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PRESS RELEASE

CASE investigates if energy-saving lamps live up to their claims

66.7% of the Energy-Saving Lamps tested did not measure up to the manufacturers' claims on light output

Introduction

In response to the public's concerns over the effectiveness of using energy-saving lamps, CASE commissioned PSB Corp to conduct tests on energy-saving lamps commonly sold in the market from January to February 2005.

The objective of the tests was to determine the claims made by manufacturers of energy-saving lamps about their light output levels (measured in lumens as stated on the packaging) compared with those of conventional tungsten filament lamps, and to highlight the level of savings which consumers can derive from energy-saving lamps.

A total of 39 lamps from 23 brands were chosen for this test. Out of these 39 lamps, 25 were self-ballasted and 14 were single-capped. CASE selected only lamps which had markings showing claims of their light output or wattage compared with conventional tungsten filament lamps.

Test Methodology

A total of 23 brands of commonly used energy-saving lamps were tested. The lamps were randomly chosen and bought from different shops in different areas of Singapore. The price range was between \$3.30 to \$12.00. Some of these shops included supermarket chains and neighborhood shops. Although the sampling gave us a fairly large number of lamps to be tested, this was not necessarily a good statistical representation of the general efficacy of lamps

in the market. However, the test did surface some interesting findings and issues which we believe to be of interest to consumers.

CASE's Findings

The test results showed that 26 of 39 (that is 66.7%) of the lamps tested did not measure up to the manufacturers' claims on light output (measured in lumens as stated on the packaging) or expected light output. In fact more than 30% of the lamps tested had light output which was \geq more than 20% lower than the claimed light output on the packaging. This meant that there may be gross mis-representation to consumers. But the test results also showed that all the tested lamps did save energy compared with equivalent tungsten filament lamp from 59.4% to 85.6%.

To summarise, the tests revealed that the light output of most energy-saving lamps were lower than that claimed on the packaging.

Actions to be taken by CASE

1. CASE will consider conducting regular sampling and publishing these findings to instill in consumers a better sense of awareness.
2. CASE will also be writing to the manufacturers and retailers to request for proper substantiation of their claims.
3. We shall assist consumers who are misled by the claims made by the businesses in seeking redress. As misrepresentation falls under one of the 20 unfair practices under the Consumer Protection (Fair Trading) Act 2003, consumers should be aware that when a business makes a misleading or false claim, CASE can, under the said Act, enter into a voluntary compliance agreement (VCA) with the business. This means that the business has to cease making such statements. Should they persist in making such statements even after signing the VCA, then CASE can take out an injunction and/or declaration proceedings against the business for breaching the VCA.

4. CASE will continue to inform and educate consumers on the need to be vigilant when buying products and services. Consumers should not take at face value what is written on the packaging of the lamps/ products. In addition, consumers should ideally make a firm request that manufacturers send their products to a reputable product certification body such as PSB to confirm and verify their claims. CASE also advises consumers to purchase lamps which have proper and legible markings indicating the performance level of the lamps, including the light output and power consumption. In the event the lamp they purchased fails to perform to its expected standards, the consumer has a right to seek redress under the Consumer Protection (Fair Trading) Act 2003.

Conclusion

It is clear that the responsibility of ensuring that products conform to standards and manufacturers' claims lies primarily with manufacturers. However, retailers should also exercise due diligence in getting proper substantiation from manufacturers on the claims made on a product before putting it on the shelf for sale. They should make sure that they do not mislead consumers and make claims about their products that are not lived up to. As responsible manufacturers and businesses, they should send their products for voluntary testing schemes to ensure greater transparency and accountability to consumers.

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