture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separation

c) Input items for consumer complaints for textile products

Identification of products	
1) Manufacturer's name and/or importer's name	
2) Products category (Yarn, fabrics of garments)	
Point of complaints	
1) Indication	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faulty indication of fiber composition • Faulty indication of country of origin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faulty washing care mark
(The table continues to next page)	

2) Fabric	
(Appearance)	
• Wale streak	• Course mark
• Stain	• Hole defect
(Physical)	
• Pilling	• Snag
• Tear	• Yarn slippage
• Abrasion	• Come off pile
(Form change)	
• Shrinkage	• Crinkles
(Dyeing)	
• Change color	• Color difference
• Stain	• Bleeding
• Change into yellow	• Whitening
3) Garment	
(Appearance)	
• Stain	• Hole defect
(Sewing)	
• Sewing defect	
(Physical)	
• Pilling	• Snag
• Tear	• Abrasion
• Seam slippage	• Yarn slippage
• Come off pile	
(Form change)	
• Shrinkage	• Crinkles
• Defective printing	• Defective coating
• Twisting	
(Dyeing)	
• Change color	• Change into yellow
• Bleeding	• Whitening
• Color difference to parts	
(Others)	
• Skin disease	• Static electricity
• Bad smell	• Needles in the textile products

2) Causal analysis to the point

For a causal analysis of consumer injuries, damage or accidents, a cooperative study is sometimes necessary among the inspection agencies, laboratories with high technical skills and manufacturers or importers of the products in question.

In case of Japan, the Research Institute of Fire Protection Agency, the Japan Automobile Research Institute, the Japan Electrical Safety and Environment Technology Laboratories, the Japan Synthetic Textile Inspection Institute Foundation and other semi-governmental and private research institutes supporting the causal analyses.

3) Relational database and communication network

Many hardware and software manufacturers will be ready to provide the appropriate solutions. Sources of information, databases and communication network are outlined in *Figure 2.3-3*. Each ministry, agency or organization

should establish and maintain its own database and communicate with each other through a communication network. Information can be exchanged manually if the network is not completed.

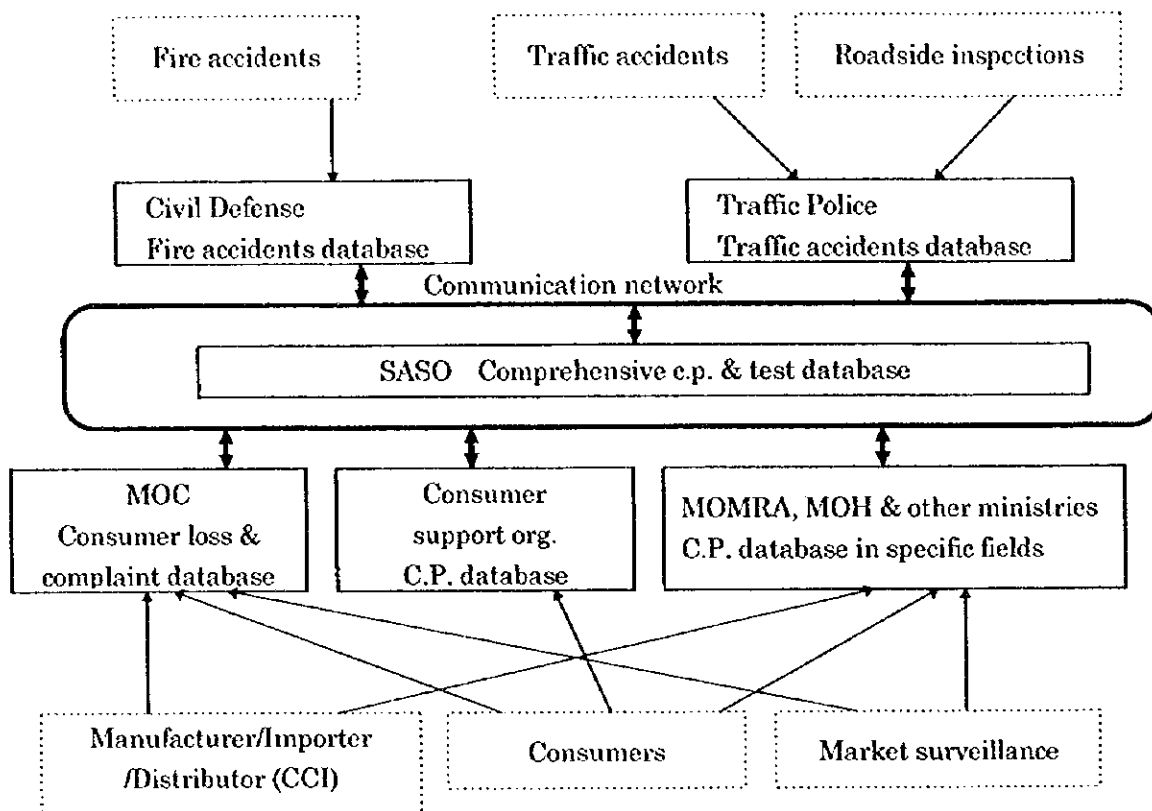


Figure 2.3.3. C.P. databases and communication network

4) Utilization of data among the related organizations

Data should be fully utilized to prevent the recurrence of accidents, injuries and damage by all related organizations, bodies and manufacturers or importers.

- Notice to the importer that the product handled by him is involved in an investigation of a consumer trouble and request for his cooperation to clarify the cause.
- Listing of the doubtful products regarding safety as well as the importers' and manufacturers' names in the custom authority and the ministry in charge for an in-depth inspection.(Black list)
- Recall of the faulty products, ban on manufacture/import or request for improvements
- Intensifying the market surveillance and test for samples from the market for doubtful products
- Revision of the relevant standards and rules or procedures
- Consumer education

5) **System improvement**

SASO and the other related ministries or organizations should have committees for improving the system and pursue more effective use of information. Causal analysis expertise will grow step by step and necessary skills and facilities should be supplemented. Input items to original data regarding accidents or consumer losses should be revised as actual accidents and losses change in their product categories and causes.

6) **Completing total feedback system for consumer protection**

As shown in *Figure 2.3.4*, the information system should be used effectively to formulate a total feedback system with fast response. Results or effects of measures should be evaluated using actual data or facts. Accumulation of improvements based on exact data and actual facts can make the consumer protection system more effective.

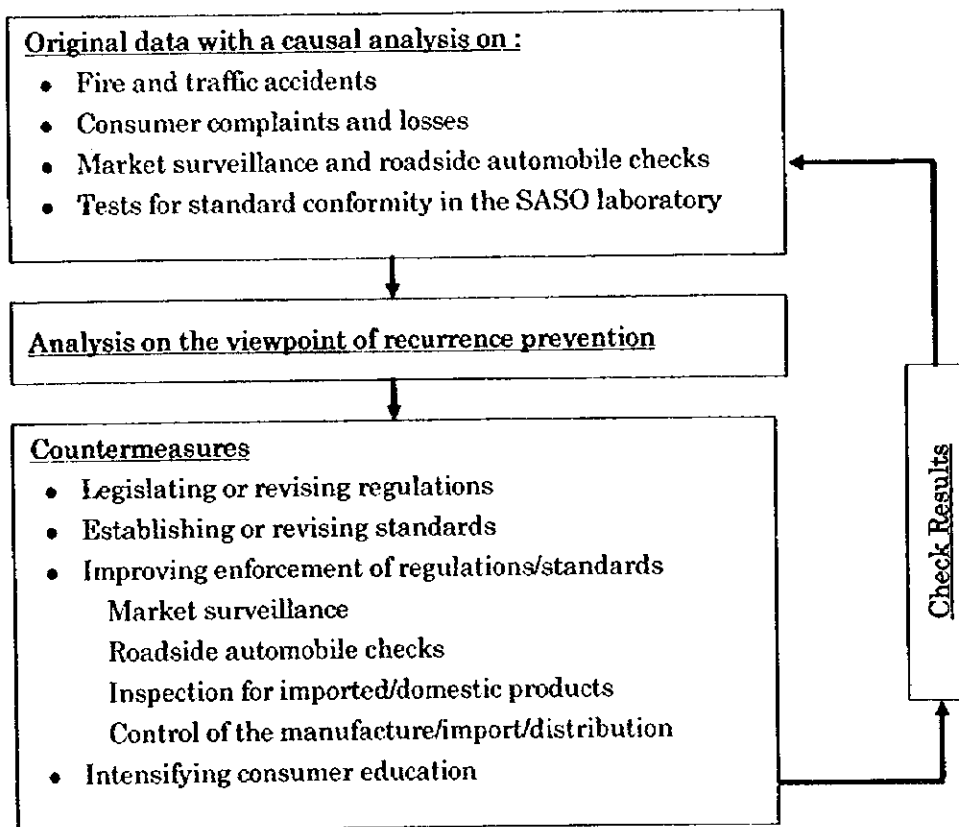
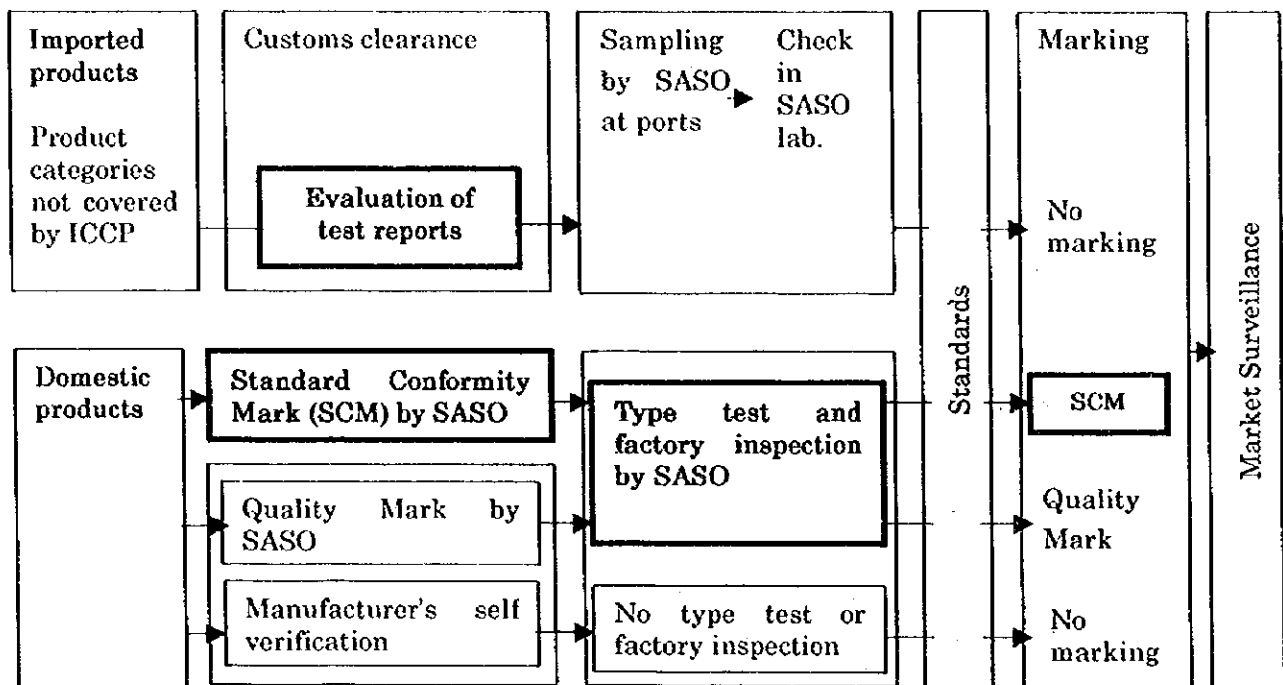


Figure 2.3.4. Total feedback system for the consumer protection information system

2.4. Inspection/testing system

This clause mentions the improvement measures to be taken in the inspection/testing system of electrical/electronic products, tires and textiles in the scope of the in-depth study, as examples, to solve the problems as pointed out in Chapter 1. It consists of five parts: "Imported products (not covered by ICCP)", "Domestic products", "Causal analysis of accidents and consumer complaints", "Market surveillance" and "Inspection of interior wiring." In carrying out the improvement measures for other products, the measures mentioned here are helpful and informative because the concept would be same.

The present inspection/testing system should be improved as shown in *Figure 2.4-1*.



Notes:

- 1) Items indicated in the bold box are newly introduced to improve the control of products put on the market.
- 2) "Evaluation of test reports" aims at the promotion of the responsibility of importers.
- 3) "Standard Conformity Mark (SCM) by SASO" aims at the promotion of control of domestic products under the mandatory certification system such as for imported products.

Figure 2.4-1. Improvement of the inspection/testing system

2.4.1. Imported products (not covered by ICCP)

Importers ought to take responsibility for their products regarding safety and quality. Therefore, importers should follow the procedures for putting their products on the market as shown in *Figure 2.4.1.-1*.

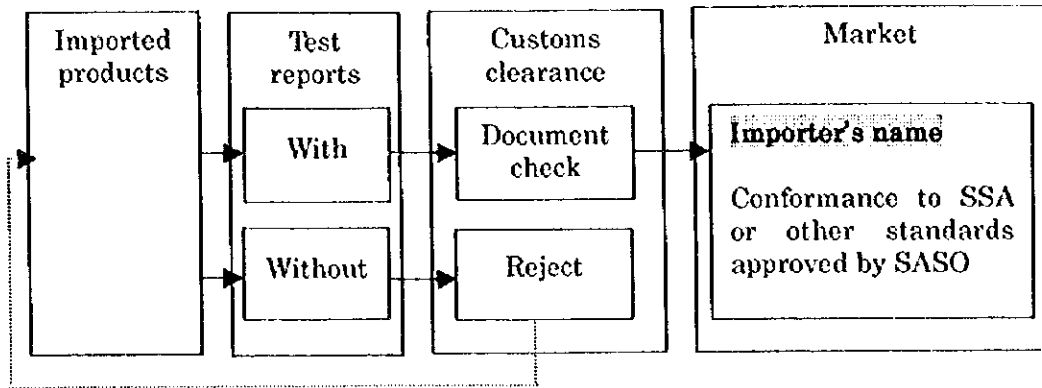


Figure 2.4.1.-1. A diagram of the inspection procedures

Importers should submit the following for inspection at the time of customs clearance;

- declaration of indication method of the name or abbreviation of the importers on the products in a legible and indelible manner to clarify their responsibility for the products
- a test report to demonstrate the conformity of the products with the relevant standards
- instruction sheet to be attached to products in Arabic

If the products are small, their indications are available on the package, tag or other places. A test report may be either issued by some laboratory or prepared by the manufacturer.

For electrical/electronic products, the CB Test Certificate and associated CB Test Report under IECEE-CB Scheme also should be available as the evidence of conformity. The test report should not be older than three years, as a practice used throughout the world because the manufacturing method and the quality control system are likely to have changed during that time. Also, the test report should be maintained by importers for more than ten years taking into account the life of the products. And the MOC should keep the records of the importers including the information of their products, and use them to trace the importers when getting information on accidents, receiving complaints and finding failure in the market surveillance on the products.

A document check should be additionally conducted by a visual inspection to eliminate inferior products before they enter the country in consideration of problems summed up in *Clause 1.12*, as shown in *Table 2.4.1.-1*.

Table 2.4.1.-1. Document check

Kinds of products	Checking items	Reasons
All	Indication method of importer's name and country of origin	As mentioned above
	Validity of test report	
Electrical/electronic products	Ratings	Many products designed for other than 127V or 220V
	Configuration of plugs attached to electrical/electronic products,	Many plugs not complying with SSA
Textile products	Fiber composition	Many false and imitating

If the document check is unfavorable, products should be rejected or suspended from imported until the requirements are fulfilled.

It is ideal that the document check is started immediately. However, as there is difficulty such as the manpower on the checker side, the document check should be schematically conducted with the priority of the implementation in consideration of the degree of the problems in the market

The plan for the implementation is mentioned below;

At the first step (from 1998)

Scope of products	Test item of test report
All electrical/electronic products	All requirements of relevant standards
Textile products made of silk	Fiber composition, colorfastness and shrinkage

At the second step (from 2000)

Scope of products	Test item of test report
Baby's clothes, underwear and others directly touching the skin	Fiber composition, colorfastness, Shrinkage and harmful substances such as formaldehyde

At the final step (from 2002)

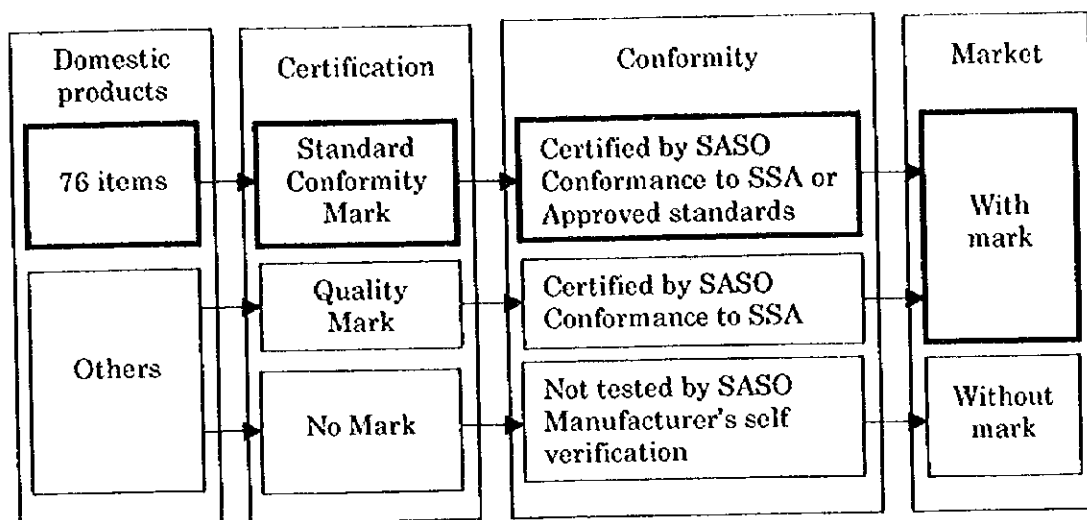
Scope of products	Test item of test report
All textile products	Full requirements of relevant standards

The document check should be commissioned to SASO as a sole standardization organization in Saudi Arabia.

If the document check is implemented, it becomes effective in preventing inferior products in five years. The introduction of the document check should be made known to importers and overseas manufacturers. It becomes more effective if offenders are strictly controlled according to Royal Decree M/11.

2.4.2. Inspection of domestic products

Domestic manufacturers ought to have the responsibility for their products regarding safety and quality. Therefore, the manufacturers should follow the procedures for putting their products on the market as shown in *Figure 2.4.2-1*.



Note:

Items indicated in the bold box are concerned with "Standard Conformity Mark (SCM)" to be newly introduced to improve the control of products put on the market.

Figure 2.4.2-1. Outline of future inspection/testing system

The SCM should be enforced on a mandatory basis in addition to the Quality Mark System on a voluntary basis because many defective products are found in the market. The SCM should apply to the same to the kinds of products covered under ICCP. There is no reason for differentiating between domestic and imported products for ensuring safety and quality because Saudi Arabia greatly depends on imported products and has designated 76 kinds of products as the most important products for consumers.

The SCM System should be commissioned to SASO as the sole standardization organization in Saudi Arabia. The SCM consists of a type testing, a prelicensed inspection and a routine factory inspection similar to the Quality Mark system.

As it is necessary for the manufacturers to follow the requirements of SCM, a grace period should be provided. Accordingly, as for the first step only the type testing should be required and all factory inspections may be postponed during the grace period. After three years, the factory inspections should be conducted as the second step.

It is importance that the SCM should introduce a marking system because the consumer can easily recognize and buy qualified products if the products bear a certification mark.

The present Quality Mark applies continuously to the products other than those under the SCM. When the SCM is started, the products, which have already obtained the Quality Mark, should be granted the SCM without any additional test and/or inspection because the technical requirements of the SCM are the same as the Quality Mark system.

2.4.3. Causal analysis of accidents and consumer complaints

The causal analysis is very important for preventing the recurrence of the consumer complaints and accidents. However, the system of the causal analysis of accidents and consumer complaints is not set up although there are many accidents and complaints mentioned in Clause 1.10.3. Therefore, the system should be set up as shown in *Figure 2.4.3.-1*.

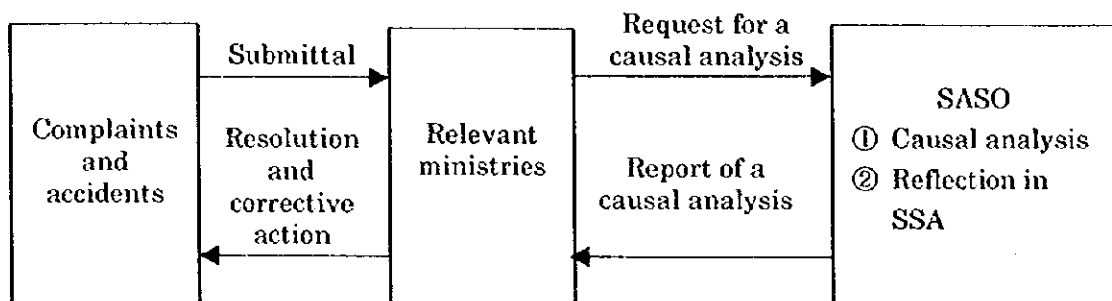


Figure 2.4.3.-1. Casual analysis system

Each ministry has the responsibility to analyze the cause of the complaints and accidents, and solve the problems. According to the statistics of fire accidents developed by the Civil Defense, the total number of the fire accidents including the electric short circuit and electrical wiring was 5,034 and approximately 65% was due to houses catching on fire. However, the statistics only states fire conditions and product names, therefore, the actual causes should be researched for prevention of their recurrence.

The relevant ministry should cooperate with SASO and the manufacturers and all persons concerned to analyze the causes of the complaints and accidents and prevent their recurrence. If necessary, the ministry should change the laws/regulations or ask SASO for a revision of SSA. SASO also should join the causal analysis because SASO has the technical knowledge with long experience in testing. The ministries should qualify SASO as the causal analysis organization and SASO should officially revise the terms of reference of SASO so as to clearly indicate this role.

2.4.4. Market surveillance

Market surveillance is very often carried out for foodstuff, but seldom conducted for the other type of products. Usually, the surveillance is carried out where a complaint is submitted. It is very difficult to carry out surveillance for all kinds of products in the limited capability of regulatory authorities. Therefore, the market surveillance should be fulfilled with the priority of the short-term and middle-term objectives in consideration of the degree of problems in the market. The methods of market surveillance are hereby indicated, as examples, for electrical/electronic products, tires and textile products in the scope of the in-depth study.

1) Electrical/electronic products

a) Visual inspection of the market (**short-term objective**)

The inspection should be conducted according to *Table 2.4.4.1*.

Table 2.4.4.1. Market surveillance plan (short-term objective)

Kind of products	Checking items	Frequency	City	Total number of products to be checked in a year
Complete product	Marking of rating	February	Riyadh	At least 1,000
	Plug configuration	May		
Mains Configuration Adaptors and extension cord set	Marking of rating	August	Damman	
	Plug and receptacle configuration	November	Jeddah	

The number of products to be checked should be at least 1,000 so as to explore the actual situation in the market and reflect it in the statistics because there are a lot of problems with products.

To accomplish the check for at least 1,000 products a year, the following preparation should be made.

No. of cities	Frequency per year	No. of products to be checked per day · group	Personnel involved in each city	Period(day)
3	4	20	4(2 group)	3

Each group for checking should consist of two persons coming from MOC and SASO because MOC has authority to control products in the market and SASO is an expert for assistance of technical aspect.

- b) Sampling test (Full Test items) for configuration adaptors and extension cord set purchased on the market by SASO lab. (**Short-term objective**)

These products are major causes of fire. Although SSA for them are not published, tests can be made by the combination of SSA standards for plugs, socket-outlets and power supply cords.

- c) Sampling test (Full Test items) for other popular products used in the home purchased depend on the capability of SASO (**middle-term objective**)

The sampling test should be conducted for products that have caused accidents and/or have had the complaints in the past. Storage water heaters, cooking appliances, heating appliances, socket-outlets etc. should be considered as products needing a sampling test.

2) Tires

There are many traffic accidents resulting from the tire burst caused by tire storage and the user maintenance rather than the quality of tires themselves.

Accordingly, market surveillance should be carried out in shops, and roadside inspections should be conducted in cooperation with tire dealers to investigate the actual condition of tires and show the drivers the proper way to take care of their tires.

- a) Market surveillance (**middle-term objective**)

Inspections should be conducted according to *Table 2.4.4.-2*.

Table 2.4.4.-2. Market surveillance plan (short-term objective)

Kind of products	Checking items	Frequency	City	Total number of shops to be checked a year
Tires for passenger car and buses	See <i>Table 2.4.4.-3</i>	February	Riyadh	At least 90
		May	Damman	
		August	Jeddah	
		November		

The surveillance of tires should be conducted to check on sale conditions at tire shops, not on safety and quality of tires.

The number of shops to be checked should be at least 90 so as to find the actual situation in the shops because there are a lot of the tire burst.

To accomplish the checking for at least 90 shops a year, the following preparation should be made.

No. of cities	Frequency per year	No. of shops to be checked per day · group	Personnel involved in each city	Period(day)
3	4	5	2 (one group)	3

Two persons, as inspectors, should come from MOC and SASO because MOC has the authority to control products in the market and SASO is an expert in the technical sense.

The market surveillance should be conducted according to *Table 2.4.4.-3.*

Table 2.4.4.-3. Checking items

Inspection items	Reasons
Storage condition of tires based on the Gulf standards No.581/1995 "REQUIREMENTS FOR STORAGE OF MOTOR VEHICLE TYRES"	Four of five tire shops that the team visited stored tires with a pile of tires (piling ten to twelve tires up).
Supply of information about tires to the buyers (consumers) from retailers Attachment of instruction manual	Retailers should give consumers proper tire maintenance.
Participation of retailers in seminars carried out by SASO, traffic police or the like	Retailers do not have sufficient knowledge about tires
Sales of used tires	Sales of used tires should be prohibited.

b) Roadside inspection (short-term objective)

Inspection should be carried out as follows.

Table 2.4.4.-4. Checking method of tires on the roadside

Kind of cars	Checking items	Season	City	Total number of cars to be inspected a year
Passenger car and bus	Internal air pressure	Summer and hajj	Riyadh	At least 10,000
	Residual groove Depth		Damman	
			Jeddah	
	Crack and cut		Meddinah	
			Mecca	

In Japan, such checks have been conducted for 25 years in cooperation with the traffic police and The Japan Automobile Tire Manufacturers Association inc. (JATMA). As a result, the number of automobile with defective tires have decreased from 37.7% to 13.8%.

Table 2.4.4.-5. Check results of tires on the roadside in Japan (Resource; JATMA)

Year	1968		1983		1993	
No. of checks	9		225		178	
No. of cars checked	2,493		43,791		21,325	
No. of cars with defective tires	941		7,787		2,935	
Defective percentage(%)	37.7		17.8		13.8	
Defect details	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Shortage of residual groove depth	435	17.4	5,380	12.3	1,560	7.3
Abnormal abrasion	0	0.0	1,466	3.3	845	4.0
Outer damage reaching the cords	192	7.7	445	1.0	161	0.8
Driving over nails, etc.	0	0.0	198	0.5	92	0.4
Low/high internal air pressure	328	13.2	521	1.2	279	1.3
Others	0	0.0	604	1.4	216	1.0
Total	955	-	8,614	-	3,153	-

The roadside inspections were very effective in reducing the number of defective tires in Japan although 25 years were needed to reduce the number of defective tires from 37.7% to 13.8%. If Saudi Arabia carries out the similar roadside inspections, the same effect could be obtained. The number of cars to be inspected should be at least 10,000 and collect information about the present conditions of tires in use for taking corrective action. The inspection is also effective in educating the drivers.

To accomplish the inspection for at least 10,000 cars a year, the following preparation should be made.

No. of cities	Frequency a year	No. of cars to be inspected per day · group	Personnel involved in each city	Period of inspection (day)
5	2	200	10(two groups)	3

The questionnaire on tires should be made to drivers at roadside inspection points so as to investigate the present condition and take corrective action for the future as shown in Table 2.4.4.-6. To perform the roadside inspection correctly, the inspection should be made in cooperation with TP and CCI (tire importers, wholesaler and retailer groups). SASO should contribute to the inspection as an expert.

Table 2.4.4.-6. Questionnaire on tires at roadside inspection points

Question		Answer to be selected	
1	Tire pressure	Checking frequency	Check method
		Everyday	Deformation of tires by visual check
		Once a week	
		Once a month	
		If necessary, such as before long driving	Measurement of pressure by an air gauge
		Not checked	
Others()			
2	Awareness of the proper tire pressure	Yes (kgf)	No
3	Rotation of tires	Periodically change	
		After checking the driving mileage	
		Not changed	
		Others()	
4	Exchange of tires	At the damaged cases	
		At residual groove depth less than the specified value	
		Others()	

3) Textile products

The fabric rolls and bolts and the garment should be inspected as described below.

a) Visual inspection in the market

The inspection should be conducted according to Table 2.4.4.-7. The market surveillance for "Labeling" is a short-term objective and for "Product quality" is a middle-term objective.

Table 2.4.4.-7. Market surveillance plan

Kind of products	Checking items	Frequency	City	Total number of products to be checked a year
Silk roll and bolt	See Table 2.4.4.-9	February	Riyadh	At least 2,000
		May		
		August	Damman	
		November	Jeddah	

The number of products to be checked should be at least 2,000 so as to find the present conditions in the market because there are a lot of the false indications on the products.

To accomplish a check for at least 2,000 samples a year, the following preparation should be made.

No. of cities	Frequency per year	No. of products to be checked per day · group	Personnel involved in each city	Period(day)
3	4	10	4(two groups)	3

Each group for the check should have two persons coming from MOC and SASO because MOC has the authority to control products in the market and SASO is an expert for giving technical assistance.

The checking items are shown in *Table 2.4.4.-8.*

Table 2.4.4.-8. Checking items

Kind of object	Checking item
Labeling	Fiber composition
	Country of origin
	Care label (not needed for fabric rolls and bolts)
Product quality	Appearance
	Sewing (not required for fabric roll and bolt)

The checking items of appearance and sewing regarding product quality in *Table 2.4.4.-8* are shown in *Table 2.4.4.-9.*

Table 2.4.4.-9. Checking items

Checking item	
Appearance	Sewing
Symmetry	Puckering
Pattern matching for each part	Missing stitch
Stain	Skip over stitch
Fabric	Breakage
Ironing glaze	Needle hole
Bad odor	Inferior linking
Colour change / Colour shading	Seam slippage
Printing	Wavy stitch
Yarn slippage	

- b) Sampling test for fiber composition, especially for silk products, shrinkage and color fastness by the SASO lab. **(Middle-term objective)**
- 4) **All sectors**
- a) Visual inspection for marking of country of origin and name of importer or domestic manufacturer in the market
- b) Collection of complaints and claims received from purchasers by retailers, etc. and their solution

To conduct market surveillance effectively, the committee should be established to:

- ① establish a basic rule and the rule of procedures of the surveillance and collecting the information about problems in the market
- ② make an annual plan for carrying out surveillance(frequencies, products, testing items, districts, etc.)
- ③ decide the method of how to make the information public
- ④ discuss the treatment of defective products, etc.

The membership of the committee should come from the relevant ministries, professors, chamber of commerce (distributors, retailers and manufacturers), consumer support organization and SASO. The results of market surveillance should be published by media such as newspapers and consumer magazines to make the public of the dangerous products.

2.4.5. Inspection of interior wiring

As mentioned in Clauses 2.2.4. and 2.6.1., an interior wiring law should be established because the improper interior wiring is now becoming a problem in this country and "Saudi Application Guide" properly for working the interior wiring of buildings, and houses and other premises is about to be established by SASO.

After establishing the law and guide, an inspection should be conducted based on them to evaluate the interior wiring of buildings, etc.

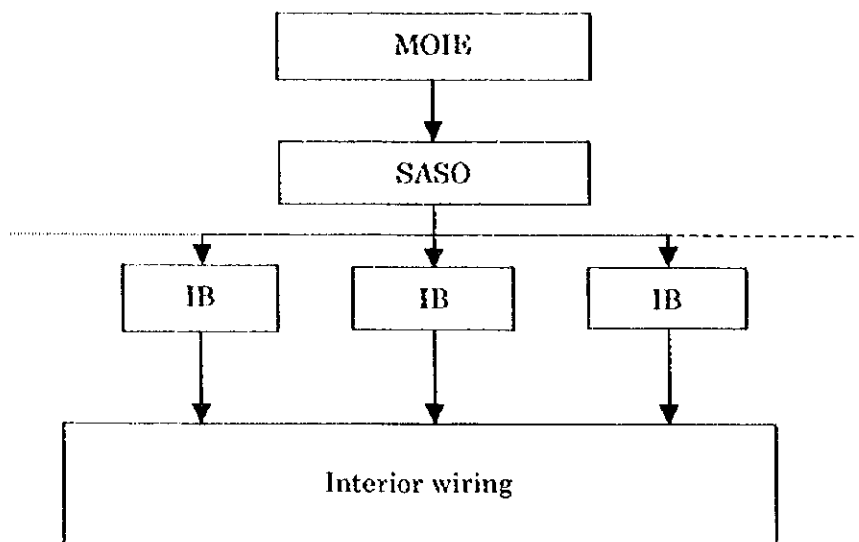
The inspection should include at least checking items in *Table 2.4.5.-1* in consideration of the cause of the fire accidents in this country.

Table 2.4.5.-1. Checking items

Electrical components and personnel	Checking item
Cables for interior wiring	Cross-sectional areas suitable to the ratings of circuit breakers
Socket-outlets	Configurations and marking of the ratings corresponding to the mains supply
Circuit breakers	Marking of ratings with distributing mains supply
Working personnel	Wiring work done by "qualified electricians"

MOIE should take the responsibility of enforcing the interior wiring law. In implementing the Saudi Application Guide to be covered by the law, MOIE should appoint SASO as the accreditation body of the inspection organizations, which carries out inspections of the interior wiring.

The system of the implementation of the inspection can be seen in *Figure 2.4.5.-1*.



IB is an abbreviation for Inspection body

Figure 2.4.5.-1. System for implementation of the inspection