

Consumer Product Safety Alert

FROM THE U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20207

Escalator Safety

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) wants you and your family to be safe when riding escalators. The CPSC estimates that there are 6,000 hospital emergency room-treated injuries associated with escalators each year. Seventy-five percent of these injuries are due to falls, another 20 percent occur when hands, feet or shoes are trapped in escalators.

Here are some steps you can take to help prevent escalator injuries, especially injuries to young children:

- Be aware that loose shoe laces, drawstrings, scarves, and mittens can get trapped in escalators. In the past year, CPSC reached an agreement with a number of children's clothing manufacturers to remove drawstrings from the necks and hoods of children's garments. If your child's clothing still has drawstrings, remove them.
- Always hold children's hands on escalators and do not permit children to sit or play on the steps.
- Do not bring children onto escalators in strollers, walkers, or carts.
- Always face forward and hold the handrail.
- Avoid the edges of steps where entrapment can occur.
- Learn where the emergency shutoff buttons are in case you need to stop the escalator.

The American Society of Mechanical Engineers/American National Standards Institute Escalator Committee set a voluntary standard for escalators. The standard requires:

- That the emergency shutoff buttons be at the top and bottom of each escalator. The button should be on the right side of the escalator when facing the stairs.
- That sidewalls be made of low-friction material so soft-soled shoes cannot get caught easily.
- That "skirt obstruction devices" (which sense the presence of a foreign object and automatically shut off the escalator) be at the top and bottom of the escalator.
- That side clearance at the edges of steps be no more than 3/16 inch.
- That warning signs be placed on escalators reminding parents to hold children's hands and face forward.
- That each step have painted foot prints or brightly colored borders.

