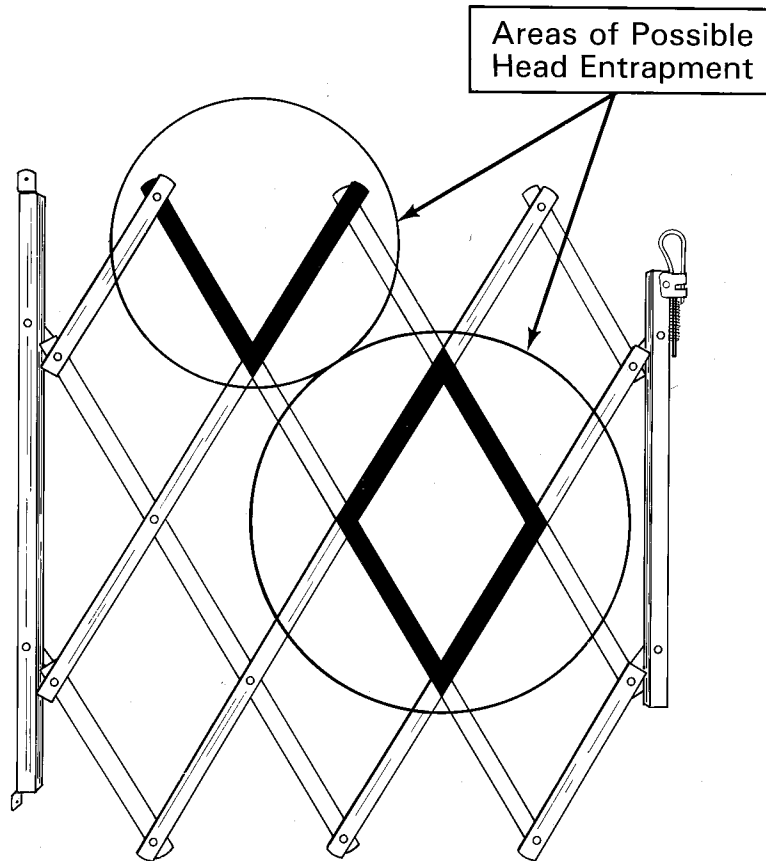


Consumer Product Safety Alert

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

Old Accordion Style Baby Gates Are Dangerous



The U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) warns of an entrapment and strangulation hazard that exists with accordion-style baby gates manufactured prior to February 1985. These gates have V-shaped openings along the top edge and diamond-shaped openings in the sides that are large enough to entrap a child's head. CPSC knows of 9 deaths and at least 25 "near-misses" because of the entrapment hazard of these gates. Most of the deaths occurred when children's heads became entrapped in the V-shaped openings.

In contrast, other styles of baby gates--such as a straight top edge and rigid mesh screen, or openings too small for a child's head to enter--do not present the entrapment/strangulation hazard.

CPSC worked with the Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association (JPMA) to develop an ASTM (formerly the

American Society for Testing and Materials) voluntary standard to address the entrapment/strangulation hazard. The standard restricts the width of V-shaped openings in the top edge of a gate to no more than 1.5 inches and limits the diamond-shaped openings to a size that prevents entry of the head of a 6 month old child. Gates that meet the requirements in the ASTM voluntary standard are safer than the old accordion-style gates. CPSC has no reports of deaths or near misses due to head entrapment in these newer gates.

Caregivers who have the old gates with large V- or diamond-shaped openings should discontinue their use.

Of course, in order to prevent falls when using any type of baby gates, care should be taken to be sure they're securely latched and that children do not attempt to climb on them.