



U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

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Includes recalls from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

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Fast-Track Recalls

Recalling dangerous products from the marketplace is one of the most important responsibilities of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). And CPSC's efforts to improve this process — with its fast-track consumer product recall program — were recently recognized nationally. (See box below.)

No company likes to recall one of its products. But when a safety problem makes a product recall necessary to prevent injuries and save lives, it is to everyone's benefit to move quickly.

The CPSC fast-track product recall program speeds up the recall process and gets more dangerous products out of people's homes. This saves industry and government both time and money, and reduces the potential for injuries and deaths to the public.

Since CPSC instituted a pilot fast-track program in August 1995, more than 315 recalls involving about 50 million potentially defective products have been conducted. About half of CPSC's recalls are now done under this streamlined system.

How Fast-Track Works

The fast-track recall program is provided for companies willing and able to move quickly with a voluntary recall of their product. The fast-track program eliminates procedural steps from the traditional recall process. This includes CPSC staff's technical evaluation of a product to determine if a defect exists that could harm consumers. This procedure, called a preliminary determination, can take several months.

This preliminary determination concerned many companies because they feared it could be used against them in product liability suits. By eliminating the preliminary determination in the fast-track recall program, companies should be more comfortable coming forward to recall their products.

To participate in a fast-track recall, a company must meet several guidelines. (See *For More Information*, page 2, to obtain specific guidance.) For example, the company must provide CPSC with a full report (16 CFR 1115.13(d)) of the problem and a proposed recall plan to address the problem. The report and

1998 Innovations Award Winner

CPSC's fast-track product recall program was one of three federal winners of the prestigious 1998 Innovations in American Government Award. Over 1,400 government programs entered the competition and 10 were selected for the honor, including seven state and local programs.

The winners were each awarded \$100,000 — money to be used to further enhance the winning program and to promote it to the public as an example of effective government. Applicants were evaluated by four selection criteria: the program's novelty, effectiveness, solution to a significant problem, and replicability by other government entities.

The Innovations Award is funded by the Ford Foundation and administered by the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University in partnership with the Council for Excellence in Government.

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plan must give CPSC staff sufficient information to determine whether the proposed recall would correct the identified problem. The specific recall actions to be taken, including notice of the recall to consumers, distributors, and retailers, must be part of the plan. The recall process must get underway within 20 days.

If CPSC staff accepts the above information, the preliminary determination is waived, and the fast-track recall proceeds.

Many Companies, Many Products

All kinds of products have been included in the fast-track recalls. For example, a major manufacturer recently recalled tens of thousands of humidifiers that could potentially overheat or catch fire. A leading manufacturer of children's products recalled tens of thousands of baby monitors that could smoke and flame. A prominent clothing retailer recalled more than 100,000 children's jackets with zipper pulls containing unacceptable levels of lead. A well-known company recalled tens of thousands of gas grills because a defective hose could leak gas or cause fires.

Other fast-track recalls have included such products as computer monitors, baseball batting aids, bicycle cranks, and play equipment. Recalls for all of these products were initiated in 20 or fewer days.

Genesis of Fast-Track

Since CPSC's inception in the early 1970s, consumer product companies have been required to report product defects that could create a substantial risk of injury to CPSC. Later, Congress also required firms to report unreasonable risks of serious injury or death. In recent years, CPSC has received 250 to 300 such reports each year. Companies who do not report product defects in a timely manner could be subject to civil penalties of up to \$1.5 million.

For many companies, reporting such problems carried with it negative connotations, as well as opened up possible product liability issues. Many companies did not readily come forward with recall programs. Other companies willing to do recalls felt that CPSC's required preliminary determination procedure actually slowed down the process.

To speed up the recall process and to offer industry an opportunity to avoid the perceived stigma of CPSC's preliminary determination of a product hazard, CPSC staff suggested a pilot fast-track process in 1995. CPSC made the pilot program permanent in 1997.

Results

Under a traditional recall process, about 30% of recalled products might be returned. Under the fast-track process,

the percentage of products returned has climbed to nearly 60%. This is because it is easier to effectively recall a potentially hazardous product when the problem is identified early and action is taken quickly. Manufacturers and retailers can stop sales of products and return them before the products get into consumers' homes.

In addition, recalls handled under the traditional recall process at CPSC also have speeded up since the fast-track program was implemented. With the time saved using the fast-track process, CPSC staff can spend more resources on those cases that are better handled under the traditional recall program. (See *Running the Recalls*, page 3.)

What's a Recall?

A product recall is a generic term for removing a product from the marketplace, as well as a repair, replacement, or refund of a product. The exact form a recall takes depends on the specific problem and the specific fix.

For example, some products are potentially so dangerous that they need to be taken off the market and destroyed. Other products can be made safe by a simple repair.

One important benchmark of a successful recall program — whatever remedy it entails — is that it reaches as many people as possible who own, use, sell, or distribute the product.

To that end, CPSC and companies work closely together to alert consumers, retailers, and distributors to the product recall. This usually includes a joint press release with CPSC, a point-of-purchase poster, and other notices. Among these are paid advertisements, direct mail, video news releases, website postings, posters for display at medical offices, hospitals, child care centers, and repair centers, and incentives targeted to likely product owners.

For More Information

To obtain more information about CPSC's fast-track product recall program, please call CPSC's Office of Compliance at 301-504-0608, extension 15; fax at 301-504-0359; or visit CPSC's website at www.cpsc.gov. Firms can report to CPSC on this website by clicking on the "business" icon on CPSC's home page.

Running the Recalls

CPSC's Office of Compliance negotiates product recalls with industry. In an interview, Marc J. Schoem, Director of the Recalls and Compliance Division, talked about the process.

What are the benefits of the fast-track product recall program?
Our primary job is to reduce injuries and deaths from consumer products, and the fast-track program allows us to get dangerous products out of the marketplace and out of people's homes faster. These fast-track recalls take an average of just nine days from initial report of a problem to initiation of the recall activity. A traditional recall may take months.

Why is the fast-track recall process faster than CPSC's traditional recall process?

The fast-track recall program eliminates many technical steps. In a traditional recall, for example, it can take months to adequately evaluate a product to determine if there's a product defect and, if so, whether this presents a substantial risk of injury to consumers. This may lead to our preliminary determination — or "PD", as we call it — that a product has a problem. If so, companies are understandably concerned that the PD could be used against them in a product liability suit.

The fast-track program eliminates the "PD." If companies come to us already willing to do a recall, then our staff doesn't have to spend valuable time determining whether the product has a defect. We can immediately begin working with the company to develop a recall plan to get the product out of the market.

Why does CPSC still handle some recalls under the traditional process?

Not all recalls lend themselves to the fast-track process. For example, we may believe a product has a problem, but the company doesn't agree with us. Another company may admit there's a problem, but hasn't identified a specific cause or can't figure out how to fix it. Some recalls are just too complex to do in 20 days. We then have to take the time to test and evaluate the product to make our case. In these instances, we'll handle the recall under our traditional process.

How do you find out about products that may need to be recalled?

Under the law, companies have to report product safety problems to us. If a company discovers that its product has a defect that could create a substantial hazard or presents an unreasonable risk of serious injury or death, the company must let us know immediately.

Do you find out about all dangerous products this way?

Unfortunately, no. Not all companies report these problems to us, even though they're supposed to. We get a lot of information from other sources — including trade complaints, state and local governments, fire and police departments, emergency medical personnel, and from consumers who use the products. In addition, we have great resources at CPSC, including our national hospital injury database, called NEISS, and our ability to receive complaints via our telephone hotline, web site, and e-mail.

If, under the fast-track recall program, you rely on the company's evaluation of a product, how do you confirm that the information is accurate?

We carefully review the information the company gives us. And, it's in a company's interest to give us complete information. If not, companies could put themselves in the position of having to do a recall twice. In addition, they might subject themselves to a substantial penalty under the law for not providing accurate information. So far, we have not had any problems of this kind.

What has industry had to say about the fast-track recall program?

We've had a lot of positive feedback from industry. A fast-track recall means that companies can be "in-and-out" in 20 business days. For them, that boils down to spending less time dealing with government and more time focusing on their business. The best indication of fast-track's success is that we've had "repeat business" by a number of companies under this program. Overall, it's a much less adversarial process than the traditional recall program.

Is there any particular type of company that benefits most from using the fast-track recall program?

We've found that fast-track works for just about any kind of company. We've used it successfully with small companies that have a limited number of products in the marketplace and with major manufacturers with millions of products that need to be recalled.

Any negatives to the fast-track recall program?

I think it puts more pressure on CPSC staff to meet these compressed deadlines. But I also think there's a greater sense of staff satisfaction in being able to get dangerous products out of the marketplace faster. After all, the fast-track program was suggested and implemented by CPSC staffers who wanted to improve the recall process.

NEISS Data Highlights — 1997

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 1997 NEISS estimates have been produced from an updated sample of 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	84,666	.08	2,671	31.6	371.5	8.8	6.9	4.9	2.4	32.8	30.5	30.8	0.8
Toys													
All Toys	136,399	.07	3,776	51.0	341.4	102.7	24.6	14.5	6.0	63.9	38.4	49.9	0.9
Sports & Recreational Equipment													
ATV's, Mopeds, Minibikes, etc.	114,851	.09	2,390	42.9	18.5	99.5	95.9	26.0	4.3	69.0	17.9	38.9	3.9
Amusement Attractions (incl. Rides)	17,060	.18	386	6.4	6.7	18.0	8.9	3.9	0.5	6.0	6.8	6.2	0.2
Barbecue Grills, Stoves, Equipment	17,439	.08	435	6.5	19.8	6.8	4.7	6.4	1.3	7.8	5.2	6.2	0.3
Baseball, Softball	326,569	.07	7,312	122.0	38.9	320.5	227.2	79.4	3.9	171.2	74.8	119.9	1.9
Basketball	644,921	.07	15,453	241.0	9.9	506.8	841.1	99.1	2.8	407.8	80.8	238.6	2.1
Beach, Picnic, Camping Equipment	16,347	.10	369	6.1	15.1	11.1	4.7	4.1	4.9	5.7	6.5	5.9	0.1
Bicycles & Accessories	567,002	.08	14,689	211.9	198.6	805.9	225.0	87.0	37.7	308.8	118.8	202.4	9.1
Exercise, Exercise Equipment	183,722	.12	4,684	68.6	48.1	68.3	129.8	65.3	28.6	82.2	55.6	66.3	2.1
Football	334,420	.07	8,577	125.0	5.9	387.1	395.7	27.1	1.5	240.7	13.9	122.4	2.4
Hockey	77,492	.21	1,425	29.0	5.8	73.6	82.5	12.4	0.8	49.7	9.1	28.6	0.3
Horseback Riding	58,709	.11	1,225	21.9	6.4	31.2	28.4	24.1	4.4	19.2	24.5	19.3	2.5
In-line Skating	98,414	.10	2,370	36.8	3.4	152.9	50.0	14.5	0.3	42.0	31.7	35.4	1.3
Lacrosse, Rugby, Misc. Ball Games	69,436	.09	1,711	25.9	14.7	89.2	53.5	8.6	1.3	36.5	15.8	25.6	0.3
Nonpowder Guns, BB'S, Pellets	21,070	.09	522	7.9	3.8	30.2	15.9	1.9	0.4	13.6	2.4	7.4	0.4
Playground Equipment	228,141	.07	6,738	85.2	314.4	399.4	13.1	5.2	2.6	94.4	76.3	81.7	3.2
Racquet Sports	32,732	.15	700	12.2	1.5	9.9	17.9	13.1	11.4	16.2	8.4	11.8	0.4
Skateboards	48,186	.14	1,052	18.0	3.9	63.1	54.4	2.1	0.4	33.0	3.6	17.1	0.8
Skating (excl. In-line)	102,736	.09	2,501	38.4	11.5	155.1	43.2	17.1	2.2	30.4	46.0	37.2	1.1
Snowmobiles	12,676	.24	193	4.7	0.4	3.3	9.4	5.7	0.0	7.1	2.5	4.1	0.6
Snowskiing, Snowboarding	—	—	1,994	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Soccer	148,913	.12	3,531	55.6	1.6	184.2	144.7	17.4	0.3	71.5	40.4	54.7	0.7
Swimming, Pools, Equipment	98,285	.12	2,396	36.7	59.3	108.8	47.4	17.4	9.4	44.5	29.3	34.9	1.6
Toboggans, Sleds, Snow Discs, etc.	29,310	.16	544	11.0	9.2	40.6	16.1	4.2	0.4	14.3	7.7	10.5	0.5
Track & Field Activities, Equipment	13,225	.16	317	4.9	0.1	13.6	18.0	0.6	1.3	5.1	4.8	4.8	0.1
Trampolines	82,722	.11	1,981	30.9	41.6	144.9	35.1	4.0	0.2	30.2	31.6	29.7	1.2
Volleyball	67,340	.08	1,424	25.2	0.5	40.3	75.5	17.1	0.5	22.5	27.7	25.0	0.1
Water Skiing, Tubing, Surfing	19,672	.17	361	7.4	0.0	4.2	17.1	8.3	0.5	12.1	2.8	7.2	0.2

* See page 6 for explanation.

NEISS Data Highlights — Calendar Year 1997 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 Comm'n & Entertainment													
Sound Recording Equipment	38,956	.07	902	14.6	38.7	13.9	18.6	9.7	17.0	14.0	15.1	13.8	0.7
Television Sets & Stands	42,071	.08	1,088	15.7	78.6	16.5	10.6	9.5	10.4	17.5	14.0	15.2	0.5
Personal Use Items													
Cigarettes, Lighters, Fuel	15,894	.10	399	5.9	22.6	5.4	8.2	4.2	1.9	7.6	4.4	5.4	0.5
Clothing	122,782	.09	2,872	45.9	47.2	62.8	47.5	36.7	61.0	43.3	48.3	43.1	2.5
Drug Poisonings to Children under 5	53,357	.11	1,711	19.9	278.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	21.7	18.2	17.9	1.8
Grooming Devices	28,056	.09	802	10.5	55.0	9.7	10.4	6.2	4.0	7.3	13.5	10.3	0.2
Razors, Shavers, Razor Blades	40,773	.10	919	15.2	12.0	12.8	29.6	14.1	9.2	21.5	9.2	15.0	0.2
Household Containers													
Cans, Other Containers	229,090	.07	5,623	85.6	165.5	87.2	97.5	79.5	50.9	85.1	86.1	83.8	1.6
Glass Bottles, Jars	45,600	.10	1,166	17.0	25.3	21.8	30.6	13.1	8.0	20.8	13.4	16.7	0.3
Yard & Garden Equipment													
Chain Saws	29,684	.09	561	11.1	0.0	1.3	10.4	15.2	12.4	21.8	0.8	10.6	0.4
Hand Garden Tools	32,197	.10	637	12.0	7.2	14.0	9.1	11.8	16.4	15.4	8.8	11.4	0.5
Hatchets, Axes	11,875	.12	216	4.4	1.3	5.3	6.6	4.5	2.6	8.1	0.8	4.4	0.1
Lawn & Garden Equipment	53,411	.09	1,119	20.0	22.6	18.3	13.7	20.0	26.9	24.8	15.3	19.3	0.7
Lawn Mowers	61,088	.09	1,274	22.8	10.0	10.2	18.6	27.8	28.5	35.4	10.8	21.3	1.5
Other Power Lawn Equipment	18,462	.13	350	6.9	3.1	5.0	4.8	7.9	9.2	12.0	2.0	6.3	0.6
Home Workshop Equipment													
Hoists, Lifts, Jacks, etc.	14,254	.10	294	5.3	2.7	2.3	7.8	6.3	3.6	9.4	1.4	5.0	0.3
Power Home Tools (excl. Saws)	32,030	.08	611	12.0	1.9	2.6	15.5	15.8	8.8	22.2	2.2	11.6	0.3
Power Home Workshop Saws	74,005	.08	1,500	27.7	0.7	6.8	20.8	34.7	44.7	53.5	2.8	26.0	1.7
Welding, Soldering, Cutting Tools	16,944	.12	333	6.3	1.2	1.3	13.3	7.9	1.2	12.4	0.5	6.3	0.1
Wires, Cords, Not Specified	13,188	.10	295	4.9	5.1	4.5	5.7	5.1	3.7	7.1	2.8	4.7	0.1
Workshop Manual Tools	107,385	.07	2,191	40.1	16.0	21.5	47.0	51.2	22.0	70.3	11.2	39.6	0.5
Home Maintenance													
Cleaning Agents (excl. Soaps)	31,668	.09	812	11.8	66.3	5.9	9.6	8.5	3.9	11.3	12.3	11.4	0.4
Cleaning Equip., Non-caustic Deterg.	26,365	.07	618	9.9	17.6	10.2	8.5	8.7	11.1	10.5	9.2	9.5	0.3
Paints, Solvents, Lubricants	15,138	.11	323	5.7	14.3	3.2	4.8	6.0	3.2	6.8	4.5	5.3	0.3
General Household Appliances													
Cooking Ranges, Ovens, etc.	41,610	.08	1,084	15.5	51.9	12.4	15.4	11.3	16.1	14.3	16.8	14.8	0.7
Irons, Clothes Steamers (not Toys)	15,296	.12	575	5.7	47.0	6.0	2.7	1.9	1.1	5.4	5.9	5.7	0.0
Refrigerators, Freezers	29,964	.08	698	11.2	14.1	8.1	10.7	11.6	11.9	12.1	10.4	10.8	0.4
Small Kitchen Appliances	38,232	.08	838	14.3	14.0	9.2	14.2	16.6	10.8	11.5	17.0	14.2	0.1
Washers, Dryers	17,369	.09	395	6.5	9.4	4.4	3.9	7.6	5.3	6.8	6.2	6.2	0.3

* See page 6 for explanation.

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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, Vent. Equip.													
Air Conditioners	11,479	.10	269	4.3	2.9	4.2	3.3	4.8	4.1	6.0	2.7	4.0	0.2
Chimneys, Fireplaces	17,298	.13	491	6.5	58.9	4.3	2.5	1.8	2.6	7.8	5.2	6.4	0.0
Fans (excl. Stove Exhaust Fans)	16,073	.10	400	6.0	12.8	5.3	5.7	5.0	7.3	6.4	5.6	5.9	0.1
Heating & Plumbing Pipes	35,399	.08	887	13.2	22.9	22.3	14.1	10.3	8.6	18.9	7.8	13.0	0.2
Heating Stoves, Space Heaters	20,391	.09	488	7.6	40.2	8.5	5.6	4.0	5.2	8.5	6.8	7.2	0.5
Radiators	13,212	.23	386	4.9	31.2	6.6	2.6	1.9	3.1	5.7	4.2	4.8	0.2
Home Furnishings & Fixtures													
Bathroom Structures & Fixtures	228,477	.07	5,357	85.4	207.8	59.0	54.5	60.2	181.7	75.5	94.8	78.6	6.6
Beds, Mattresses, Pillows	411,689	.08	10,854	153.8	696.3	194.2	65.4	51.1	317.0	147.4	159.9	143.0	10.4
Carpets, Rugs	98,693	.09	2,323	36.9	86.3	24.5	15.5	23.8	99.1	25.8	47.5	33.1	3.7
Chairs, Sofas, Sofa Beds	373,188	.07	9,399	139.4	604.3	139.5	72.0	69.4	236.2	124.7	153.5	130.7	8.4
Desks, Cabinets, Shelves, Racks	222,662	.07	5,548	83.2	299.3	114.8	64.8	51.3	75.3	87.8	78.8	81.2	1.8
Electric Fixt., Lamps, Equip.	49,979	.07	1,310	18.7	52.9	23.5	19.0	13.6	14.1	21.2	16.2	18.1	0.4
Holiday, Party Supplies	10,399	.12	238	3.9	14.8	2.0	0.9	4.0	2.5	4.2	3.6	3.7	0.2
Ladders, Stools	157,610	.08	3,318	58.9	26.3	18.3	26.1	78.1	79.8	86.9	31.9	52.9	5.9
Mirrors, Mirror Glass	22,623	.09	577	8.5	13.4	9.6	18.3	6.1	3.3	9.8	7.2	8.2	0.2
Misc. Household Covers, Fabrics	15,441	.10	325	5.8	7.5	3.8	3.2	4.1	16.6	3.2	8.2	5.4	0.4
Other Misc. Furniture & Accessories	55,243	.09	1,278	20.6	31.0	9.7	15.5	25.3	13.7	20.6	20.7	20.1	0.4
Tables, not elsewhere classified	287,933	.06	7,859	107.6	651.4	126.5	57.1	42.8	98.6	118.8	96.8	105.3	2.1
Home Structures & Const. Mat.													
Cabinet/Door Hardware	17,021	.10	442	6.4	22.3	9.9	3.9	4.0	5.8	7.3	5.5	6.2	0.1
Fences	110,731	.07	2,924	41.4	44.9	106.0	52.3	25.3	19.5	60.1	23.4	40.0	1.3
Glass Doors, Windows, Panels	166,988	.08	4,076	62.4	86.6	91.0	126.7	44.2	21.1	76.2	49.2	60.0	2.3
Handrails, Railings, Banisters	34,421	.09	1,002	12.9	28.0	22.4	12.5	9.0	9.6	14.4	11.4	12.4	0.4
Non-glass Doors, Panels	342,918	.10	8,827	128.1	370.5	213.7	133.7	74.0	109.0	126.8	129.4	125.6	2.4
Outside Attached Struct. & Mat.	21,192	.09	480	7.9	7.0	4.2	8.0	9.4	6.5	13.4	2.7	7.2	0.7
Stairs, Ramps, Landings, Floors	1,753,031	.08	41,612	655.0	1242.4	519.7	517.0	467.0	1392.9	501.1	802.4	594.4	59.6
Window, Door Sills, Frames	53,286	.09	1,298	19.9	69.8	25.9	17.6	10.4	26.4	20.1	19.7	19.2	0.7
Miscellaneous Products													
Dollies, Carts	43,929	.08	1,149	16.4	121.6	13.1	5.6	6.8	11.8	16.0	16.8	15.8	0.4
Elevators, Other Lifts	16,794	.20	397	6.3	10.8	5.3	5.8	3.9	15.1	5.1	7.4	6.0	0.3
Gasoline, Diesel Fuels	12,739	.11	303	4.8	11.3	4.9	7.0	4.0	1.6	7.6	2.1	4.0	0.8

* **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.

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? _____

This information is collected by authority of 15 U.S.C. 2054 and may be shared with product manufacturers, distributors, or retailers. No names or other personal information, however, will be disclosed without explicit permission.



U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
Washington, DC 20207

TC-49

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 June, July, and August 1998, 723 cases were reported to CPSC. Included here are samples of cases to illustrate the type and nature of the reported incidents.

ASPHYXIATIONS/ SUFFOCATIONS

*A female, 9, and her brother, 5, became trapped in a chest-type freezer, which was stored in the basement of their home. The freezer had a latch on the outside of the lid and could not be opened from the inside. The cause of death was asphyxia. (Julie Rarick for Dennis W. Crabb, M.D., Medical Examiner, Crawford County, Des Moines, IA)

*A male, 3 months, was placed in a portable crib for a nap by his mother. The crib, which originally had four panels supporting the mattress, had two panels missing or broken. The victim was found an hour later, unresponsive, with his face sunken into a depression in the bottom part of the crib. The cause of death was asphyxia. (Keith Preston, Chief Deputy Coroner for Thomas J. Rosko, M.D., Coroner, Bucks County, Doylestown, PA)

*A male, 1 month, was placed face down in a playpen for a nap by a babysitter. The babysitter checked on the victim and found him unresponsive with his face directly into a blanket. The cause of death was asphyxia. (Manfred C. Borges, Jr., M.D., Medical Examiner, Naples, FL)

*A male, 17 months, was placed in a mesh-sided portable playpen for a nap by a day care worker. The playpen collapsed on the child, with the support bar across his neck and his head sticking through the playpen. The cause of death was asphyxia. (Jacqueline Dobbins for

Mitra Kalelkar, M.D., Medical Examiner and Edmund R. Donoghue, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner, Cook County, Chicago, IL)

*A female, 7 months, was found unresponsive in a portable crib. The victim was found face down on the crib's plastic, nylon mattress cover. The cause of death was asphyxia. (Dywane K. Harris for Ron Suarez, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner Morris County, Morristown, NJ)

* A female, 9 months, was left alone in a high chair for a few minutes by a caregiver. The caregiver returned to find the victim hanging by her neck from the strap of the high chair. The cause of death was asphyxia. (Lee Miller, M.D., Medical Examiner, Hillsborough County, Tampa, FL)

A male, 7 months, was found face down on an air mattress, unresponsive and entangled in his bed covers. There were several pillows and blankets surrounding the mattress. The cause of death was mechanical asphyxiation. (Donna Tagli for Max E. Blue, Jr., M.D., Assistant Medical Examiner and W. Pearson Clack, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner, Sarasota County, Sarasota, FL)

*A female, 1, was playing with a hair bead wrap. The child apparently put the wrap in her mouth and swallowed a marble from the wrap. The marble became lodged in the child's throat. The cause of death was obstruction of airway. (Terry Browne, Deputy Coroner for Cyril H. Wecht, M.D., J.D., Coroner, Allegheny County, Pittsburgh, PA)

A female, 3 months, was placed on an adult bed to sleep. The victim was later found unresponsive wedged between the mattress and the wall. The cause of death was positional asphyxia. (Joseph Pestaner, M.D., Medical Examiner and John E. Smialek, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner, Baltimore, MD)

POISONINGS

A male, 29, and his girlfriend were found dead in the male victim's home by a police officer. A vent pipe which led to the back of a natural gas floor-mounted heater was not secured and hung loose below the heater. The cause of death for both victims was carbon monoxide fumes. (Daniel L. Matticks, M.S., Medical Examiner Investigator for Brian D. Blackbourne, M.D., Medical Examiner, San Diego, CA)

A male, 62, and his brother, 60, failed to return after a hunting trip. They were found in a tent with a propane lamp in the "on" position. The victims had closed the tent because of a rain storm. The cause of death was carbon monoxide poisoning. (Jeanne E. Ainsley for Julia Goodin, M.D., Medical Investigator, Santa Fe, NM)

* A female, 43, a female, 10, and a female, 5, were found dead in a camper trailer. The victims had a propane lantern, which was used for light, in the trailer. The cause of death was carbon monoxide poisoning. A male survived the incident and was taken to the hospital for treatment. (Erin M. Jerant, Coroner, Huerfano County, Pueblo, CO)

*A male, 49, and his female friend were found dead due to a faulty gas wall heater. The cause of death was carbon monoxide poisoning. (Charles Kelley, Medical

Investigator for Brian D. Blackbourne, M.D., Medical Examiner, San Diego, CA)

DROWNINGS

A male, 4, was found unresponsive in a swimming pool. The victim gained access to the pool through an unlocked deck gate. The cause of death was drowning. (Angelo K. Ozoa, M.D., Ph.D., Medical Examiner, Santa Clara County, San Jose, CA)

A male, 2, was being watched by a babysitter along with four other children. The victim exited the house through a broken sliding glass door and was found by the babysitter floating in an in-ground swimming pool. The babysitter unsuccessfully attempted CPR on the victim. The cause of death was drowning. (Merle Reyes, M.D., Medical Examiner and Shashi B. Gore, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner, Orlando, FL)

A female, 1, was found by her parents face down in their above-ground swimming pool. The pool had stairs and a deck which was barricaded to prevent the victim from entering the pool. The child managed to get past the barricade and enter the water. The cause of death was drowning. (Dora Maxim for Borus McCormick, Coroner, San Bernardino, CA)

FIRES

A female, 40, was in the basement doing laundry when she tripped over a gasoline can, spilling the gas. It is believed that a water heater ignited the fumes from the gasoline. Flammables such as paint

were also in the basement. The victim and three other family members were hospitalized. The victim died from her injuries. The cause of death was smoke inhalation and thermal burns. (Michael Birchmeyer for Mary I. Jumbelic, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner, Onondaga County, Syracuse, NY)

A male, 76, died in a house fire which was caused by a kerosene heater placed near wall paneling. The cause of death was smoke inhalation and thermal injuries. (James H. Moore for Ronald G. Wright, M.D., Medical Examiner and John E. Smialek, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner, Baltimore, MD)

A female, 83, caught her clothing on fire as she reached over the top of the kitchen range to turn off a burner. The cause of death was third-degree burns over fifty percent of the body. (Carol Koop for Michael McGee, M.D., Medical Examiner, Ramsey County, St. Paul, MN)

A male, 64, spilled gasoline in his trailer. The gasoline fumes were ignited by a gas-fired forced air furnace in the trailer. The cause of death was smoke and soot inhalation and thermal injuries. (Morris Lupia for S. Livingstone, M.D., Medical Examiner and Mary Jumbelic, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner, Onondaga County, Syracuse, NY)

— *Suzanne Newman, Directorate for Epidemiology and Health Sciences*



CPSC Recalls

The following product recalls were conducted by firms in cooperation with CPSC. For more information about recalls, visit CPSC's website at www.cpsc.gov.

Product: Up to 10 million battery-powered Power Wheels® **ride-on cars and trucks**. The recalled toy vehicles were sold under nearly 100 model names. The Power Wheels logo and the model name are on each vehicle. The toys are intended for children ages 2 to 7 and have speed ranges from one to five miles per hour, depending on the model. Toy and mass merchandise stores nationwide sold the vehicles from January 1984 through October 1998 for about \$70 to \$300. Power Wheels vehicles sold after October 1998 are not recalled.

Problem: Electrical components in these vehicles can overheat and cause fires. CPSC and Fisher-Price have about 700 reports of electrical components failing and overheating while the cars and trucks were being ridden, charged, parked, or stored, including about 150 reports of fires. Nine children suffered burns to hands, legs, and feet, and up to \$300,000 in property damage to 22 homes and garages have been reported.

What to do: Take out batteries immediately and don't let children use the vehicles until the repair is done. Call 1-800-977-7800 anytime to schedule a free repair at a Power Wheels Service Center or for assistance in identifying the recalled vehicles. Consumers may also access the company's website at www.powerwheels.com.

Product: About 8.4 million Omega brand **fire sprinklers** manufactured since 1982 by Central Sprinkler Corp. and its subsidiary Central Sprinkler Co. The sprinklers are installed in homes, schools, hospitals, dormitories, nursing homes, and many other buildings. Most recalled sprinklers have 3 flat round metal disks stacked one above the other with a small space between each disk.

Problem: CPSC alleges that the sprinklers are defective and could fail in a fire. CPSC alleges that, on average, between 30% to 40% of Omegas removed from various locations across the country for testing failed to activate as they should. The recall follows the resolution of the lawsuit filed by CPSC on March 3, 1998. CPSC has reports of Omega sprinklers not functioning in 17 fires with at least four persons suffering injuries and over \$4.3 million in property damage.

What to do: Call 1-800-896-5685 any time or access the Omega recall website at Omegarecall.com for information about identifying recalled sprinklers and getting free replacement glass bulb sprinklers and reimbursement toward cost of removal and replacement. For consumers to get any monetary reimbursement for installation costs, they must submit a proof of claim and release to Central postmarked by August 1, 1999.

Product: About 390,000 **children's satin pajama sets** distributed by Limited Too, Inc. The recalled pajamas are in girl's sizes 6 through 14 and are woven, 100% polyester with a satin finish. They come in two-piece pullover or front-button styles with sleeveless, short, or long-sleeved tops and bottoms in a variety of colors and patterns. The sleepwear is labeled "made in Hong Kong", "Macau", "China", or "Sri Lanka", and were sold nationwide in Limited Too stores from December 1995 through July 1998 for about \$15 to \$39.

Problem: The pajamas fail to meet federal flammability standards for children's sleepwear, presenting a risk of serious burn injuries to children. No injuries have been reported.

What to do: Stop using the pajama sets and return them to a Limited Too store for a full refund. Call 1-800-934-4497 between 8:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. ET Monday through Friday for information.

Product: About 200,000 AIWA **mini home audio systems** distributed by AIWA America, Inc. The recalled audio systems have model number CX-NA303U on the back of the unit. The systems are about 10 by 12 by 13 inches and include a combination radio, tape, CD player, and speakers. They were sold in electronics, department, and discount stores nationwide from March 1998 through July 1998 for about \$200 to \$250.

Problem: These audio systems could contain a faulty transistor that can cause the unit to smoke, presenting a fire hazard. AIWA has 100 reports of smoking or emitting a burning odor and three reports of units catching fire. No injuries were reported.

What to do: Stop using these mini-home audio systems and call AIWA America at 1-888-619-9353 between 6 a.m. and midnight ET seven days a week for instructions on returning the units for free repair.

Product: About 58,000 **wooden bunk beds** made by Lexington Furniture Industries. The bunks are twin size and sold under the brand names, Lexington, Devan, Young-Hinkle, Dixie, and Henry Link. The brand name is stenciled on the inside frame of the bed. These beds were sold in furniture stores and department stores nationwide from January 1980 through August 1997 for about \$200 to \$1,200.

Problem: If the top bunk is mis-assembled, there could be a space between the end of the mattress and the end of the bed that could be large enough for a child's body to fall through, but small enough to entrap a child's head. Lexington Furniture has one report of a child falling through the space when the bunks were set up as twin beds; no injury was reported.

What to do: Slide the mattress to either end of the top bunk and measure the space between the end of the mattress and end of the bed. It should not be 3-1/2" or greater. If there is a space of 3-1/2" or more, stop using the bed and call Lexington at 1-888-463-0111 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. ET Monday through Friday for a free kit to close the gap. Consumers may also call this number for help in identifying the recalled beds.

Product: About 50,000 Century Fold'N Go Care Centers, Models 10-750 and 10-760 made before September 1998. These portable, wheeled units include a **playard, changing table, and bassinet**. Model 10-760 has a canopy. "Century" is imprinted on the side of the playard. Juvenile product stores nationwide sold these products from March 1998 through August 1998 for about \$100 to \$130.

Problem: The bassinet could have loose fabric, which can create a pocket near the floorboard in which an infant can become entrapped and suffocate. Century has four reports of babies getting their head caught between the mesh side and floorboard of the bassinet.

What to do: Stop using the bassinet and call Century at 1-800-583-4092 anytime for a free repair kit.



NHTSA Recalls

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is the government agency responsible for improving safety on the nation's highways. As part of its efforts to achieve this goal, NHTSA is authorized to order manufacturers to recall and repair vehicles or items of motor vehicle equipment (including air bags, tires, and child safety seats).

The following safety recall campaigns are being conducted in cooperation with NHTSA. For more information about NHTSA recall activities, you can access NHTSA on the Internet at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov> or by calling the NHTSA Auto Safety Hotline at 1-888-DASH-2-DOT (1-888-327-4236).

American Honda Motor Company

Honda is recalling 967,771 **1995-1997 Accord sedans, coupes, and wagons** (except the DX model and models with V6 engines) manufactured from April 1994 through May 1997. The factory installed air-conditioner wire harness was improperly routed allowing some wires to rub against each other, eventually causing a short circuit. The short circuit can possibly cause the underhood wiring to overheat and smoke, causing a fire in the engine compartment. A short circuit can also result in a blown fuse or dead battery. Owners who do not receive the free remedy within a reasonable time should contact Honda at 1-800-999-1009. [NHTSA Recall 98V231]

AmTran Corporation

AmTran is recalling 2,293 **1997-1999 Conventional school buses** built with Code G47AODM outward opening service door and Code G47ACDC or G47A5DC manual door control and manufactured from February 1997 through August 1998. Certain clothing articles such as draw strings can become lodged between the door control rod clevis attachment as a person is exiting the bus. If the driver is unaware of this situation, the entrance door may be closed, capturing the item in the door, causing death or injury to the person exiting the bus. Owners who do not receive the free repair kit within a reasonable time should contact AmTran at 1-800-843-5615. [NHTSA Recall 98V200/AmTran Recall 98-303]

BMW

BMW is recalling 340,000 1992-1995 318i, 318iA, 318is, 318iSA, 318C, 318iCA, 325i, 325iA, 325is, 325isA, 325ic, 325iCA, M3; 1989-1995 525i, 525iA, 525iTA, 535i, 535iA, 530i, 530iA, 530iTA, 540i, 540iA, M5; 1988-1995 735i, 735iA, 735iLA, 740iA, 740iLA, 750iLA; and 1991-1995 840CiA, 850i, 850iA, 850Ci, 850CiA, 850CSi manufactured from January 1988 through November 1994. A malfunction or failure of a coolant system component, such as a thermostat, water pump, or fan belt, can result in significantly increased coolant temperature and system pressure. If the indications of a critical overheating condition is not noticed by the driver, it is possible a coolant system component could be damaged or fail. If a crack were to form or a seam were to separate in the heater core end piece, hot coolant could suddenly be expelled inside the car, increasing the risk of personal injury to a car's occupant. Owners who do not receive the free remedy within a reasonable time should contact BMW at 1-800-831-1117. [NHTSA Recall 98V178]

Chrysler Corporation

Chrysler is recalling 685,000 **1995-1998 Cirrus, Dodge Stratus** and 12,996 **1998 Plymouth Breeze and Chrysler Sebring passenger vehicles** equipped with automatic transmissions and manufactured from July 1994 through January 1998. If the cable connecting the console shifter mechanism to the ignition key is improperly adjusted and the operator applies pressure to the release button on the console shifter to shift out of Park with the key in the locked position, the connecting pin in the shifter can break. If this happens, the "ignition-park" interlock system will be nonfunctional, and the vehicle can roll away if the parking brake is not set. Dealers will test and inspect for proper operation of the system. Any vehicles that are not functional after the inspection will have the shift mechanism and cable replaced with a "self-adjusting" design. Owners who do not receive the free remedy within a reasonable time should contact Chrysler at 1-800-992-1997. [NHTSA Recall 98V183/Chrysler Recall 789]

Chrysler Corporation

Chrysler is also recalling 157,000 **1996-1997 Chrysler Town & Country, Dodge Caravan/Grand Caravan, and Plymouth Voyager/Grand Voyager mini vans** equipped with integrated child seats and manufactured from January 1995 through July 1997. The shoulder harness restraint on the integrated child seat can become difficult to release when the safety belt latch plate becomes contaminated. This can cause difficulty in removing a child from the restraint. Dealers will clean the latch mechanism. An extender will be added to the emergency release anchor for the child seat safety belts so that the release clips are more visible and accessible to the operator in the event that the retractor mechanism cannot be unlocked. In addition, an instructional owner's manual supplement card will be provided. Owners who do not receive the free remedy within a reasonable time should contact Chrysler at 1-800-992-1997. [NHTSA Recall 98V185/Chrysler Recall 791]

Ford Motor Company

Ford is recalling 175,000 **1995-1998 Contour and Mercury Mystique vehicles** manufactured from July 1994 through January 1998. The floor shift automatic transmission control can be damaged if subjected to certain interior cleaning products. The gear position indicator can deteriorate and not correctly indicate the actual gear position resulting in incorrect gear selection. Owners who do not receive the free remedy within a reasonable time should contact Ford at 1-800-392-3673. [NHTSA Recall 98V233/Ford Recall 98S26]

Volkswagen of America, Inc.

VW is recalling 153,000 **1993-1995 Jetta, Golf and GTI vehicles** manufactured from February 1992 through June 1995. The rear brake line on the passenger side was routed too close to the corner of the fuel tank. The line could be damaged by chafing against the fuel tank. Repeated chafing could eventually result in a leaking brake line causing diminished braking in one brake circuit, increasing the vehicle's stopping distance. Owners who do not receive the free remedy within a reasonable time should contact VW at 1-800-822-8987. [NHTSA Recall 98V195/VW Recall UD]

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