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Giving furniture stability: SVS Interlock from Lehmann prevents accidents

It's a scenario no furniture manufacturer would want to be responsible for: several drawers or pull-outs opened at the same time can cause a piece of furniture to tip over and injure a person, possibly even with fatal consequences. Statistics show that such accidents are a frequent occurrence. This is why proposed legislation is now coming from the USA to demand a new safety standard for furniture. At interzum 2023 in Cologne, Lehmann is presenting a quick and lasting solution: „SVS Interlock" brings firm standing to dressers and chests of drawers.

Drawers and pull-outs are shown to be a popular way giving cabinets copious storage space that's easy to access. Advances made in recent years have concentrated on full-extension runners, extra-wide drawers and higher load-bearing capacities rather than focusing on furniture safety. However, when freestanding furniture comes with several drawers that can be opened at one and the same time – whether in a hurry or out of curiosity – the inevitable happens: the centre of gravity shifts, and furniture tips over.

A press statement released by the US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) on 19 October 2022 reported that furniture accidents of this kind resulted in an estimated 84,100 emergency treatment cases in the US alone between 2006 and 2021. CPSC staff were also aware of 234 deaths between January 2000 and April 2022 resulting from dressers tipping over. Among them, 199 children.

A locking system minimises the risk of tipping over

Lehmann is presenting a preventive solution at interzum 2023 in the form of the „SVS Interlock" drawer locking system. In free-standing furniture, it makes sure that only one drawer or pull-out can be opened at one and the same time. To this end, a rail concealed in the furniture is fitted with a push rod and at least one self-locking pawl per pull-out element. As soon as one pawl hook element falls in response to opening a drawer, the push rod moves the remaining hooks into the locking position. This prevents access to the other drawers.

Lehmann has developed „SVS Interlock" for all commonly found drawer systems and – matched to whichever cabinet height and number of pull-outs – can supply it in customised, pre-assembled sets. The locking mechanism can be screwed on or channel-mounted on the left, right or in both sides. For the cabinetmaker/carpenter, the system is just as easy to work with as it is to integrate into industrial production.

Compliant with international law

„SVS-Interlock" provides a quick and lasting answer to meeting statutory requirements on accident prevention. This way, the Lehmann system even now complies with the Consumer Product Safety Commission's „Safety Standard for Clothing Storage Units", which is expected to be mandatory for all furniture in the US from 24 May 2023 in the form of the „Stop Tip-overs of Unstable, Risky Dressers on Youth" (STURDY) law, and which prompted the American ASTM standardisation organisation to develop a new standard that could make furniture manufacturers worldwide more accountable in the future.

„Raising awareness of the hazards involved in the tipping behaviour of modern furniture in a very specific way, this fast-track legislation in the USA will serve as a model worldwide," says Marc Tame, International Sales Manager at Lehmann, with every certainty. It is not only expected to help give furniture greater stability in dressing rooms, children's bedrooms, living rooms and bedrooms in general, but also prove beneficial in earthquake regions.

What's more, „SVS Interlock" can be used in mobile desk pedestals in offices or doctors' surgeries, in tool cabinets or service trolleys in aircraft that are moved over uneven surfaces, or in mobile facilities, such as caravans, motor homes, food trucks or workmen's vans, to ensure that nothing tips over and falls out.

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Caption: The "SVS Interlock" drawer locking system from Lehmann minimises the risk of modern drawer furniture tipping over. It makes sure that only one drawer or pull-out can be opened at once. Photo: Lehmann

Lehmann

The family owned business LEHMANN in Minden/Westphalia is one of the of European leaders for mechanical and electronic locking systems for furniture and more. The range of applications extends from office and commercial furnishings, lockers and safe deposit boxes, shopfitting and interior furnishing, laboratory, warehouse and factory equipment, caravan and boat building up to vending machines. Two modern plants with own research and product development as well as tool and mould construction, foundry, plastic injection moulding and electroplating form the basis for innovation and quality of the products. Around 340 employees worldwide ensure customer satisfaction and delivery reliability. In addition Lehmann actively markets individual steps in its supply chain as industrial services.