



U.S. Consumer
Product Safety
Commission

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CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY REVIEW

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HOME SAFETY

Gas and Fuel-Burning Appliances

As the home heating season begins, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) urges all consumers to have their gas and other fuel-burning appliances inspected by a professionally-trained technician. This annual check can help prevent fires, explosions, and carbon monoxide poisoning.

Flexible Connectors

The CPSC recently issued an announcement to both consumers and utility companies about the dangers of older flexible gas connectors that connect home appliances to gas supply pipes. These gas connectors are corrugated tubes made of uncoated brass. They may crack or break, resulting in a gas leak, fire, or explosion.

Homes built and appliances installed within the past 15 years should not be at risk. But, CPSC is concerned that many uncoated brass flexible gas connectors may still be in people's homes. As these connectors age, they become more dangerous. All uncoated flexible brass connectors should be replaced.

Only a professional should inspect the connectors, which are most often used with gas ranges, ovens, and clothes dryers. Even slightly moving an older appliance to clean or check it for the presence of an uncoated brass connector can cause the connector to fail. This can allow gas to leak, which can lead to an explosion and fire.

Hazards

Since 1980, brass connectors have been associated with at least 212 incidents, resulting in 38 deaths and 63 injuries.^{1,2} The following cases illustrate the dangers.

- A 78 year-old male was killed and his 89 year-old wife seriously injured when a ruptured gas connector allowed gas to escape into the victims' home. Turning on a light switch triggered an explosion and fire.
- A 30 year-old woman was injured in an explosion in her home. Vapors from a broken flexible connector, attached to a gas stove, were ignited by the furnace's pilot light.
- A 70 year-old female attempted to re-light the pilot light in her natural gas range. The flexible gas connector had broken, causing a leak and an explosion. The victim suffered burns to over 50% of her body.

Background

Flexible connectors are necessary when it is difficult to use a rigid pipe to attach an appliance to a home's gas supply pipe. Uncoated brass flexible connectors were first used in the late 1950s and early 1960s. These connectors had a brass end fitting that was soldered onto a corrugated brass tube. Over time, the solder

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could fail, causing a leak between the end fitting and the tube. In addition, the corrugated brass tube itself could corrode and crack, particularly when exposed to ammonia and other household cleaners.

Since the late 1970s, connectors have been manufactured in one piece to eliminate solder failures. To prevent corrosion, connectors are currently manufactured with plastic-coated brass or stainless steel.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

The approach of the winter home heating season is also the time when people are most at risk of death or injury from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. Most non-fire, consumer product-related CO poisoning deaths not related to motor vehicles are associated with heating systems. These heating systems may be fueled by such substances as natural or liquid propane gas, oil, wood, or coal.

CO is a colorless and odorless poisonous gas that results from the incomplete combustion of fuels. Any fuel-burning appliance can be a source of potentially dangerous CO levels. Some consumer appliances, such as wood stoves, oil boilers, and kerosene heaters, produce an irritating smoke that can alert the victim to a potentially hazardous situation.

Unfortunately, consumers do not have this warning with appliances that burn natural and liquid propane gas. When malfunctioning or not vented properly, these gas appliances may emit potentially lethal amounts of CO without any irritating fumes. Other products, such as charcoal briquettes and pressed woodchip logs, produce relatively smokeless fires, even at times of inefficient combustion. Victims receive no obvious sensory warning that high CO levels are present.

The Annual Home Heating Inspection

CPSC recommends that consumers get all fuel-burning appliances inspected each year by qualified professionals. When these appliances operate correctly and efficiently, consumers may maximize home safety and reduce fuel costs.

If a home is more than about 15 years old, an inspection of flexible gas connectors should be done at the same time. For more information about these connectors, call CPSC's toll-free hotline at 800-638-2772 or visit its web site at www.cpsc.gov.

In addition, consumers should install CO detectors near sleeping areas in their homes. Look for the label on the CO detector or its packaging to make sure the detector meets the requirements of either the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) 2034 standard or the International Approval Services (IAS) 6-96 standard.

Some symptoms of CO poisoning may mimic common illnesses, such as influenza or colds. Because of this, many victims do not seek medical attention or, if they do, may be misdiagnosed. Carbon monoxide victims entering emergency rooms typically complain of fatigue, headache, nausea, dizziness, shortness of breath, chest pain, confusion, and other symptoms.

CO Injury Data

Heating systems were involved in most (177) of the estimated 223 non-fire CO poisoning deaths associated with consumer products, excluding motor vehicles, during 1994 (the latest year of available data on deaths).³ In many incidents, limited information was available about the type of fuel used. Among the heating system fuel types identified, liquid propane and natural gas were associated with the highest number of deaths.

In 1996, approximately 15,400 people were treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms for suspected non-fire CO poisoning (Figure 1).⁴ Heating systems, primarily furnaces and heaters, contributed to the majority (9,300) of these incidents. Where information about the heating system was available,

Heating Systems	9,300
Gas/LP Heating	3,300
Kerosene/Oil Heating	600
Coal/Wood Heating	400
Heating Systems Unknown	5,000
Gas Ranges/Ovens	900
Grills	600
Charcoal Grills	300
Other Grills	300
Portable Generators & Pumps	700
Fuel-Powered Tools	500
Gas Water Heaters	100
Gas Clothes Dryers	400
No Product Specified	2,800

Figure 1

gas or liquid propane heating appliances were identified as having contributed to more than one-third of the heating system incidents.

Gas ranges and ovens also contributed to additional CO poisoning incidents. In these incidents, the gas ranges and ovens were often misused for heating purposes.

— Donald Switzer, Directorate for Engineering Sciences, and Kimberly Ault, M.S., and Ronald Monticone, M.S., Directorate for Epidemiology and Health Sciences

References

1. CPSC. In-depth Investigation File, Injury or Potential Injury File, Death Certificate File; U.S. Fire Administration, National Fire Incident Reporting System.
2. CPSC. National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS). NEISS is a statistical sample of approximately 6,000 hospitals nationwide that have emergency departments. Each day NEISS hospitals report to CPSC all emergency room-treated injuries associated with consumer products and related activities.
3. CPSC. Death Certificate File; National Center for Health Statistics Mortality File.
4. CPSC. National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS).

Halogen Lamps

To address fire deaths associated with halogen torchiere floor lamps, CPSC negotiated the largest recall/repair corrective action program in its history. CPSC staff also is working with Underwriters Laboratories (UL) to strengthen UL's safety standard for these lamps.

Since 1992, there have been at least 189 fires and 11 deaths involving halogen torchiere floor lamps. These free-standing lamps have a shallow bowl-shaped light fixture mounted on top of a six-foot pole and illuminated by a tubular halogen bulb (Figure 2). The tubular halogen bulbs operate at much higher temperatures than regular bulbs. Because of this, flammable materials, such as curtains or clothing, that come in contact with the bulb can catch on fire.

Preventing Fires

To safeguard against fires with halogen torchiere lamps, a glass or wire guard over the glass bulb shield can help prevent flammable materials from touching the bulb. At CPSC staff's urging, UL issued a revised performance standard that applies to halogen torchiere floor lamps manufactured after February 5, 1997. Halogen torchiere floor lamps meeting the revised UL standard are now equipped with this guard.

About 40 million lamps without the protective guards are already, however, in consumers' homes. To address this potential fire hazard, CPSC and the halogen lamp industry cooperatively developed a program for in-home consumer repair of the lamp. The repair consists of consumers installing a wire guard over the glass bulb shield to make it harder for flammable materials to touch the bulb.

Through a cooperative effort with retail stores, the halogen lamp industry is making available to consumers as many free wire guards as needed. Consumers can receive a free wire guard and instructions from: Ames, B.J.'s Wholesale Club, Hechingers/Home Quarters, Home Base, Home Depot, Ikea, Kmart, Lowes, Montgomery Ward, Office Depot, Target, and Walmart. Consumers should not return lamps to the retail stores. Free safety guards for these lamps also can be obtained by calling 1-800-523-5702 x592.

— *Renae Rauchschalbe, Office of Compliance*



Figure 2

Halogen Lamp Safety for Consumers

- Make sure your halogen torchiere floor lamp has a guard over its glass bulb shield. In addition, follow these tips to help ensure safety.
- Only use a halogen bulb of 300 watts or less in the lamp.
- Never place the lamp near curtains or other cloth window treatments.
- Never drape clothes over the lamp.
- Keep the lamp away from bedding.
- Turn off the lamp when you leave a room or are not at home.
- To reduce tipovers, keep children and pets away from the lamp.

Fire Safety for Kids

Children playing with fire are a major cause of fire-related deaths for youngsters. This year, CPSC will be evaluating its cigarette lighter standard, which requires disposable and novelty lighters to be child-resistant. Information on fires caused by children playing with lighters will be collected over a one-year period. A report of the study is planned for the following year.

In addition, to help young children deal with and prevent fires, CPSC staff recently provided technical assistance for a 15-minute video ("Be Cool About Fire Safety") and a Deputy Fire Marshal kit. The new materials, for children ages 4 to 8, include a coloring book, pencils, parents' guide, and poster.

CPSC staff worked on these materials with the National Consumers League, Advertising Council, U.S. Fire Administration, Allstate Insurance, General Federation of Women's Clubs, American Association of School Administrators, International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National PTA, and National Safety Council.

For a free catalog of fire safety materials, contact: For a Safer America Special Projects Office, 1 Prospect Street, Amsterdam, New York 12010 at 518-842-4388 (fax: 800-995-5121).

— *Linda E. Smith, Directorate for Epidemiology and Health Sciences, and James F. Hoebel, Directorate for Engineering Sciences*

Improving Playgrounds

Each year, more than 200,000 children, on average, are treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms for playground equipment-related injuries.¹ About 70% of the injuries are associated with public playground equipment.

Updated Guidelines

As part of its effort to promote playground safety, CPSC recently updated its *Handbook for Public Playground Safety*. The handbook contains CPSC's safety guidelines for designing, constructing, operating, and maintaining public playgrounds.

The latest edition of the *Handbook* includes revised or additional information about protective surfacing material, use zones, lead paint on playground equipment, and clothing entanglement on equipment.

Since 1981, CPSC has circulated its safety guidelines for public playgrounds. While these guidelines are not mandatory standards, California, Texas, and Michigan have passed bills that require new playgrounds to conform to the guidelines. North Carolina requires playgrounds in child care facilities to conform to CPSC's guidelines.

Injury Data

Most injuries associated with playgrounds (about 75%) result from falls. Other hazards include impact with moving equipment, running or bumping into stationary equipment, and contact with such hazards as protrusions, pinch points, sharp edges, and hot surfaces.

About one-third (33%) of all playground-related injuries are fractures. The arm/hand (42%) and head/face (35%) areas are most often involved. Males and females are represented in approximately equal proportions.

An annual average of 15 children, 40% under age 6, are reported to have died from playground-related injuries. Fatal injuries involved entanglement in ropes tied to or caught on equipment, falls, impact from equipment tipovers or structural failure, entanglement of clothing or similar items on equipment, impact with moving swings, and head entrapment.

Head injuries are involved in most fall-related deaths. Almost all who die in swing impact injuries are very young children.

— John Preston, Directorate for Engineering Sciences, and Deborah Tinsworth, Directorate for Epidemiology and Health Sciences

Public Playground Safety Checklist

Parents and community groups may want to use the following checklist to help ensure safety on their local playgrounds.

1. Make sure **surfaces** around playground equipment have at least 12 inches of wood chips, mulch, sand, or pea gravel, or are mats made of safety-tested rubber or rubber-like materials.
2. Check that protective **surfacing extends** at least 6 feet in all directions from play equipment. For swings, be sure surfacing extends, in back and front, twice the height of the suspending bar.
3. Make sure play structures more than 30 inches high are **spaced** at least 9 feet apart.
4. Check for dangerous hardware, like open "S" hooks or protruding bolt ends.
5. Make sure **spaces** that could trap children, such as openings in guardrails or between ladder rungs, measure less than 3.5 inches or more than 9 inches.
6. Check for **sharp points** or **edges** in equipment.
7. Look out for **tripping hazards**, like exposed concrete footings, tree stumps, and rocks.
8. Make sure elevated surfaces, like platforms and ramps, have **guardrails** to prevent falls.
9. **Check playgrounds regularly** to see that equipment and surfacing are in good condition.
10. **Carefully supervise children** on playgrounds to make sure they're safe.

This checklist was recently released nationwide, as part of a joint project between CPSC and KaBOOM!, a national nonprofit organization committed to building safe playgrounds. For additional copies, write: Playground Checklist, CPSC, Washington, DC 20207; call CPSC's toll-free hotline at 1-800-638-2772; or visit CPSC's web site at www.cpsc.gov.

Reference

1. CPSC. National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS).

For More Information

To receive CPSC's recently revised *Handbook for Public Playground Safety*, with more technical information on playground safety, write: Playground Handbook, CPSC, Washington, DC 20207 or visit CPSC's web site at <http://www.cpsc.gov>.

NEISS Data Highlights — Calendar Year 1996

CPSC's National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS) collects current injury data associated with 15,000 categories of consumer products from hospital emergency departments across the country. Consisting of a national probability sample of hospitals of differing sizes and locations, NEISS provides national estimates of the number and severity of consumer product-related injuries. The 1996 NEISS estimates have been produced from the sample of 91 hospitals used since 1991. For 1997, the NEISS estimates will be produced from an updated sample that includes 101 hospitals, including children's hospitals. Information from NEISS is available to the public through CPSC's National Injury Information Clearinghouse (phone: 301-504-0424). For information about the NEISS system, contact Art McDonald (phone: 301-504-0539 (x1249)/ e-mail: amcdonal@cpsc.gov).

Product Groupings	Estimated Number of Cases*	CV*	Number of Cases*	Estimated Number of Product-Related Injuries* per 100,000 Population in the United States and Territories that were treated in Hospital Emergency Departments									
				Age						Sex		Disposition	
				All Ages	00-04	05-14	15-24	25-64	65+	Male	Female	Treated & Rel.	Hosp. & DOA
Child Nursery Equipment													
All Nursery Equipment	90,450	.08	2,461	34.1	400.9	9.7	7.1	4.3	2.4	34.2	34.0	33.0	1.0
Toys													
All Toys	137,566	.07	3,451	51.9	339.2	112.9	27.4	12.4	5.1	66.4	37.9	50.7	1.1
Sports & Recreational Equipment													
ATV's, Mopeds, Minibikes, etc.	126,083	.09	2,413	47.5	18.8	109.1	106.5	29.0	6.3	78.1	18.2	43.0	4.5
Amusement Attractions (incl. Rides)	16,348	.12	370	6.2	8.3	17.9	7.2	3.8	0.1	6.2	6.1	6.0	0.1
Barbecue Grills, Stoves, Equipment	15,355	.10	370	5.8	17.2	7.0	5.3	5.0	1.7	7.0	4.6	5.4	0.4
Baseball, Softball	351,908	.07	8,323	132.7	49.3	357.0	251.2	82.1	3.9	189.0	78.6	130.5	2.1
Basketball	653,676	.06	16,725	246.4	13.5	517.1	872.4	98.8	1.6	413.7	86.1	244.0	2.2
Beach, Picnic, Camping Equipment	19,066	.10	413	7.2	19.9	9.2	6.1	5.8	4.5	7.5	6.9	6.9	0.2
Bicycles & Accessories	566,085	.08	14,224	213.4	207.9	821.5	226.0	85.4	32.4	307.1	123.5	203.2	10.0
Exercise, Exercise Equipment	173,825	.10	4,876	65.5	54.7	73.6	127.7	58.6	24.2	79.6	52.0	63.5	1.9
Football	363,921	.07	8,680	137.2	6.5	431.7	442.4	26.5	0.4	266.1	13.5	133.9	3.1
Hockey	77,930	.14	2,209	29.4	7.1	72.5	87.1	12.5	0.0	50.4	9.2	29.0	0.4
Horseback Riding	60,208	.12	1,286	22.7	6.2	30.3	34.6	24.8	2.2	21.0	24.4	20.4	2.2
In-line Skating	102,820	.10	2,653	38.8	2.4	151.2	63.2	15.4	0.5	45.4	32.4	37.2	1.5
Lacrosse, Rugby, Misc. Ball Games	86,144	.10	2,230	32.5	20.9	108.2	70.9	10.6	1.0	46.0	19.5	31.8	0.6
Nonpowder Guns, BB's, Pellets	27,499	.09	575	10.4	4.2	40.1	21.0	2.6	0.3	18.1	2.9	9.7	0.6
Playground Equipment	237,441	.07	5,773	89.5	346.8	412.4	14.5	4.3	2.5	98.8	80.6	85.7	3.6
Racquet Sports	35,954	.12	949	13.6	2.9	12.5	23.1	14.0	9.0	18.0	9.3	13.4	0.1
Skateboards	35,751	.09	904	13.5	2.5	42.8	46.7	1.4	0.0	24.3	3.1	13.1	0.4
Skating (excl. In-line)	111,550	.10	2,829	42.0	16.8	166.4	44.9	19.5	3.8	34.8	49.0	40.8	1.3
Snowmobiles	14,741	.23	211	5.6	0.1	3.4	11.0	6.6	1.1	9.1	2.1	4.9	0.6
Snowskiing, Snowboarding	-	-	1,973	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soccer	156,681	.10	4,147	59.1	2.5	178.6	172.4	18.2	0.5	79.0	40.0	58.0	0.9
Swimming, Pools, Equipment	107,861	.12	2,528	40.7	66.9	120.3	58.1	18.1	8.0	48.6	33.1	39.0	1.6
Toboggans, Sleds, Snow Discs, etc.	39,774	.14	891	15.0	8.3	53.6	22.9	6.7	0.2	19.3	10.9	14.2	0.8
Track & Field Activities, Equipment	15,624	.11	345	5.9	0.1	18.4	22.4	0.3	0.1	6.0	5.8	5.7	0.1
Trampolines	83,399	.12	1,728	31.4	43.9	144.2	36.6	4.5	0.0	31.0	31.8	30.4	1.0
Volleyball	74,677	.08	1,737	28.1	1.1	38.2	88.2	20.1	0.5	28.0	28.3	27.9	0.2
Water Skiing, Tubing, Surfing	16,935	.18	340	6.4	0.1	4.1	16.6	6.8	0.0	10.3	2.6	6.2	0.2

* See page 7 for explanation.

NEISS Data Highlights — Calendar Year 1996 cont.

Product Groupings	Estimated Number of Cases*	CV*	Number of Cases*	Estimated Number of Product-Related Injuries* per 100,000 Population in the United States and Territories that were treated in Hospital Emergency Departments									
				Age						Sex		Disposition	
				All Ages	00-04	05-14	15-24	25-64	65+	Male	Female	Treated & Rel.	Hosp. & DOA
Home Communications & Entertainment													
Sound Recording Equipment	38,881	.08	960	14.7	39.6	14.9	22.3	8.5	17.2	14.3	14.9	13.9	0.7
Television Sets & Stands	41,145	.08	1,021	15.5	89.7	13.8	10.5	7.7	12.2	16.7	14.4	15.1	0.4
Personal Use Items													
Cigarettes, Lighters, Fuel	17,600	.11	428	6.6	27.7	6.4	9.2	4.1	2.5	8.1	5.3	5.9	0.7
Clothing	133,112	.09	3,231	50.2	49.5	69.8	55.9	41.5	57.4	50.4	49.9	47.0	3.1
Drug Poisonings to Children under 5	56,940	.12	1,413	21.5	295.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	24.2	18.8	18.8	2.7
Grooming Devices	28,767	.08	748	10.8	60.5	8.6	11.7	6.1	3.4	8.1	13.5	10.7	0.1
Protection Devices	11,138	.16	233	4.2	9.8	7.3	4.6	3.2	1.0	5.8	2.7	4.2	0.0
Razors, Shavers, Razor Blades	40,242	.08	987	15.2	17.8	11.9	27.2	14.2	8.4	20.7	9.9	15.0	0.2
Household Containers													
Cans, Other Containers	233,681	.07	5,938	88.1	193.1	88.4	104.5	77.2	54.6	88.4	87.8	86.3	1.7
Glass Bottles, Jars	47,642	.08	1,114	18.0	25.8	25.4	32.2	13.8	6.9	20.5	15.5	17.7	0.2
Yard & Garden Equipment													
Chain Saws	35,132	.09	657	13.2	0.0	1.6	16.6	18.1	10.8	25.9	1.2	12.8	0.5
Hand Garden Tools	42,809	.09	972	16.1	15.0	19.4	11.1	16.6	16.7	21.7	10.8	15.4	0.7
Hatchets, Axes	14,332	.12	275	5.4	0.9	5.5	6.4	6.7	1.5	9.6	1.3	5.3	0.1
Lawn & Garden Equipment	53,395	.08	1,233	20.1	17.7	18.4	12.7	20.9	28.5	25.1	15.4	19.3	0.8
Lawn Mowers	72,487	.09	1,478	27.3	12.7	12.3	21.1	33.2	35.4	43.9	11.4	25.8	1.5
Other Power Lawn Equipment	22,611	.12	427	8.5	3.3	5.7	5.9	9.9	11.8	14.7	2.4	7.7	0.8
Trimmers, Small Power Garden Tools	12,591	.10	277	4.7	0.4	1.0	5.4	6.2	4.9	7.0	2.6	4.6	0.2
Home Workshop Equipment													
Hoists, Lifts, Jacks, etc.	14,838	.12	296	5.6	2.5	2.0	7.9	7.1	2.9	10.1	1.2	5.2	0.4
Power Home Tools (excl. Saws)	29,881	.09	566	11.3	1.6	2.1	11.8	15.9	7.9	21.3	1.6	11.2	0.1
Power Home Workshop Saws	84,188	.08	1,862	31.7	1.2	8.0	24.4	40.6	47.8	61.9	2.8	29.9	1.9
Welding, Soldering, Cutting Tools	19,246	.10	377	7.3	0.8	0.8	15.2	9.4	1.2	14.4	0.4	7.2	0.1
Wires, Cords, Not Specified	15,677	.11	317	5.9	1.7	6.1	6.3	6.0	7.2	7.9	4.0	5.7	0.2
Workshop Manual Tools	111,048	.07	2,400	41.9	20.3	23.3	47.3	54.7	17.0	73.8	11.2	41.4	0.4
Home Maintenance													
Cleaning Agents (excl. Soaps)	34,616	.09	852	13.0	67.1	7.9	11.1	9.7	4.0	10.9	15.1	12.6	0.5
Cleaning Equip., Non-caustic Detergents	27,966	.09	630	10.5	18.1	10.8	9.5	9.6	10.8	9.9	11.2	10.1	0.4
Paints, Solvents, Lubricants	16,179	.11	379	6.1	12.3	5.0	7.0	6.3	1.8	7.7	4.6	5.8	0.3
General Household Appliances													
Cooking Ranges, Ovens, etc.	48,045	.08	1,201	18.1	68.1	15.7	14.2	13.2	16.6	16.4	19.8	17.0	1.1
Irons, Clothes Steamers (not Toys)	16,143	.11	480	6.1	46.6	6.1	4.0	2.2	0.9	5.9	6.3	5.8	0.3
Refrigerators, Freezers	31,854	.08	742	12.0	14.6	8.6	11.8	12.0	14.7	12.8	11.2	11.6	0.4
Small Kitchen Appliances	36,082	.08	886	13.6	17.4	8.6	13.3	15.6	9.3	12.0	15.1	13.3	0.3
Washers, Dryers	18,707	.10	415	7.1	10.7	4.9	6.3	7.8	5.2	8.0	6.1	6.9	0.1

* See page 7 for explanation.

NEISS Data Highlights — Calendar Year 1996 cont.

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				Age						Sex		Disposition	
				All Ages	00-04	05-14	15-24	25-64	65+	Male	Female	Treated & Rel.	Hosp. & DOA
Heating, Cooling, Ventilation Equipment													
Air Conditioners	12,459	.11	301	4.7	2.6	5.3	3.9	5.4	3.2	7.0	2.5	4.6	0.1
Chimneys, Fireplaces	20,288	.15	504	7.6	72.2	6.1	2.0	1.5	3.5	9.9	5.5	7.6	0.1
Fans (excl. Stove Exhaust Fans)	16,543	.10	371	6.2	12.7	6.1	6.8	5.2	6.3	7.4	5.2	6.0	0.2
Furnaces	13,042	.25	257	4.9	9.1	8.9	2.6	4.2	3.5	4.4	5.4	4.6	0.3
Heating & Plumbing Pipes	38,312	.08	902	14.4	21.5	25.2	12.0	12.9	7.0	20.2	8.9	14.1	0.3
Heating Stoves, Space Heaters	29,492	.12	626	11.1	54.2	14.4	7.1	5.6	9.6	11.4	10.9	10.5	0.6
Radiators	14,106	.16	506	5.3	36.0	9.2	1.5	1.6	2.6	6.5	4.2	5.1	0.2
Home Furnishings & Fixtures													
Bathroom Structures & Fixtures	226,145	.07	5,490	85.2	204.7	57.5	50.9	61.9	179.9	79.1	91.1	79.1	6.0
Beds, Mattresses, Pillows	416,985	.07	10,675	157.2	667.6	198.8	79.5	48.6	343.1	153.1	161.1	144.4	12.6
Carpets, Rugs	123,775	.10	3,351	46.7	117.0	31.5	21.5	26.1	134.1	32.9	59.9	41.9	4.6
Chairs, Sofas, Sofa Beds	395,409	.07	9,754	149.1	634.0	150.5	72.2	73.0	262.3	132.7	164.7	139.4	9.4
Desks, Cabinets, Shelves, Racks	220,947	.07	5,510	83.3	302.6	115.1	55.9	50.7	84.0	83.1	83.4	81.7	1.5
Electric Fixtures, Lamps, Equipment	52,051	.07	1,302	19.6	44.5	26.8	20.3	14.8	16.3	23.0	16.4	18.9	0.7
Ladders, Stools	165,868	.07	3,773	62.5	30.3	20.3	27.5	79.4	97.6	92.2	34.0	56.9	5.5
Mirrors, Mirror Glass	22,135	.09	593	8.3	16.6	10.8	18.7	5.4	1.6	8.5	8.1	8.2	0.1
Misc. Household Covers, Fabrics	17,514	.09	417	6.6	6.0	3.0	5.8	5.7	15.5	3.9	9.2	6.1	0.5
Other Misc. Furniture & Accessories	60,578	.10	1,467	22.8	30.5	9.8	26.4	25.5	18.7	23.0	22.7	22.5	0.3
Tables, not elsewhere classified	308,793	.07	7,882	116.4	753.8	129.9	59.6	42.6	98.4	129.6	103.7	113.4	2.8
Home Structures & Construction Materials													
Cabinet/Door Hardware	19,763	.09	490	7.4	27.0	11.7	6.7	3.8	7.0	8.4	6.5	7.2	0.2
Fences	114,055	.06	2,778	43.0	45.9	106.2	59.1	27.1	16.8	65.0	21.9	41.8	1.1
Glass Doors, Windows, Panels	180,754	.07	4,412	68.1	99.1	97.0	131.4	48.4	30.0	83.8	53.1	65.8	2.3
Handrails, Railings, Banisters	39,299	.10	1,079	14.8	34.7	27.1	13.4	8.5	16.5	17.0	12.7	14.4	0.4
Non-glass Doors, Panels	334,522	.07	8,895	126.1	392.9	198.6	135.3	72.6	98.7	125.1	127.0	123.7	2.3
Outside Attached Structures & Materials	23,353	.10	488	8.8	5.6	7.0	8.6	10.3	6.8	14.8	3.1	8.2	0.6
Stairs, Ramps, Landings, Floors	1,972,553	.09	48,259	743.6	1,425.8	556.4	586.9	504.0	1,707.2	563.5	916.0	669.6	73.3
Window, Door Sills, Frames	53,101	.08	1,201	20.0	65.4	25.3	15.3	12.4	24.2	20.1	19.9	19.5	0.5
Miscellaneous Products													
Dollies, Carts	43,636	.08	1,100	16.4	114.7	14.1	5.6	7.4	11.4	17.9	15.1	16.0	0.4
Elevators, Other Lifts	15,261	.11	491	5.8	8.6	3.9	3.8	4.1	14.9	4.4	7.0	5.4	0.3
Gasoline, Diesel Fuels	15,634	.12	301	5.9	14.7	6.6	8.9	4.5	2.6	10.3	1.7	5.2	0.7

Source: National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS), U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

* **Estimated Number of Cases:** Since NEISS is a probability sample, each injury case has a statistical weight. National estimates of product-related injury incidents are derived by summing the statistical weights for the appropriate injury cases.

* **CV (Coefficient of Variation):** The CV, the standard error of the estimate divided by the estimate, is a measure of sampling variability (errors that occur by chance because observations are made only on a population sample).

* **Number of Cases:** This is the actual number of injury cases collected from the hospitals sampled. Since injury cases have different statistical weights, these "raw" numbers should not be used for comparative purposes.

* **Product-Related Injuries:** These are national estimates of the number of persons treated in U.S. hospital emergency departments with consumer product-related injuries during the given time period. The data system allows for reporting of up to two products for each person's injury. Therefore, a person's injury may be counted in two product groups.

MECAP NEWS

Medical Examiners and Coroners Alert Project and Emergency Physicians Reporting System

The MECAP-EPRS Project is designed to collect timely information on deaths and injuries involving consumer products. Please contact us whenever you encounter a death or situation that you believe should be considered during a safety evaluation of a product.

To report a case or ask for information about MECAP, please call our toll-free number, 1-800-638-8095, or our toll-free fax number, 1-800-809-0924, or send a message via Internet to AMCDONAL@CPSC.GOV.

*Indicates cases selected for CPSC follow-up investigations. Cases reported but not selected for follow-up also are important to CPSC. Every MECAP report is included in CPSC's injury data base and will be used to assess the hazards associated with consumer products.

During the months of April, May and June 1997, 585 cases were reported to CPSC. Included here are samples of cases to illustrate the type and nature of the reported incidents.

ASPHYXIATIONS/ SUFFOCATIONS

* A male, 8 months, was found with his head dangling between the bars of his crib. The bars had a 5-inch separation. The cause of death was positional asphyxia. (Robert Rossi for Ljubisa Dragovic, M.D., Medical Examiner, Oakland County, Pontiac, MI)

A male, 5 months, was found unresponsive by his mother in an adult twin bed. The victim's face was compressed between the mattress and the headboard. The child was transported to the hospital where he was pronounced dead. The cause of death was suffocation. (Frederick P. Hobin, M.D., District Medical Examiner, Fort Pierce, FL)

*A female, 8 months, was secured in an infant swing by a shoulder harness and crotch strap and then left unattended for 20 minutes. The victim tried to climb out of the swing and got her neck caught in the swing's harness. The victim was taken to the hospital, but died soon after arrival. The cause of death was asphyxia/strangulation. (Becky Shaw for Dean Sienko, M.D., Medical Examiner, Ingham County, Lansing, MI)

*A male, 11 months, and his brother, 2, climbed on a chest of drawers in their bedroom. Their mother, hearing a noise, ran into the bedroom to find both children trapped under the dresser. The younger victim died from traumatic asphyxia. The older child survived with injuries. (Mike Howell for Marta Coburn, M.D., District Medical Examiner, Naples, FL)

*A male, 2 months, was placed to sleep face down on a bean bag

chair. He was later found unresponsive. The cause of death was positional asphyxia. (Tom Drumstra for Justin Uku, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner, Erie County, Buffalo, NY)

*A male, 1, was left alone briefly by his mother at home. The mother returned to find the child entangled in a venetian blind cord, with the cord around the child's neck. The cause of death was anoxic encephalopathy. (Tonya Winkler for William Brown, Coroner, Sacramento County, Sacramento, CA)

*A male, 1, was playing on the floor with other children when he swallowed a small rubber balloon. The victim's parents called emergency medical services. The child was found unresponsive, with the balloon obstructing the child's airway. The cause of death was asphyxia. (Robert Amsburn for John Hunt, D.O., Deputy Medical Examiner, Kalamazoo County, Kalamazoo, MI)

A male, 1, fell down a flight of stairs with a plastic candy dispenser in his mouth. The force of the fall caused the candy dispenser to lodge in the child's throat. An attempt to remove the dispenser caused the dispenser to break, leaving a piece tightly lodged in his throat. This cut off the air supply to the victim. The cause of death was obstruction of airway. (James H. Moore for Stephen Radentz, M.D., Medical Examiner, Baltimore, MD)

DROWNINGS

A male, 2, and his family were visiting a friend's home. The adults were in the family room while the children were playing in an adjacent room. The victim exited an open back door and fell into a swimming pool. The victim was taken to the hospital, where he later died. The cause of death was hypoxic encephalopathy following resuscitation for near drowning. (Russell Vega, M.D., Medical Examiner, Hillsborough County, Tampa, FL)

*A female, 6 months, was left in a bathtub by her mother, who had gone to answer the telephone. The victim was sitting in a bathtub infant seat that had suction cups on the bottom. When the mother returned, she found the victim still in the seat, on her back with her face under water. The cause of death was drowning. (Delores Butler for Peter W. Schilke, M.D., Medical Examiner, Philadelphia, PA)

*A male, 9 months, was left alone in a bathtub while his babysitter went to answer the telephone. The babysitter returned to find the victim face down in the water. The victim was transported to the hospital and pronounced dead. The cause of death was drowning. (P.J. Zeller, M.D., Medical Examiner, Gainesville, FL)

A male, 2, was left alone in the backyard while a babysitter took his sibling into the house. The victim climbed a 35" high fence which surrounded an above-ground swimming pool. When the babysitter returned to the backyard, she found the victim in the pool unresponsive. The cause of death was drowning. (Fred Benanti for Charles Wetli, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner, Suffolk County, Hauppauge, NY)

*A male, 10 months, was with his mother in the living room while she cleaned the floor. The mother used a 5-gallon bucket filled with cleaning solution and water. She left the room to do laundry. The mother later found the victim head first in the bucket. The cause of death was drowning. (Hector Sandoval for Bill A Willard, Chief Deputy Coroner, Kings County, Fresno, CA)

A male, 2, and his sister, 3, were playing in a back bedroom of their house while their mother fed a 3 week-old infant. The two children climbed onto a dresser and out the window. The male victim stood on a toy wagon, pulled himself over the top of a 4-foot high above-ground swimming pool, and fell into the wa-

ter. The female entered the pool to try to save him. The mother heard her daughter call for help. She pulled her daughter out of the pool and then removed her son, who was submerged under water. The male victim was transported to the hospital where he was pronounced dead. The cause of death was drowning. The young female suffered no injuries. (Lee Miller, M.D., Medical Examiner, Hillsborough County, Tampa, FL)

FIRES

A male, 18, was stripping the floor with gasoline in an enclosed room and switched on the light. The fumes from the gasoline ignited and burned the victim. The cause of death was diffuse thermal burns and smoke inhalation. (Pat Staruk for Elizabeth Laposata, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner, Providence, RI)

A male, 80, tried to light a stove and caught his clothing on fire. The victim ran out of his house and collapsed in a neighbor's yard. The neighbor extinguished the flames. The cause of death was smoke inhalation and thermal burns. (James H. Moore for David Fowler, M.D., Medical Examiner, Baltimore, MD)

A male, 45, was removing floor tiles with a torch. The vapors from the tile glue ignited, causing a fire. The cause of death was complications of thermal burn injuries and smoke inhalation. (Michael Garvey for Dr. Sanchez, Medical Examiner and Humphrey Germaniuk, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner, Washington, DC)

A male, 42, died in a fire caused by a short circuit in a heating pad's electrical extension cord. The cause of death was inhalation of smoke and soot. (Roger E. Mittelman, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner, Dade County, Miami, FL)

*A female, 25, and a male, 23 months, died in a house fire. The

fire was started by a child, 4, who was playing with a long gun-type fireplace lighter. The cause of death was carbon monoxide poisoning and burns. (Barbara Gage for James Beyer, M.D., Deputy Chief Medical Examiner, Northern Virginia, Fairfax, VA)

A male, 12, was playing with sparklers in a garage. He was burned when the sparklers ignited a flammable liquid. The victim was hospitalized with 90% total body surface burns and died two days later. The cause of death was thermal injuries. (Jacqueline Dobbins for J. Scott Denton, M.D., Medical Examiner, and Edmund R. Donoghue, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner, Cook County, Chicago, IL)

ELECTROCUTIONS

A male, 49, was getting out of a hot tub with friends. He picked up a malfunctioning driveway light and received an electrical shock. The victim's friends turned off the power, but the victim could not be revived. The cause of death was electrocution. (Charles A. Diggs, M.D., Associate Medical Examiner, Fort Pierce, FL)

A male, 32, was repairing a microwave oven when he was electrocuted. The cause of death was accidental electrocution. (Mary Coffman for Jeffrey Barnard, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner, Dallas County, Dallas, TX)

MISCELLANEOUS

*A female, 2, died after an exercise machine fell on top of her. The cause of death was traumatic hemothorax. (Antoinette J. Tibbs for L. Sathyavagiswaran, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner, Los Angeles County, Los Angeles, CA)

—Suzanne Newman, Directorate for Epidemiology and Health Sciences

Recent CPSC Recalls

The following are product recalls conducted by firms in cooperation with CPSC. For more information about recalls, visit CPSC's web site at <http://www.cpsc.gov>.

For information about the **halogen torchiere floor lamps** recall/repair program, see article on page 3.

Product: About 390,000 Cosco metal **full-size cribs**, Model Nos. 10T01, 04, 05, 06, 08, 14, 84, 85, 94, and 95 and 10M06, 84, 85, and 94. The tubular metal cribs have wheels, come in a variety of colors, and have date codes of 0195 or higher on one of the end panels. The cribs were sold nationwide beginning in 1995 for about \$90 to \$150.

Problem: These cribs may have been misassembled with the mattress platform used as a side rail, resulting in spaces in the side rail of 5 inches rather than 2-3/8 inches. An infant can be trapped in spaces over 2 3/8 inches, resulting in serious injury or death. Cosco has received more than 47 reports of misassembled cribs, including 27 entrapments, resulting in one death.

What to do: Check Cosco cribs immediately to be sure the mattress platform is not used as a side rail. Try to pass a soda can through the slats on each side rail. If the can passes through, stop using the crib immediately and call Cosco at 1-800-221-6736 for instructions. Cosco is offering all consumers with these cribs a warning sticker to prevent future misassembly and a free gift to all owners of misassembled cribs to encourage them to repair the crib.

Product: About 125,000 Century Lil'Napper **infant swings**, Models Nos. 12-344, 345, 347, 475, and 476, with shoulder harness straps that come over the child's shoulders and buckle between the legs. The swings have white, tubular metal legs and a two-position plastic seat with either a vinyl or fabric seat pad. The Century brand name and swing controls are on the motor assembly at the top of the swing. The swings were sold nationwide beginning in 1991 for about \$90.

Problem: If the straps on the swings loosen or are unbuckled, a child can become tangled in them and strangle. Three deaths and one near-strangulation have resulted when children from 6 to 9 months-old became entangled in the harness-style restraint straps.

What to do: Stop using the swing and call Century at 1-800-231-1448 for a free repair kit, including a new seat pad, a restraint system with waist and crotch straps, and installation instructions.

Product: About 1,000,000 Duracraft **humidifiers**, Models DH-901 through DH-904 with date codes within 900101 to 94231 and all Models DH-3001 through DH-3006. The humidifiers have a rectangular water tank, ranging in size from 1 to 4 gallons, located next to the mist chamber that has an attached control panel. "Duracraft" is on the front of the unit. The humidifiers were sold nationwide from January 1991 through June 1996 for about \$40 to \$80.

Problem: The humidifiers can overheat, posing a fire hazard. Duracraft has received about 85 reports of humidifiers overheating, catching fire, or producing smoke. There have been no reports of injury or death, but there have been reports of property damage.

What to do: Stop using these humidifiers and call Duracraft at 1-800-290-8495 for a free part to repair Models DH-901 through DH-904 or for a free replacement humidifier for Models DH-3001 through DH-3006.

Product: About 80,000 Homelite gasoline-powered **backpack blowers**, Model BP-250. Recalled blowers have UT numbers UT 08017F or UT 08017G and serial numbers ranging from HP2000001 through HP3659999, HQ0010001 through HG3659999, and HR0010001 through HR2109999 located on a sticker on the fuel tank. The blowers were sold nationwide from October 1994 through December 1996 for about \$200.

Problem: If the blower's fuel lines are routed too close to the engine cylinder, they can crack and leak fuel, presenting a fire hazard.

What to do: Take the blowers to an authorized Homelite dealer for repair. For the nearest dealer or for information, call 1-800-242-4672.

Product: About 50,000 Duracraft electric "Space Saver™ **portable baseboard heaters**, Model CZ520, with date codes that begin with 95. The heater's exterior is white thermoplastic with a black steel grill. The control knobs are on the right side. The heater tilts to various angles on its hinged stand. "Duracraft" is on the top right of the heater, and the model number is on the bottom. These baseboard heaters were sold nationwide from September 1995 through March 1996 for about \$60.

Problem: The heater fan could become stuck, causing it to overheat and pose a fire hazard. Duracraft has 20 reports of heaters overheating, producing smoke or causing fire, resulting in property damage. No injuries have been reported.

What to do: Stop using and call Duracraft at 1-800-431-2165 for a free replacement heater.

Product: About 1,000,000 Shimano **bicycle cranks** sold in North America. The cranks, used to connect the pedal to the bike frame, are installed on more than 200 models of bicycles made since 1994 under at least 49 brand names. The cranks are numbered FC-CT90, FC-M290 and FC-MC12. These numbers are on the back or inner side of the right crank arm.

Problem: If the crank breaks, the rider's leg can be injured by contact with the broken crank or the rider can lose control, fall, and be injured. Shimano has more than 630 reports of broken cranks, resulting in 22 injuries, including cuts and fractures.

What to do: Check bicycle crank assemblies. If they have one of the three numbers above, stop using the bicycle immediately and call Shimano at 1-800-353-4719 for a free replacement and installation of a new crank assembly at an authorized repair shop or arrange for the free replacement with your bicycle dealer.

— Marc Schoem, Office of Compliance

Consumer Product Incident Report

Please contact us about any injury or death involving consumer products. Call us toll free at: 1-800-638-8095. Visit our web site at www.cpsc.gov. Or, fill out the form below. Send it to: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission/EHDS, Washington, DC 20207 or fax it to: 1-800-809-0924. We may contact you for further details. Please provide as much information as possible. Thank you.

YOUR NAME _____

YOUR ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

YOUR TELEPHONE _____

NAME OF VICTIM (IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____

DESCRIBE THE INCIDENT OR HAZARD, INCLUDING DESCRIPTION OF INJURIES _____

VICTIM'S AGE _____ SEX _____ DATE OF INCIDENT _____

DESCRIBE PRODUCT INVOLVED _____

PRODUCT BRAND NAME/MANUFACTURER _____

IS PRODUCT INVOLVED STILL AVAILABLE? YES NO PRODUCT MODEL AND SERIAL NUMBER _____

WHEN WAS THE PRODUCT PURCHASED? _____



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