



U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT  
SAFETY COMMISSION

# The SAFETY REVIEW

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NANCY NORD  
ACTING CHAIRMAN

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COMMISSIONER

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*These packages represent the 664 toy shipments stopped and inspected at the ports this year. Of these, 238 were seized and denied entry into the U.S. for safety violations.*

December is a time to celebrate the holidays, but also a time to look back and reflect on the past 12 months.

A year ago, toy safety was on everyone's mind. The safety violations we found in 2007 were unacceptable and we've spent the year taking major actions to address those issues. We bolstered our goal of keeping our children's toys the safest in the world.

In February, I spoke at the International Toy Fair and told industry we would not tolerate lead violations and they have responded. But we haven't relied on the efforts of industry. We've stepped up inspections of toys on store shelves. We've created an Import Surveillance Division to be more proactive at the ports and to seize products that violate our safety standards. We've educated manufacturers, here and abroad, about our safety requirements.

All of these actions have had measurable results. Toy recalls are down by half from a year ago. We're looking harder for violations and finding less. This is a testament to the enforcement authority of the agency and partners like U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

The bottom line for you is that the toys you're seeing and buying this holiday season have gone through more intensive testing and inspections than ever. But safety is not seasonal at CPSC. Every day we enforce the laws on the books to make store shelves and, in turn, American homes, safer.

Have a safe and happy holiday season.

*Nancy Nord*

Nancy Nord  
Acting Chairman



Watch our Holiday  
News Conference



## CPSC's List of Dangerous Toys

Every year, parents and grandparents want to know what the best and worst toys are for the coming holiday season. While CPSC isn't in the business of evaluating what's hot and what's not, we can provide parents with vital and important shopping tips.

One way to evaluate toy safety is to look at what's been recalled due to safety defects or violations. From the beginning of the calendar year, CPSC has recalled about 50 toys, which can be categorized by toy type.

### #1

*(63% of units recalled)* **TOYS WITH STRONG MAGNETS** that can be swallowed by children: Magnets can fall out of their housing or be found in small, ingestible plastic components. If more than one magnet or a magnet and a metal object are swallowed, they can forcefully attract each other through intestine walls causing serious injury, infection and death.



*About 1.3 million magnetic toy figures were recalled on March 17, 2008.*

### #2

*(20% of units recalled)* **REMOTE CONTROLLED TOYS** and accessories, which can pose fire and burn hazards: Rechargeable lithium batteries (lithium-ion or lithium polymer) are increasingly being used in toys because the technology is lighter and has a lot of energy in a small package, but overheating, fires, burns and explosions have occurred.



*About 685,000 remote-controlled helicopters with lithium batteries were recalled on July 24, 2008.*

### #3

*(12% of units recalled)* **TOYS WITH SMALL PARTS** that can come loose posing an immediate choking or aspiration hazard to infants and toddlers.



*About 300,000 plush toys with small parts were recalled on April 7, 2008.*

Parents can keep the holidays fun by being safety-savvy shoppers; by looking for age-appropriate toys; and by reading all the warning labels carefully. Gift givers should also follow these important tips:

- Kids less than 8 years old in the house? Avoid toys with magnets or magnetic components small enough to swallow.
- Only adults should charge remote-controlled toys following manufacturer instructions; never overcharge.
- Watch for small parts around infants and young children.
- Sign up for free recall notifications by e-mail. As soon as there's a recall, you'll know what's affected and what to do.





## Winter Weather

Love it or hate it, snow and ice make for slippery conditions. Of course, slips and falls on icy surfaces are not unusual, but neither are injuries from winter sports and activities.

For 2007, CPSC staff estimates 235,000 injuries treated in emergency rooms from incidents related to selected winter activities and products. The chart below shows a breakdown of these activities.

Many of the reported injuries were strains, sprains and fractures. The more serious injuries involved head trauma such as concussions and skull fractures. Many winter sports, particularly those involving high speeds, are safer with a helmet on. There are different helmets for different activities. Each type of helmet is made to protect your head from the impacts common to a particular activity or sport.



Which Helmet for Which Activity?

### Survival on the Mountain

I love to ski. As a kid growing up in upstate New York, I loved the snow, the wind, and the feeling of gliding on snow. Truthfully, I never wore a helmet until I started taking my daughter, Victoria, to the mountains. Even then, I didn't want to wear one, but I wanted to set a good example for Victoria.

Last season, on a routine run, I was searching out some fresh powder on the side of a trail. I skied into a section that looked smooth, but the snow collapsed suddenly under me and I went tumbling into the trees – head first.

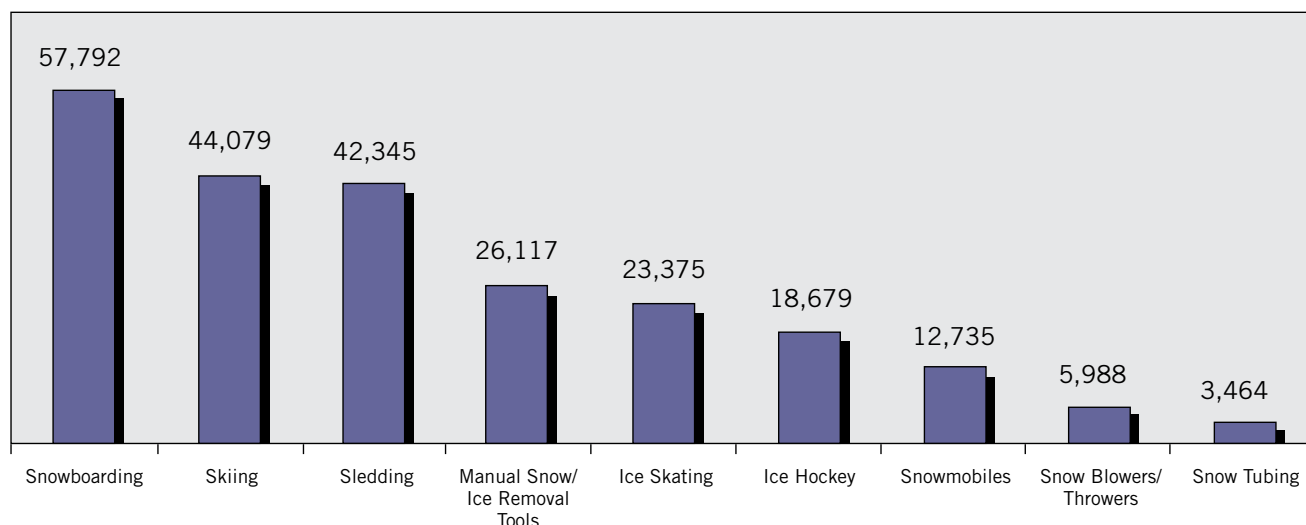
I left the mountain that day with a slight concussion and strapped to a sled, but confident that my helmet saved me from a certain skull fracture, or worse. Now, the skis don't go on, until the helmet goes on first.

My advice to everyone out there: strap one on every time – it could save your life.

– Alan H.



## Estimated E.R.-Treated Injuries (2007)





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## Weathering the High Cost of Heating Your Home

Aside from stocking up on sweaters and blankets, rising energy costs could send many consumers looking for ways to take the chill out of their homes this winter. The CPSC urges consumers to keep safety in mind when using fireplaces, gas-fired stoves, space heaters and furnaces as they can be fatal if not used and maintained properly. Heating systems are a leading source of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning; there have been more than 300 CO-related deaths from home heating products since 2002. CPSC recommends a yearly professional inspection of chimneys, flues and vents for leakage, blockage by debris, and to make sure they are not loose or disconnected. In addition, the inspector should check appliances for gas leaks and adequate ventilation.

“Protect your family from an invisible killer,” said CPSC Acting Chairman Nancy Nord. “Install working CO alarms in the hallway near bedrooms in each sleeping area.”

Furthermore, consumers need to be cautious when using portable heaters, including space heaters, which are one of the major causes of death in home heating fires. There were about 1,900 residential fires associated with portable heaters each year from 2003–2005.

To help prevent deaths and injuries from space heaters, CPSC urges consumers to:

- Place the heater on a level, hard and nonflammable surface (such as ceramic tile floor), not on rugs or carpets, or near bedding or drapes.
- Keep the heater at least three feet from bedding, drapes, furniture and other flammable materials. Keep children and pets away from space heaters.
- To prevent the risk of fire, NEVER leave a space heater on when you go to sleep or place a space heater close to any sleeping person. Turn the space heater off if you leave the area.
- Use a space heater that has been tested to the latest safety standards and certified by a nationally-recognized testing laboratory. These heaters will have the most up-to-date safety features; older space heaters (manufactured before 1983) may not shut off if oxygen levels fall too low or turn off automatically if tipped over.
- Make sure the smoke alarms in your home have fresh batteries.



Hear more  
in our podcast



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## RECALL SPOTLIGHT

### Wireless Headset Batteries Recalled by GN Netcom Due to Fire Hazard



**Name of Product:** GN9120 Wireless Headsets

**Units:** About 525,000 (an additional 675,000 were sold outside the U.S.)

**Manufacturer:** GN Netcom Inc., of Nashua, New Hampshire

**Manufacturer (battery):** Amperex Technology Limited (ATL), of Hong Kong

**Hazard:** An internal short circuit can cause the lithium-ion polymer batteries to overheat, posing a fire hazard.

**Incidents/Injuries:** GN Netcom has received 10 reports of incidents involving overheating, including three reports of open flames and property damage to furniture on which the headsets were resting. An additional 37 reports of overheating, three reports of open flames and one report of second degree burns, requiring medical attention, were received outside the U.S.

**Description:** This recall involves GN9120 wireless headsets with ATL lithium-ion polymer batteries. The headsets are intended primarily for professional use in offices and call centers. The product is sold with three components: a base station, headset and power adapter. "GN Netcom" or "GN9120" is printed on the base station and headset. The affected batteries have part number 603028 and have a white plastic enclosure. The batteries are labeled "Made by ATL (Amperex Technology Ltd.)" and "(ATL P/N 603028)." Batteries sold as a replacement part are labeled "GN9120 battery replacement kit."

**Sold through:** GN Netcom, authorized distributors and resellers nationwide from January 2005 through September 2008 for between \$150 and \$350 as part of the GN9120 headset and about \$20 as a replacement part.

**Remedy:** Consumers should immediately stop using and unplug the recalled headsets. Consumers should contact GN Netcom to receive a replacement battery.

**Consumer Contact:** Call GN Netcom at (877) 803-6467 or visit the firm's Web site at [www.jabra.com](http://www.jabra.com).

## SIGN UP for recalls



Sign up for this FREE resource! Signing up is easy, it's fast, and it could save your life or the life of a family member. Simply provide us with your e-mail address, and start receiving important information today. As soon as there's a recall, you'll know about it.

SIGN UP NOW





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CPSC Recall Hotline 800-638-2772

## RECENT RECALLS



### Chain Saws

Homelite Consumer Products Inc., of Anderson, South Carolina, is recalling about 370,000 Homelite Chain Saws. The chain brake can fail to stop the chain on its first application, posing a risk of laceration to consumers.



### Toy Blasters

Hasbro Inc., of Pawtucket, Rhode Island, is recalling about 330,000 Nerf™ N-Strike Recon Blasters. The blaster's plunger can pull the user's skin during firing of the toy blaster resulting in injury to the face, neck, and/or chest.



### Toy Boats

Dollar General Merchandising Inc., of Goodlettsville, Tennessee, is recalling about 200,000 Battery Operated Toy "Speed Boats". The two battery terminals can come into contact with each other, causing the battery to overheat, posing a burn hazard to consumers.



### Wireless Video Gaming Guitars

Performance Designed Products LLC, of Sherman Oaks, California, is recalling about 57,000 Rage Wireless Guitars. A circuit board defect can cause AA batteries used in the guitar to leak if the batteries are installed incorrectly, posing a risk of chemical burns to consumers.



### Mixers

MEDport LLC, of Providence, Rhode Island, is recalling about 54,500 Fit & Fresh™ Smooth Blend Mixers. While placing the cup on or off the base of the mixer, the mixer can unexpectedly turn on, activating the blade. This can pose a serious laceration hazard to consumers.



### Gas Grills

Fiesta Gas Grills, of Dickson, Tennessee, is recalling about 47,000 Blue Ember Gas Grills. The gas grills can be assembled improperly exposing the gas burner hoses to excessive heat, posing fire and burn hazards to consumers.



### Gas Vent Dampers

Effikal LLC, of Orion, Michigan, is recalling about 45,000 Automatic Gas Vent Dampers. The automatic gas vent damper could fail, and if the blocked vent switch does not activate, the vent could leak carbon monoxide (CO).



### Gaming System Batteries and Recharging Station

LeapFrog Enterprises Inc., of Emeryville, California, is recalling about 35,500 Rechargeable Batteries and Recharging Stations for Didj Custom Gaming System. The rechargeable batteries included with the Recharging Station can overheat if the gaming system is placed into the recharging base upside down, posing a burn hazard to consumers.



### Notebook Computer Batteries

About 35,000 (with an additional 65,000 batteries sold worldwide) Lithium-Ion Batteries manufactured by Sony Energy Devices Corporation, of Japan, and used in Hewlett-Packard, Toshiba and Dell Notebook Computers are being recalled. These lithium-ion batteries can overheat, posing a fire and burn hazard to consumers.



### Hammock Stands

Pottery Barn, of San Francisco, California, is recalling about 30,000 Wooden Hammock Stands. When used outdoors, the wood in the hammock stand can deteriorate over time and break, posing a risk of falls and lacerations to consumers.



For the latest recalls from around the Federal Government.