STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Edmund G. Brown Jr. Governor

DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS
BUREAU OF ELECTRONIC AND APPLIANCE REPAIR, HOME FURNISHINGS, AND THERMAL INSULATION

2016 OUTREACH PLAN

BEARHFTI
BUREAU OF ELECTRONIC & APPLIANCE REPAIR, HOME FURNISHINGS & THERMAL INSULATION

February 2016

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INTRODUCTION

In 2015, the Bureau of Electronic and Appliance Repair, Home Furnishings and Thermal Insulation (Bureau) conducted a market condition study. The study looked at many aspects of the Bureau and the industries it regulates. Specifically, the contractor CPS HR Consulting completed a market condition assessment by:

- Reviewing pertinent legislation, regulations, organizational structure, and statistics;
- Interviewing the following critical stakeholders:
    - Bureau management;
    - Bureau Advisory Council members;
    - Industry officials;
    - A representative sample of California consumers; and
- Collected and analyzed secondary market research of the industries under the Bureau's oversight.

With regard to the California consumer sample, CPS HR surveyed 682 California residents located throughout the state.

Need for Outreach

Many respondents in the study believe there is a need for stronger and more varied outreach, visibility, communication, and publicizing of the Bureau's programs and services using a wide variety of media. Further, the Bureau needs to improve industry and consumer education through more direct mail, webinars, teleconferences, podcasts, and workshops in Northern and Southern California.

The Bureau's 2016 Outreach Plan

In order to address the issue of low consumer awareness, as well as low regulated industry awareness, of the Bureau's programs and requirements, the Bureau is preparing to do the following:

- Conduct three Bureau Advisory Council meetings annually to ensure licensees and interested stakeholders are apprised of Bureau operations and efforts.
- Update the Bureau's website to be more user-friendly and provide various documents requested by industry in the market assessment study.
- Provide YouTube content and numerous publications to consumers and regulated small business entities in English, Spanish, and additional languages on Bureau requirements such as Technical Bulletin 117-2013 and flame retardant chemical disclosure requirements.
- Look for opportunities to conduct outreach at community events on compliance requirements in a uniform fashion for all Bureau license types.

Finally, the outreach plan outlined above utilizes services the Bureau already has access to within the Department to maximize cost savings. This includes brochures and video development as well as language translation services.

BUREAU ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATES

Prior to 2015, the Bureau's Advisory Council only met periodically. This made it difficult for Advisory Council members as well as interested stakeholders to stay apprised of Bureau operations and policy efforts.

In order to ensure the Bureau receives timely feedback on numerous initiatives, it held three Council meetings in 2015 and is scheduled to hold three Council meetings in 2016. Further, the Bureau will hold, at a minimum, one Advisory Council meeting in Southern California annually. The Bureau's February 2016 Council meeting will be held in Riverside, California.

Finally, in October of 2015, the Bureau expanded the Advisory Council's membership from nine members to eleven. New members of the Council include a career technical education professor of appliance repair, a service dealer with 50 years of experience in electronic repair, academics in the fields of combustion science and thermal insulation, and a non-profit advocate committed to improving the safety of consumer products. These individuals have joined an existing team of industry experts that have provided considerable feedback for the Bureau and have proven to be an invaluable resource. The Council's membership includes:

Sharron Bradley, Industry (HFTI)
Burt Grimes, Industry (HFTI)
Judy Levin, Public (HFTI)
Joanne Mikami, Public (EAR & HFTI)
David Spears, Industry (EAR)
David Yarbrough, Industry (HFTI)
Donald Erwin, Industry (EAR)
Timothy Hawkins, Industry (EAR)
Donald Lucas, Public (HFTI)
Leonard Price, Public (EAR)
David Velasquez, Industry (EAR)

BUREAU WEBSITE UPDATE

The Bureau's existing website is in fact composed of three different legacy websites. The Bureau has been working with the Department of Consumer Affairs' Office of Information Services over the past year to consolidate these three sites in order to have one seamless website that is:

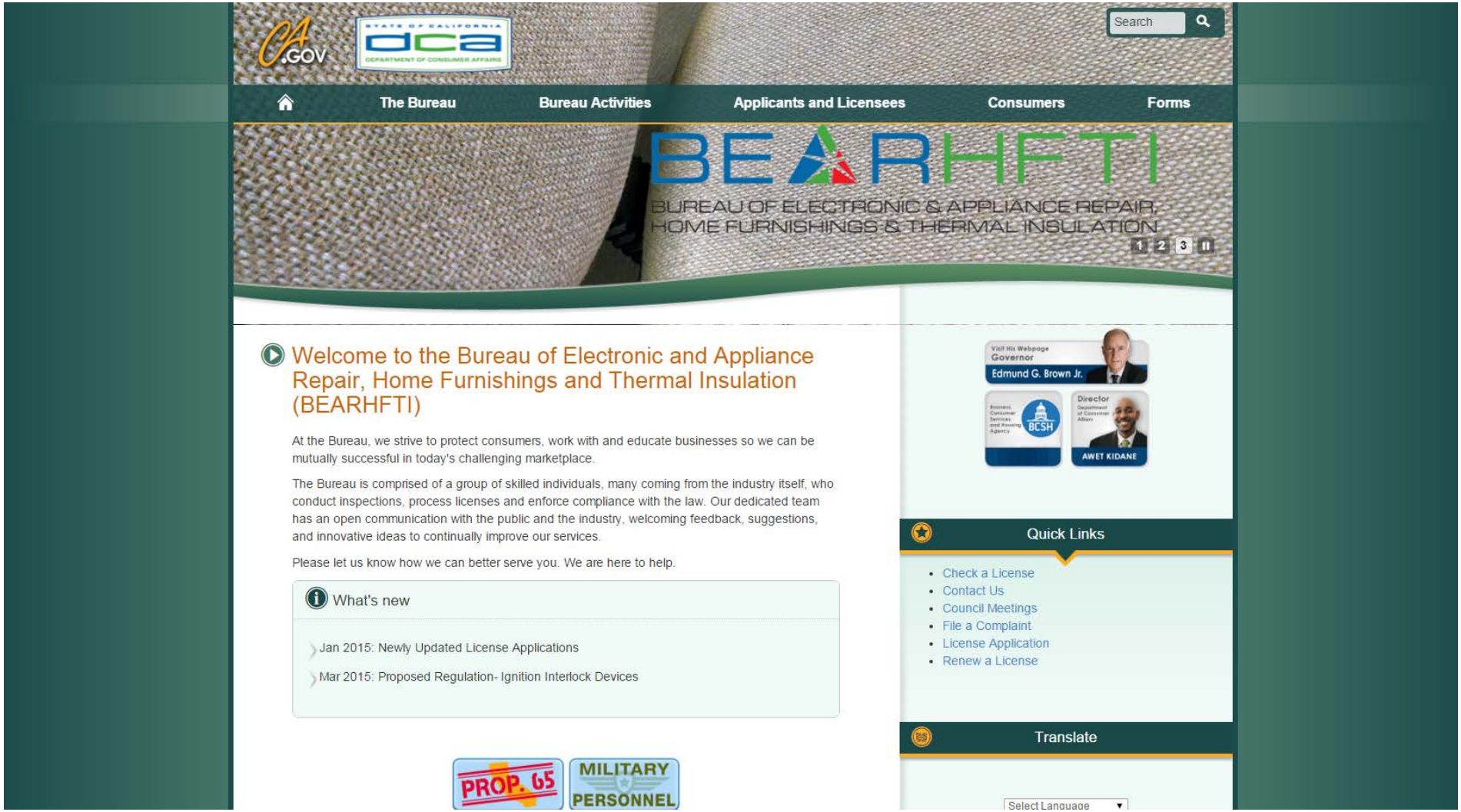
- Easy to use
- Easy to navigate
- Contains up to date search functionalities
- Ensures the majority of content is translatable

Go-Live Timeline

The Bureau has just commenced evaluating the website links, reviewing translation content, and evaluating whether existing web content was properly migrated into new web pages. This phase of the project is expected to last two months. In that time, the Bureau also encourages stakeholders to contact the Bureau in order to make an appointment to review the new web pages as well and provide feedback.

With reviews completed by the end of March, the new website will go live on April 4, 2016. Despite the Bureau's thorough review of web content, it does anticipate some material or information may not be properly transferred and we encourage stakeholders at any time to contact the Bureau to resolve any issues that arise. The Bureau will continue to have access to its legacy website and can quickly retrieve content and will ensure the new website is updated in a timely manner.

The following test pages are meant to provide interested stakeholders with the new web design's layout and how content is organized. The Bureau appreciates feedback on these materials.


Search
The Bureau
Bureau Activities
Applicants and Licensees
Consumers
Forms
BEARHFTI
BUREAU OF ELECTRONIC & APPLIANCE REPAIR, HOME FURNISHINGS & THERMAL INSULATION
Welcome to the Bureau of Electronic and Appliance Repair, Home Furnishings and Thermal Insulation (BEARHFTI)
At the Bureau, we strive to protect consumers, work with and educate businesses so we can be mutually successful in today's challenging marketplace.
The Bureau is comprised of a group of skilled individuals, many coming from the industry itself, who conduct inspections, process licenses and enforce compliance with the law. Our dedicated team has an open communication with the public and the industry, welcoming feedback, suggestions, and innovative ideas to continually improve our services.
Please let us know how we can better serve you. We are here to help.
What's new
Jan 2015: Newly Updated License Applications
Mar 2015: Proposed Regulation- Ignition Interlock Devices
PROP. 65
MILITARY PERSONNEL
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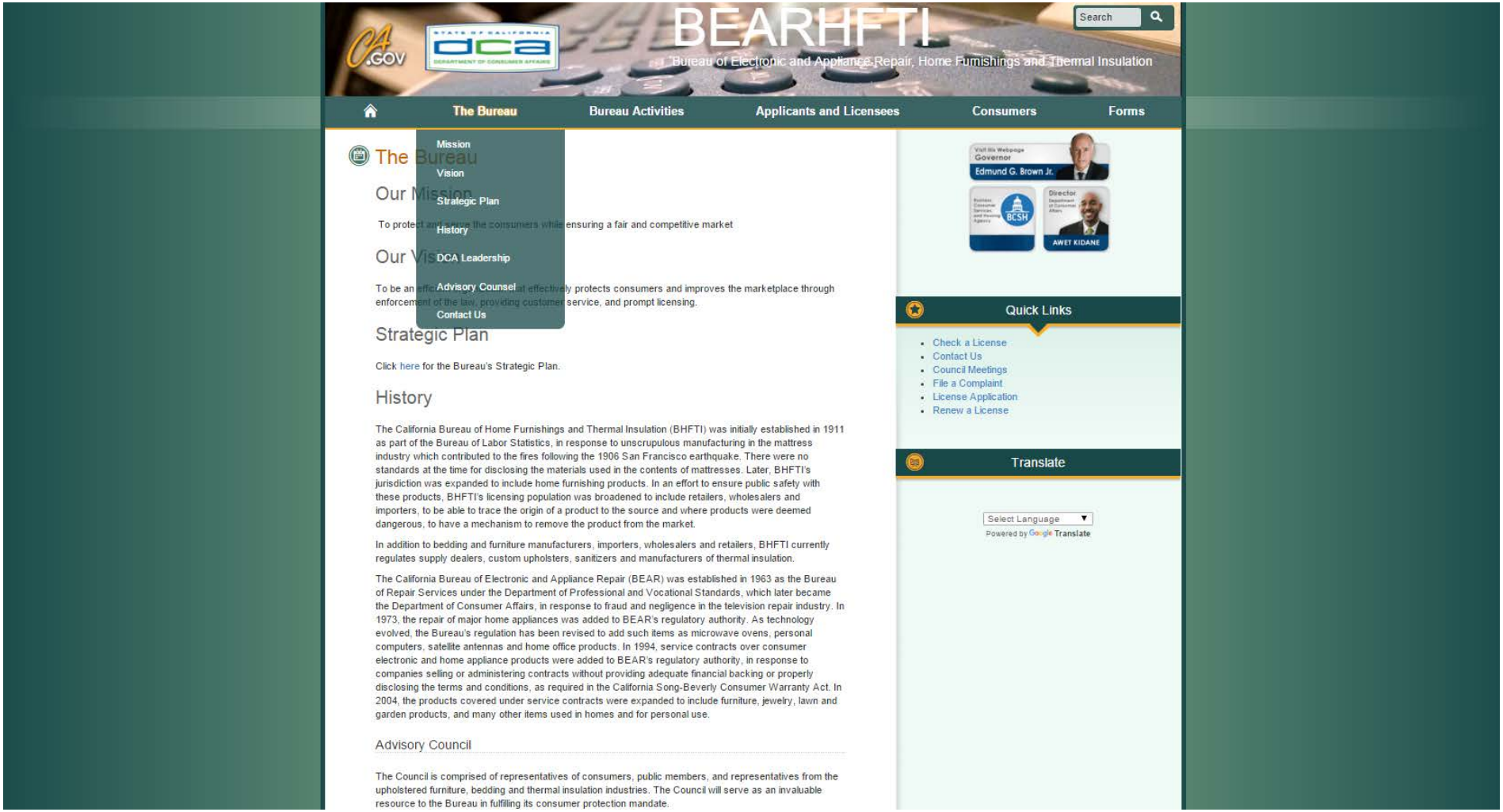
Director
AWET KIDANE
Quick Links
Check a License
Contact Us
Council Meetings
File a Complaint
License Application
Renew a License
Translate


BEARHFTI
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Mission
Vision
Strategic Plan
History
DCA Leadership
Advisory Counsel
Contact Us
The Bureau
Our Mission
To protect and serve the consumers while ensuring a fair and competitive market
Our Vision
To be an efficient and effectively protects consumers and improves the marketplace through enforcement of the law, providing customer service, and prompt licensing.
Strategic Plan
Click here for the Bureau's Strategic Plan.
History
The California Bureau of Home Furnishings and Thermal Insulation (BHFTI) was initially established in 1911 as part of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in response to unscrupulous manufacturing in the mattress industry which contributed to the fires following the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. There were no standards at the time for disclosing the materials used in the contents of mattresses. Later, BHFTI's jurisdiction was expanded to include home furnishing products. In an effort to ensure public safety with these products, BHFTI's licensing population was broadened to include retailers, wholesalers and importers, to be able to trace the origin of a product to the source and where products were deemed dangerous, to have a mechanism to remove the product from the market.
In addition to bedding and furniture manufacturers, importers, wholesalers and retailers, BHFTI currently regulates supply dealers, custom upholsters, sanitizers and manufacturers of thermal insulation.
The California Bureau of Electronic and Appliance Repair (BEAR) was established in 1963 as the Bureau of Repair Services under the Department of Professional and Vocational Standards, which later became the Department of Consumer Affairs, in response to fraud and negligence in the television repair industry. In 1973, the repair of major home appliances was added to BEAR's regulatory authority. As technology evolved, the Bureau's regulation has been revised to add such items as microwave ovens, personal computers, satellite antennas and home office products. In 1994, service contracts over consumer electronic and home appliance products were added to BEAR's regulatory authority, in response to companies selling or administering contracts without providing adequate financial backing or properly disclosing the terms and conditions, as required in the California Song-Beverly Consumer Warranty Act. In 2004, the products covered under service contracts were expanded to include furniture, jewelry, lawn and garden products, and many other items used in homes and for personal use.
Advisory Council
The Council is comprised of representatives of consumers, public members, and representatives from the upholstered furniture, bedding and thermal insulation industries. The Council will serve as an invaluable resource to the Bureau in fulfilling its consumer protection mandate.
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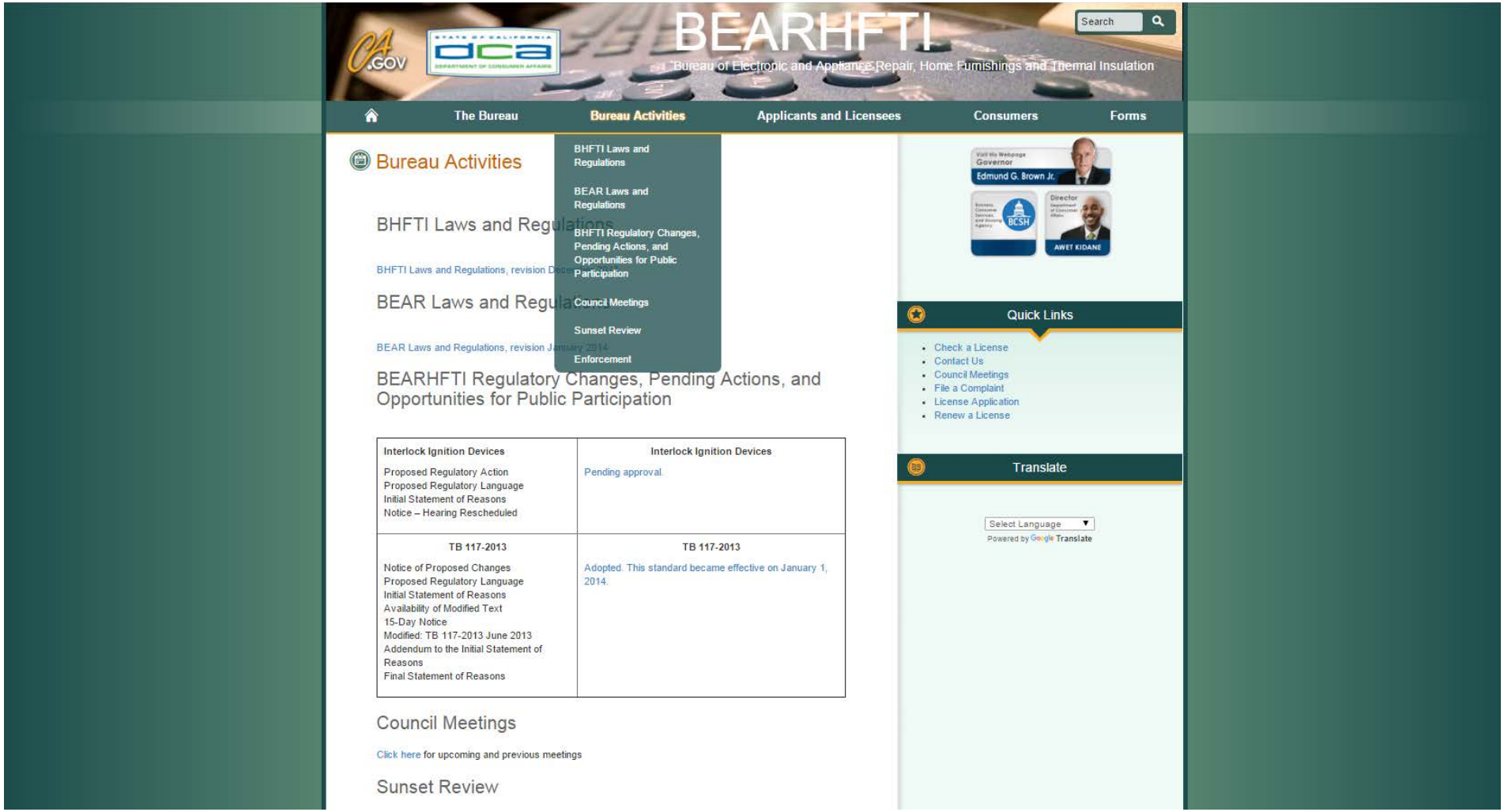
BEARHFTI
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BHFTI Laws and Regulations
BEAR Laws and Regulations
BHFTI Regulatory Changes, Pending Actions, and Opportunities for Public Participation
Council Meetings
Sunset Review
Enforcement
Bureau Activities
BHFTI Laws and Regulations
BEAR Laws and Regulations
BEARHFTI Regulatory Changes, Pending Actions, and Opportunities for Public Participation
Interlock Ignition Devices
Proposed Regulatory Action
Proposed Regulatory Language
Initial Statement of Reasons
Notice – Hearing Rescheduled
Interlock Ignition Devices
Pending approval.
TB 117-2013
Notice of Proposed Changes
Proposed Regulatory Language
Initial Statement of Reasons
Availability of Modified Text
15-Day Notice
Modified: TB 117-2013 June 2013
Addendum to the Initial Statement of Reasons
Final Statement of Reasons
TB 117-2013
Adopted. This standard became effective on January 1, 2014.
Council Meetings
Click here for upcoming and previous meetings
Sunset Review
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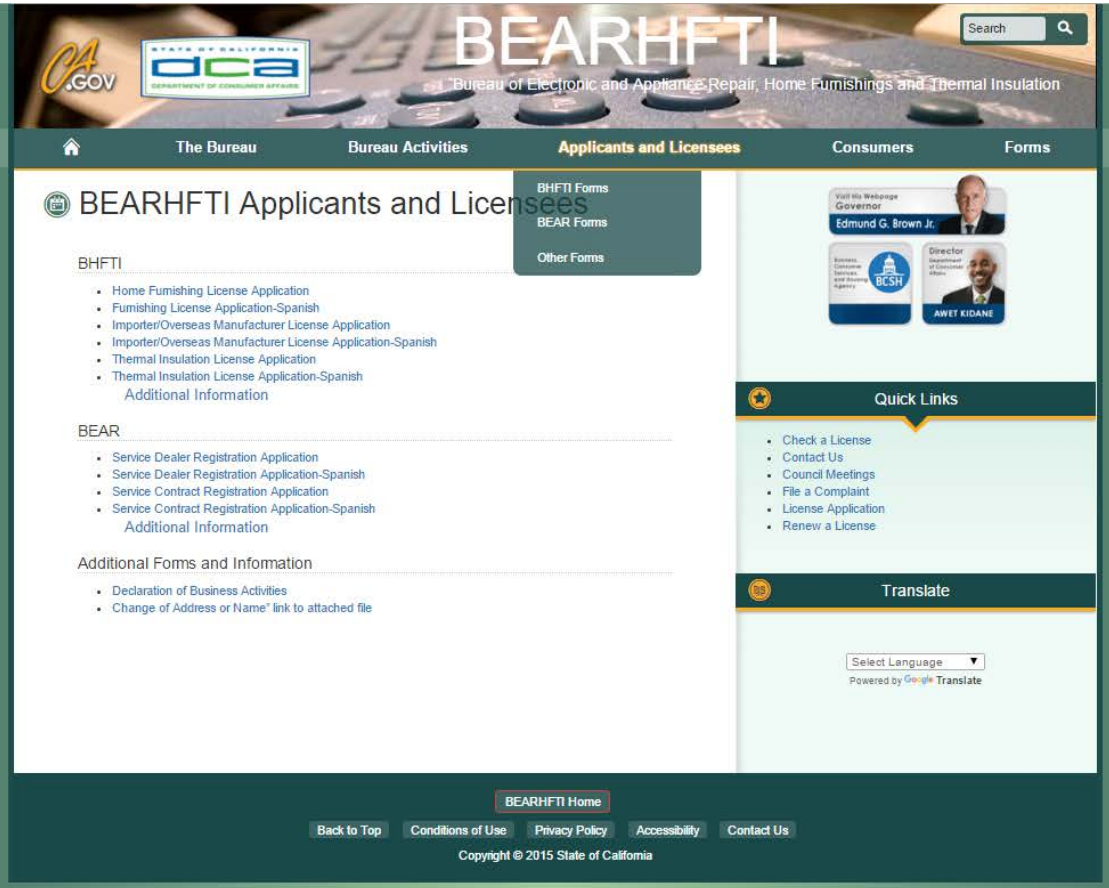
BEARHFTI
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BHFTI Forms
BEAR Forms
Other Forms
BEARHFTI Applicants and Licensees
BHFTI
Home Furnishing License Application
Furnishing License Application-Spanish
Importer/Overseas Manufacturer License Application
Importer/Overseas Manufacturer License Application-Spanish
Thermal Insulation License Application
Thermal Insulation License Application-Spanish
Additional Information
BEAR
Service Dealer Registration Application
Service Dealer Registration Application-Spanish
Service Contract Registration Application
Service Contract Registration Application-Spanish
Additional Information
Additional Forms and Information
Declaration of Business Activities
Change of Address or Name" link to attached file
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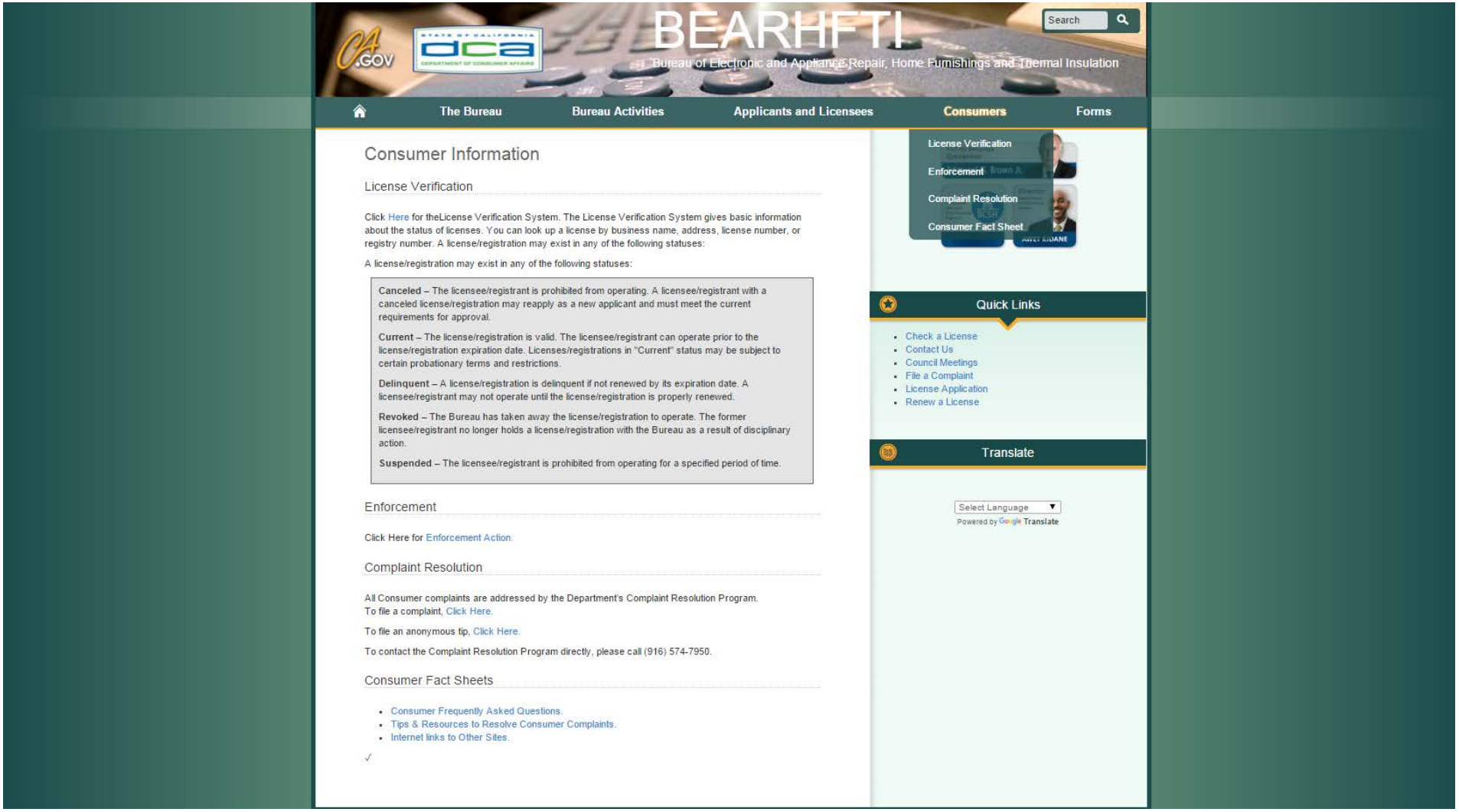
BEARHFTI
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Consumer Information
License Verification
Click Here for theLicense Verification System. The License Verification System gives basic information about the status of licenses. You can look up a license by business name, address, license number, or registry number. A license/registration may exist in any of the following statuses:
A license/registration may exist in any of the following statuses:
Canceled – The licensee/registrant is prohibited from operating. A licensee/registrant with a canceled license/registration may reapply as a new applicant and must meet the current requirements for approval.
Current – The license/registration is valid. The licensee/registrant can operate prior to the license/registration expiration date. Licenses/registrations in "Current" status may be subject to certain probationary terms and restrictions.
Delinquent – A license/registration is delinquent if not renewed by its expiration date. A licensee/registrant may not operate until the license/registration is properly renewed.
Revoked – The Bureau has taken away the license/registration to operate. The former licensee/registrant no longer holds a license/registration with the Bureau as a result of disciplinary action.
Suspended – The licensee/registrant is prohibited from operating for a specified period of time.
Enforcement
Click Here for Enforcement Action.
Complaint Resolution
All Consumer complaints are addressed by the Department's Complaint Resolution Program.
To file a complaint, Click Here.
To file an anonymous tip, Click Here.
To contact the Complaint Resolution Program directly, please call (916) 574-7950.
Consumer Fact Sheets
Consumer Frequently Asked Questions.
Tips & Resources to Resolve Consumer Complaints.
Internet links to Other Sites.
License Verification
Enforcement
Complaint Resolution
Consumer Fact Sheet
Quick Links
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Contact Us
Council Meetings
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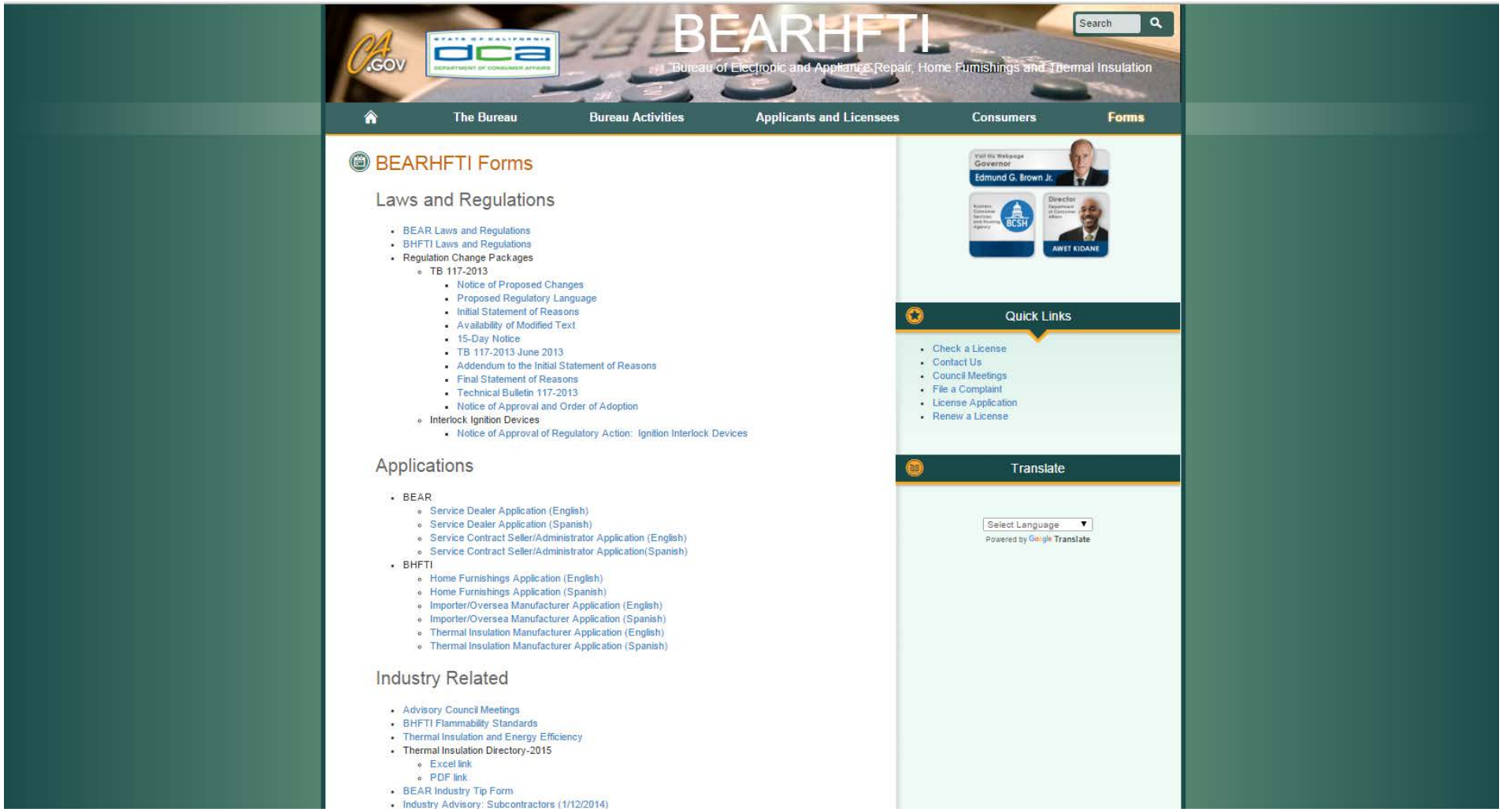
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BHFTI Laws and Regulations
Regulation Change Packages
TB 117-2013
Notice of Proposed Changes
Proposed Regulatory Language
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TB 117-2013 June 2013
Addendum to the Initial Statement of Reasons
Final Statement of Reasons
Technical Bulletin 117-2013
Notice of Approval and Order of Adoption
Interlock Ignition Devices
Notice of Approval of Regulatory Action: Ignition Interlock Devices
Applications
BEAR
Service Dealer Application (English)
Service Dealer Application (Spanish)
Service Contract Seller/Administrator Application (English)
Service Contract Seller/Administrator Application(Spanish)
BHFTI
Home Furnishings Application (English)
Home Furnishings Application (Spanish)
Importer/Oversea Manufacturer Application (English)
Importer/Oversea Manufacturer Application (Spanish)
Thermal Insulation Manufacturer Application (English)
Thermal Insulation Manufacturer Application (Spanish)
Industry Related
Advisory Council Meetings
BHFTI Flammability Standards
Thermal Insulation and Energy Efficiency
Thermal Insulation Directory-2015
Excel link
PDF link
BEAR Industry Tip Form
Industry Advisory: Subcontractors (1/12/2014)
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VIDEOS, PUBLICATIONS, AND SOCIAL MEDIA

In order to reach a wide audience of consumers as well as small businesses regulated by the Bureau, the Bureau is developing two “YouTube” videos for release in the Spring/Summer of 2016. One video will inform audiences of labeling and disclosure requirements while the other video will explain consumers’ rights and service dealer requirements when repairing appliances and electronics. These videos will also be translated into several languages, including Spanish, Mandarin, Russian, and Vietnamese.

Once complete, these videos will be uploaded to the web with links provided on the Bureau’s website, the Department of Consumer Affairs’ Facebook page, as well as be released to media contacts and on numerous Twitter accounts. In addition, the Department’s Field Unit staff, who conduct field visits throughout the State of California, can reference these videos when discussing compliance issues with the regulated industry.

In addition, the Bureau is preparing several publications to provide licensees and consumers during field visits as well as community events. These publications will address concerns our inspectors have noted in the field, complaints filed with the Department of Consumer Affairs, as well as the feedback provided by the Market Assessment.

Finally, the Bureau is also preparing several cards to identify dedicated phone numbers where consumers or licensees can call to seek assistance in Spanish or Mandarin.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Compliance Inspection Visits

Each year the Bureau's field staff conduct approximately 10,000 visits to licensees throughout the state of California. In 2016, the Bureau plans to break these field inspections into two types: announced visits and unannounced visits. Announced visits will entail roughly 15 percent of field visits and are designed to provide small businesses with a compliance checklist prior to the Bureau's scheduled visit.

Other Department of Consumer Affairs licensing programs have seen a great amount of success in long-term compliance with this type of pre-planned visits. The Bureau will plan follow up unannounced visits on these licensees to ensure compliance is still being maintained.

Community Events

In addition to field visits, the Bureau plans to set up booths at numerous community events throughout the state to inform consumers of their rights. Events the Bureau plans to attend include swap meets, trade shows, and county fairs. The Bureau will also host consumer awareness events, which have proven to be informative to many community groups, such as senior communities in the past.

MEASURING PERFORMANCE AND NEXT STEPS

Throughout 2016, the Bureau will be monitoring “web hits” to its website and videos, tracking fluctuations in complaints, and receiving feedback from the industries it regulates. Based on this data it will make adjustments where appropriate. Finally, in 2017, the Bureau will perform another survey of consumers to gauge how awareness has improved or can further be improved.

Feedback from stakeholders is welcome throughout this process.

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BUREAU OF ELECTRONIC & APPLIANCE REPAIR, HOME FURNISHINGS & THERMAL INSULATION

2016 BEARHFTI Outreach Objectives

Focus	Issue	Development	Implementation
Web Development	Existing 3 websites need to be merged into one cohesive, easy to navigate Webpage. Files on the legacy sites need updating, weed out the obsolete, and archive the historical. Integrate multiple languages, new brochures, language lines, and videos. Simplify and expand search capabilities for topics.	Department OIS to develop a new site, essentially a three phase process. Phase 1 of the development completed with initial site, Phase 2 to have Website live within 2 months (April 4). Anticipate issues during the Phase 2 stage, however will work out the glitches and updates.	Phase 1: Initial by February 2016 with function tests completed, Phase 2: Turning on the site by April 4. Phase 3 to review/finalize majority, if not all, legacy site information to the new Website – fully populated with information and refinements.
Video Productions	Needing more information on our new Website which can be found in other areas (YouTube, Facebook, etc.) Videos expanding information outreach to embellish upon certain areas of Labeling, Licensing, Upholsterers, Receipting and others. Multiple languages are needed, especially Spanish and Mandarin, ĂŶĚ includĞ Ukraine, Russian and Vietnamese.	Department of Public Affairs to develop at no cost four 3 to 4 minute videos that can be used in various media outlets. Storyboard script developed, B-Roll shot and still graphics. Basic talk show design with a standard host to open and close, subject matter expert introduced topic discussion and Q&A at the end. Referral information at the end to Web links and other sites.	Video 1 (Labels) & 2 (Licensing): April 2016, which coincides with the new Website debut. <Spanish & Mandarin> Video 3 (Upholsterers) & 4 (Receipting): May 2016 <Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian, and Mandarin>

Focus	Issue	Development	Implementation
Literature Material	Need to develop Labels, Licensing, Upholstery, and Sales Receipting literature to disseminate and to place on our new site. All 4 areas have been identified through Field Operations and feedback from calls areas needing expansion. Written material to be available off our new site for further outreach and information. Five identified languages need to have this printed material developed.	Department Publications Unit to draft publications based off our design and information submitted. Pictures and narrative development, first draft of Brochure 1 submitted for design setting. These brochures are to be basic three-fold 8 1/2 x 11 layouts, full color based off the department's in-house printing capabilities.	Brochure 1: Labels/Regulations to be completed March 2016 Brochure2: Licensing April 2016 integrate with new Website debut Brochure 3: Upholsterers May/June 2016 Brochure 4: Receipting July 2016
Public Affairs	Lack public attention on topics, needing to be proactive with pitching articles to the media, developing informative pieces for publication and trade magazines.	First article developed "What does the new 1019 label law mean?" Hoping to use an industry publication to publish the short, but informative topic. Another topic pitched to the media is on bed bugs, mattress sanitization, what to watch for and ways to help to avoid the critters.	Article 1: What's 1019? to be developed in March 2016. Media Topic: Sanitization, April 2016.
Public Event Participation	Need to be more actively participating in public events, community groups, cultural fairs, and with seniors in general.	In 2015 we have participated in about 5 large community events. They have been extremely successful both in community and other agency networking.	Continue to build on our table booth design and literature. Show our videos, be accessible at the following: E3 Electronics Show, Asian Cultural Heritage Day, Women's Conference, Consumer Electronics Show, OC Night, numerous street festivals and home expos.

Focus	Issue	Development	Implementation
Industry Relations	Bureau seems to be disconnected from industry, requiring a better connectivity and understanding of the issues and complications. Understandably, over the years the department has focused on the consumer side; however the industry has been left out in many of the discussions and developments.	The brochures and videos being developed are a dual audience benefit. More importantly, staff are continuing to be proactive with enforcement, educating and providing weekly feedback to the leads so we can quickly react. More meet & greets with the industry by HQ leads to better understand needs.	Both Northern and Southern meet & greets are scheduled. The Chief and Deputy Chief will visit small to large retailers, manufacturers and service licensees to address the issues. Attend and participate in more symposiums and industry conferences to listen, gather and respond to the issues.
Networking	The need to utilize other state and local government agencies to disseminate information about the Department and Bureau.	Build alliances with Board of Equalization, Franchise Tax Board, local agencies, as well as recycling to maximize the efforts both in outreach and enforcement.	BOE and FTB contacts have been made and materials shared. Brochures and handouts will be shared at HQ, Field Operations, and community outreach events.
Survey/Review	How do you gather and determine what is the most effective way to deliver an outreach campaign?	Based off phone calls, enforcement, investigations, complaints filed, we determined the four basic areas to hit first with brochures and videos. The initial languages identified were from surveying field personnel and talking with licensees and unlicensed businesses, understanding the confusions and areas needing further clarification.	Initially, create an inexpensive, department sponsored outreach plan to immediately address the most obvious issues. Track successes and refine areas needing more attention, gather information and concerns for a better analysis to be done in 2017. Private consultant considered for the evaluation to prepare us for another outreach plan the following year.