



## U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

Ann Brown, *Chairman*  
Mary Sheila Gall, *Commissioner*  
Thomas H. Moore, *Commissioner*

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# CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY REVIEW

SPRING 2000  
VOL. 4, NO. 4

## Operation S.O.S.

Monitoring e-commerce is a new frontier for CPSC. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) recently launched a pilot program called Operation S.O.S. (Safe Online Shopping) to find recalled, illegal, and potentially hazardous consumer products sold over the Internet.

The *Consumer Product Safety Review* (CPSReview) interviewed Alan Schoem, Director of CPSC's Office of Compliance, and Patricia Fairall, Program Manager, Office of Compliance, who helped set up CPSC's Internet initiative.

### **CPSReview:** *What is Operation S.O.S.?*

**Schoem:** Operation S.O.S. stands for Safe Online Shopping. It is CPSC's pilot Internet surveillance program to search undercover for unsafe products. We're looking for products that violate mandatory safety standards. We're also looking for products that might have defects that present a substantial risk to consumers, as well as recalled products.

### **CPSReview:** *Why did you decide to set up Operation S.O.S.?*

**Schoem:** We had been talking for a while about the need to look at products sold over the Internet. That's because of the large volume of retail sales that are now taking place on the Internet.

### **CPSReview:** *How did you go about setting up Operation S.O.S.?*

**Fairall:** Initially, we reviewed what a number of other federal agencies were doing about Internet surveillance and met with them to identify the techniques they used to set up this type of operation. Then, we established a system where we have "clean" computers, credit cards, and mail boxes that can't be traced to CPSC. That means, when we go online and do surveillance, no one will know it is CPSC staff doing the shopping.

### **CPSReview:** *How does Operation S.O.S. work?*

**Fairall:** Operation S.O.S. is now part of each CPSC compliance officer's job. They use the Internet as one more tool to work on their cases or find new cases. We also have a core group of staff who regularly do searches on a variety of product areas.

### **CPSReview:** *What have you found so far over the Internet?*

**Fairall:** We've found lots of things that had safety problems — flammable children's sleepwear, children's jackets with drawstrings, mini-hammocks without spreader bars, cigarette lighters that were not child-resistant. We found a drug that should have been in a child-resistant package and wasn't. We recalled a toy and a hammock we found on the Internet. We found some Scuba diving equipment and washing machines that could have had problems. We're also looking at fireworks.

*Continued on page 2*

## Operation S.O.S. Continued

**CPSReview:** *How is your surveillance of products over the Internet different from the surveillance of products found in brick and mortar stores?*

**Schoem:** In brick and mortar stores, we walk into retail stores and look for particular products. If we go online, we surf through different websites for products. If we suspect that a product violates a regulation or presents a safety hazard, we buy the product or, if the company is selling the product in the United States, we send an investigator on-site to take a look at it.

**Fairall:** Internet searching saves us time, because investigators don't have to drive out to lots of retail stores to search for products.

**CPSReview:** *Are you finding products you might not have found without Operation S.O.S.?*

**Schoem:** Quite possibly. For example, we might not have had easy access to some of the flammable sleepwear or drugs in non-child-resistant packaging. If something is only being sold online, going online is the only way you would find out about it. In addition, although cigarette lighters are sold through traditional brick and mortar stores, they were also being sold online. As Pat said, sometimes it's a lot easier to go online and look for products than to run around to a lot of different retail stores.

**CPSReview:** *How many of the unsafe products you find come from Internet surveillance compared with traditional surveillance?*

**Schoem:** Right now, there's a very small number from the Internet. But that's going to grow. Over the next few months, we are going to look at the most efficient way to use the Internet to find unsafe products. As Internet sales grow, we'll also be monitoring these sales in a much bigger way.

**CPSReview:** *How else are you using the Internet for surveillance?*

**Fairall:** We are also looking for silent recalls and violations of the requirement that firms report defective products that could create a substantial product hazard or products that present an unreasonable risk of serious injury or death. Sometimes firms silently recall a product that violates our regulations, and we want to identify them. We are also looking for firms, manufacturers, and importers selling products similar to the ones currently

being investigated — which helps us do a better job when we look at a group of products for various types of hazards. And, we are trying to find previously recalled products that continue to be sold online.

**CPSReview:** *Any other things you're doing on the Internet?*

**Fairall:** We're looking at various news groups and bulletin boards — looking for consumers who say a product breaks in a certain way that might present a substantial product hazard.

**CPSReview:** *The issue of Internet privacy is very big. Should the average consumer have anything to fear from CPSC surveillance?*

**Schoem:** Not from us, because we are only looking at publicly available information. We are not looking at any information that may be restricted in some way. We are only going on websites and places where there is no expectation of privacy, and everybody understands that the information is public.

**CPSReview:** *Are you monitoring chat rooms?*

**Fairall:** We have not gone into chat rooms that are live. We have gone into news groups, message boards, and bulletin boards looking for posted messages where people alert other consumers to problems they have encountered with particular products.

**CPSReview:** *What about auction sites?*

**Fairall:** We have done a little bit of work on auction sites. We are looking more for firms selling large numbers of a product than a consumer selling one or two used items. (See *Online "Double Check"*, page 3.)

**CPSReview:** *How are you using the Internet to help businesses with their consumer product safety issues?*

**Fairall:** We want to provide advice and guidance to small businesses that may be just getting into Internet sales but are unaware of some of our regulations. This is a way for us to find and identify those types of firms and send them guidance, so they can be sure the products they sell are not hazardous.

**CPSReview:** *Do you have any final thoughts on how Operation S.O.S. will help CPSC's compliance efforts?*

**Schoem:** We think Operation S.O.S. will be an important tool in our arsenal to find dangerous and violative products, which will help us better protect consumers.

## Online “Double Check”

CPSC recently announced an initiative with two of the largest auction websites — eBay Inc., of San Jose, CA and Amazon.com Auctions of Seattle, WA — to protect consumers from dangerous products sold online.

Linking to CPSC’s website, eBay and Amazon.com Auctions will post guidance for consumers to help them get information about recalled products that may be offered for sale.

Hundreds of hazardous products have been banned by CPSC or recalled over the years. While CPSC can get these products off store shelves, getting these products out of people’s homes is more difficult. Many items end up for sale by individuals on the increasingly popular auction websites.

Children’s products and toys, tools, exercise equipment, and household items are the focus of this initiative.

CPSC urges consumers to do a “Recall Double Check” when using online auctions: check before you sell, check before you buy. This “Recall Double Check” will be easier because of the links from eBay and Amazon.com Auctions sites to CPSC recall information.

Customers of eBay can access a special CPSC page on the eBay site that alerts consumers to the dangers of recalled products. This information is available with a link from both the bidder and seller forms for certain products, and the *Tips for Buyers*, *Tips for Sellers*, and *Is my item allowed on eBay?* sections of the eBay site.

Amazon.com Auctions will include a link to CPSC’s website in the confirmation emails sent to bidders and sellers of tools, toys, exercise equipment, and other products. Links also are located at the *Prohibited Content and Asking Questions About an Item* sections on the site. Amazon.com Auctions will continue to monitor its site for recalled products and remove them as appropriate.

To determine if any product has been recalled or banned, consumers can visit CPSC’s website at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) or call CPSC’s toll-free Hotline at 1-800-638-2772.

## Baby Boomer Sports Injuries

Sports-related injuries among those ages 35 to 54 — today’s baby boomers — increased about 33% from 1991 to 1998, according to a recently-released CPSC report.

There were just under 276,000 hospital emergency room-treated injuries to persons 35 to 54 in 1991 compared with slightly more than 365,000 sports injuries to persons of these ages in 1998.

This increase in injuries, which occurred in 16 popular sports activities, was due primarily to increased numbers of baby boomers participating in these sports (*Figure 1*).

When all medically-attended injuries in these popular sports were included, CPSC estimated there were a total of more than 1 million injuries to baby boomers in 1998 (compared with 778,000 such injuries to persons 35 to 54 in 1991). These sports injuries to baby boomers cost the nation over \$18.7 billion in 1998.

Bicycling and basketball were associated with the largest number of 1998 baby boomer sports injuries treated in hospital emergency rooms. Of special note (see below), baby boomers suffered a relatively high number of head injury-related deaths while bicycling.

Baby boomers represented almost one-third of all Americans who participated in sports in 1998. These 79.1 million people comprised over 29 percent of the total U.S. population. In 1998, there were 14 million more Americans in the 35 to 54 age group than in 1991.

### Sports Injuries and Deaths

Seven sports showed significant increasing trends in the number of emergency room-treated injuries in the 35 to 54 age group in 1998. These were: bicycling, golf, soccer, basketball, exercise and running, weightlifting, and in-line skating. Participation data showed increases in baby boomers’ sports participation for most of these sports. (Information on how many people participated in weightlifting or exercise and running was not available.)

Three sports showed significant decreasing trends in the number of emergency room-treated injuries and decreasing trends in the number of participants. These were: skiing, tennis and volleyball.

For three sports, there were large numbers of deaths reported to CPSC. These were: bicycling (290 deaths a year, all but 35 motor vehicle-related); swimming (67

*Continued on page 4*

deaths a year associated with swimming pools); and skiing (7 deaths a year).

### Safety Equipment-Related Issues

Baby boomers who rode bicycles died from head injuries at nearly twice the rate as children who rode bikes. This difference is likely the result of greater helmet usage among children. According to CPSC, 69% of children wear helmets when bicycling compared with only 43% of baby boomers.

Baby boomer in-line skaters, however, were injured less frequently than other skaters. In 1998, about 3.2 out of every 1,000 baby boomer in-line skaters were treated in an emergency room for a skating injury. Among children under 18, this number was 4.6 out of every 1,000. For the population as a whole, it was 4.1 per 1,000 skaters. Baby boomers suffered a much smaller proportion of arm and hand injuries than other age groups,

which may be an indication they are wearing appropriate protective equipment such as gloves, wrist guards, and elbow pads.

### Conclusion

It is important for baby boomers to stay active and to participate in sports. But safety is an essential consideration.

For example, baby boomers can reduce serious head injuries by wearing bike helmets when bike riding. Other sports-related injuries can be avoided or reduced by following such precautions as wearing other appropriate sports safety equipment, warming up before vigorous exercise, and increasing one's amount of exercise gradually.

— George W. Rutherford, Jr., M.S., Directorate for Epidemiology

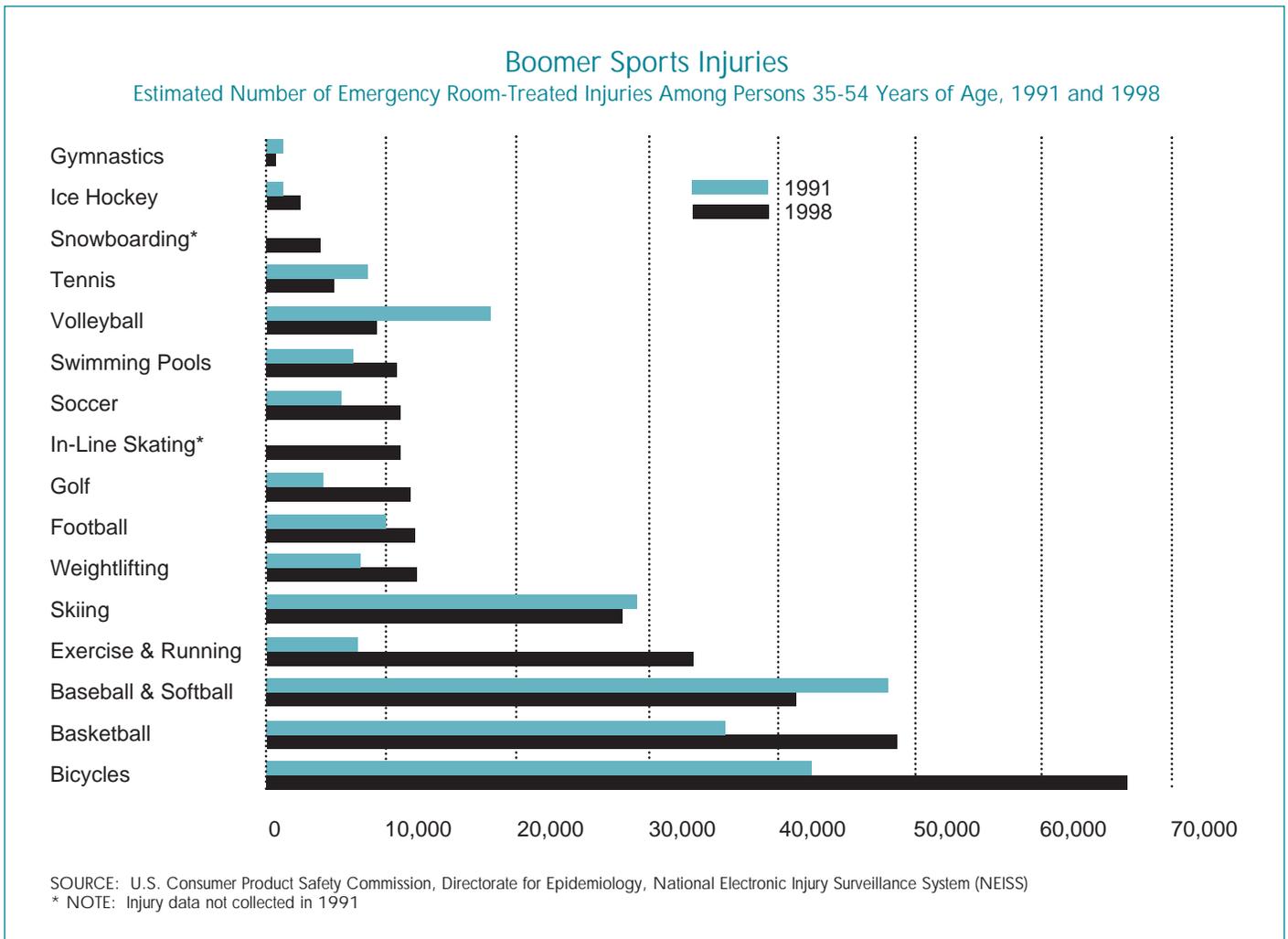


Figure 1

## Recall Round-up's "Most Wanted"

Bad guys are not the only ones to make the "Most Wanted" lists in post offices these days. As part of CPSC's recent "Recall Round-up 2000," dangerous recalled consumer products also are up on the walls of post offices around the country.

CPSC and the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) recently worked together to post these recall notices on bulletin boards in all 33,000 post offices.

The goal of Recall Round-up 2000 is to get hazardous products out of people's homes. Despite recall notices and public warnings, consumers still use many products with the potential to seriously injure or kill. With more than seven million people entering post offices each day, these recall posters should help alert more people to possible dangers.

In addition to the Postal Service's help for Recall Round-up 2000, CPSC enlisted the aid of state and local officials, and national and state health and safety organizations. Governors, state health officials, and grassroots voluntary and service groups helped publicize the safety campaign and distribute information about the hazardous products. In some states, recalled products were rounded up and brought to central locations for disposal.

As part of Recall Round-up 2000, CPSC encouraged safety checks of thrift stores, too many of which sell recalled, hazardous products. This year, officials in 32 states began visiting thrift stores to educate store owners about the dangers of selling recalled products and to help get hazardous products off the shelves.

Recall Round-up 2000 highlighted the following hazardous products that might still be in consumers' homes.

**Infant car seat/carriers** with the handles that can unexpectedly release can cause the seat to flip forward and the infant to fall. Three brands of carriers have been recalled. CPSC knows of 160 injuries, including skull fractures and concussions, with all three recalled carriers. The recalled carriers are: Evenflo "On My Way" Model 207 and 492 made before July 27, 1997 by Evenflo Company; Cosco "Arriva" and "Turnabout" models made before September 9, 1997 by Cosco Inc.; and Kolcraft "Infant Rider", "Secura", and other models made from January 1, 1993 through June 30, 1999 by Kolcraft Enterprises. People should call these companies to get a free repair kit: Evenflo (800-203-2138); Cosco (800-221-6736); and Kolcraft (800-776-2609).

**Pokemon Balls** included with Burger King kids meals may pose a suffocation hazard to children under age 3 if either half of the ball gets stuck on the child's face, covering the nose and mouth. More than 25 million "Pokemon Balls" were distributed in November and December 1999. A 13-month-old girl and a 4-month-old boy reportedly suffocated when one-half of a Pokemon ball covered the

nose and mouth. In addition, CPSC is aware of several non-suffocation incidents. Take away the "Pokemon Balls" (including the clip) from children under age 3 and discard the ball. Or, return both halves to a Burger King restaurant for a free small order of French fries.

**Swimming pool dive sticks** can cause rectal or vaginal impalement if children jump into a shallow pool and fall or land on the dive stick. CPSC knows of eight impalement injuries and four non-impalement injuries to children 5 to 11 years old. People should stop using the hard plastic dive sticks and throw them out. Depending on the dive sticks owned, consumers can receive a refund, replacement, or repair.

**Television carts** made by Sauder Woodworking Co. (models 5155, 5055, and 5251 made through September 1998) and by Bush Industries Inc. (models 5414 and 5014 from June 1992 to August 1998) can tip over and injure children and adults when the cart and the TV fall. There have been 15 reports of these carts tipping over, resulting in three injuries, including a 3-year-old girl who suffered a skull fracture. The carts were sold ready-to-assemble and had a bottom cabinet with hinged double doors. People should remove their televisions and VCRs from the carts and contact the manufacturer to get a free repair kit to help prevent the cart from tipping over. For Sauder, call: 888-800-4590; for Bush, call: 800-950-4782.

**Tubular metal cribs** made by Cosco Inc. before September 1997 can entrap or strangle a baby. These metal cribs can be mis-assembled with the mattress platform used as a side rail, creating a distance between the side rail slats that allows an infant to become entrapped. There have been 27 reports of babies becoming entrapped because of mis-assembly, resulting in one death. In addition, mattresses sold with Model "M" cribs and sold before October 1997 can compress and be pushed between the bars on the crib's platform, permitting a baby to slip between the bars on the crib's platform and become entrapped. Cosco has received 12 complaints of entrapment because of the compressed mattress, resulting in one death. Call the company to make sure the crib is properly assembled and to get a new, safer mattress at 800-221-6736.

**Cedar chests** with lids that automatically latch shut when closed made by The Lane Co. between 1912 and 1987 can pose a hazard. CPSC and Lane are aware of seven children suffocating inside the chests when the lid closed and automatically latched shut. Only those made between 1912 and 1987 are involved. Contact the company to get a free replacement lock to prevent entrapment at 888-856-8758.

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## Children's Safety Initiatives

CPSC recently initiated several partnerships to protect the lives of infants and young children.

At CPSC's urging, seven major retailers that sell bedding for infants have agreed to a safety campaign promoting safe bedding practices for babies. Babies "R" Us, IKEA, JCPenney, Kmart, Lands' End, Sears, and Target, which account for the majority of baby bedding sales, are making changes to crib displays in retail stores, catalogs, advertisements, and websites.

Shoppers will no longer see cribs made up with pillows, quilts, and comforters at these retailers. As many as 900 baby deaths each year attributed to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) may be caused by suffocation from soft bedding items such as these.

Many of these retailers will include cautionary statements about soft bedding for younger babies in their catalogs, on signs attached to cribs, and on inserts that accompany baby comforters and quilts.

When featured in crib ads, babies will always be pictured sleeping on their backs. Some of the retailers will create bedding safety brochures for customers and add quilt racks to their nursery product lines.

Since 1994, CPSC has warned about the danger of soft bedding to babies under 12 months. But consumers often got a different message when they went to stores or browsed through catalogs. Many cribs were made up with pillows and other soft bedding, which may have encouraged parents to use these items in cribs.

CPSC has worked with manufacturers to get warning labels on infant pillows and is now working for a similar warning on baby quilts and comforters.

### Crib Safety at Hotels

In another move to protect young children, CPSC and the National SAFE KIDS Campaign recently announced an initiative on crib and play yard safety to keep children

safe when traveling with their families. Spot checks by SAFE KIDS found that about 80% of hotels and motels visited had unsafe cribs and play yards.

Bass Hotels & Resorts, which includes the Inter-Continental, Holiday Inn, Holiday Inn Express, Staybridge Suites, and Crowne Plaza brands, initially joined the new safety initiative.

Since the announcement, other hotel companies have joined the safety initiative. These include Wyndham, Omni, Hyatt, Hilton, Aero Inn, and Starwood.

Bass Hotels & Resorts, for example, is providing additional training for staff. It held a "Crib Safety Week", where each hotel's housekeeping and maintenance staff conducted a thorough inspection of all cribs and play yards. The company also plans to include crib safety information in hotel publications, on its website, and at media events.

SAFE KIDS visited 90 hotels and motels in 27 states and the District of Columbia. Of the cribs inspected, 82% had at least one safety hazard, including loose hardware or lack of secured mattress supports that could entrap a baby; soft bedding, including quilts, comforters, or pillows that could cause suffocation; and adult-sized sheets that pose a strangulation and suffocation hazard.

Of the play yards and mesh cribs inspected, 52% had at least one safety hazard, including soft bedding and tears or holes in the meshing, which pose an entrapment risk to babies.

— *Jacqueline Elder, Office of Hazard Identification and Reduction*

For hotel or motel stays with young children, call ahead to ask if there is a system in place to ensure that the cribs are safe. To check out CPSC's crib safety checklist for consumers and a safety inspection checklist for hotels and motels, visit CPSC's website at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) or call the CPSC hotline at 1-800-638-2772.

## Recall Round-up's "Most Wanted"

*Continued from page 5*

**Old cribs and other products made before CPSC's safety standards** can choke, strangle, or suffocate children. Old cribs with more than  $2\frac{3}{8}$  inches between crib slats, corner posts, or cut-outs on the headboard or footboard present suffocation and strangulation hazards. Bunk beds with spaces bigger than  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches can cause entrapment and strangulation. Old chest freezers can suffocate children. Hairdryers without built-in shock-

protection devices in the plug can cause electrocution. Drawstrings around the neck of jackets and sweatshirts can strangle a child. Destroy these old hazardous products. Do not sell them at garage sales or give them to thrift stores.

— *Carol Cave, Directorate for Field Operations*

For more information about these and other consumer products, call CPSC's tollfree hotline at: 1-800-638-2772 or visit its website at: [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov).

# 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 website at [www.cpsc.gov](http://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

# 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](mailto: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 December 1999, and January and February 2000, 609 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, 17 months, was put in a playpen at his babysitter's. Soon after, the child began to turn blue and Emergency Medical Services was called. Paramedics found a green miniature pool ball lodged in the back of his throat. The child was taken to the hospital where he died two days later. The cause of death was asphyxiation. (Daniel S. Heinz, Coroner, Peoria County, Peoria, IL)

\*A male, 3 months, was put to sleep on the bottom bunk of a bunk bed by his grandmother. A comforter and pillow were placed between the bunk bed and the wall to eliminate a gap. The next morning, the grandmother found the baby lodged between the mattress and the wall; the comforter had dislodged. The cause of death was positional asphyxiation. (L. J. Dragovic, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner, Oakland County, Pontiac, MI)

## POISONINGS

\*Two men, 51 and 34, went on a hunting trip. They were found, unresponsive, in their sleeping bags in a tent by a friend. The tent was sealed and contained a working propane heater with a blue flame around the heating element. The cause of death was carbon monoxide intoxication. (Marcus Nashelsky, M.D., Medical Investigator, Albuquerque, NM)

A female, 33, was found unresponsive in the apartment she had moved into the day before. The cap to a boiler exhaust vent was closed in the boiler room next to her apartment. This caused carbon monoxide to seep into her apartment. The cause of death was carbon monoxide poisoning. (Bruce Hyma, M.D., Assistant Medical Examiner, District 11, Dade County, Miami, FL)

\*A male, 61, and his wife, 51, were found in their van with two empty camping lanterns. Both lanterns had their valves in an open position. The cause of their deaths was carbon monoxide poisoning. (Patricia J. McFeeley, M.D., Assistant Chief Medical Investigator, Albuquerque, NM)

A male, 84, was found dead due to a malfunctioning liquid propane refrigerator. The cause of death was carbon monoxide poisoning. (Lynn Reed, Coroner, Moultrie County, Sullivan, IL)

\*A male, 65, was found dead in his home due to an unventilated propane gas floor heater. The cause of death was carbon monoxide intoxication. (Marcus Nashelsky, M.D., Medical Investigator, Albuquerque, NM)

## DROWNINGS

A female, 1, was found unresponsive in the family swimming pool. The pool was equipped with a child safety fence, but the gate was left open, which enabled the child to enter the pool. The cause of death was drowning. (Susan Gabriel for Thomas Beaver, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner, District 7, Volusia County, Daytona Beach, FL)

\*A male, 8 months, was left in a bathtub in a flotation device while his mother went to the kitchen to cook some rice. The mother returned to check on him because he

was quiet. She found him out of the flotation device and under water. The unresponsive child was taken to the hospital, where he died the next day. The cause of death was drowning.

(William Hamilton, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner, District 8, Gainesville, FL)

A male, 2, was found under the solar cover of his family's above-ground pool. The child had been left alone momentarily by his mother, who was attending to her other child. A closed gate blocked access to the stairs of the deck surrounding the pool. An investigator theorized that the child had slipped through the railings of the deck stairway or had climbed between the steps themselves from the backside of the stairway. The cause of death was drowning.

(Richard R. Ballinger, Coroner, Du Page County, Wheaton, IL)

A female, 17 months, was found in the family pool by her mother. The child apparently opened French doors at the back of the house, untied the rope holding a broken gate closed, and entered the pool. The cause of death was drowning.

(Carlos A. Fonseca, M.D., Deputy Medical Examiner, Morris County, Morristown, NJ)

A female, 17 months, was found floating in the swimming pool at her home. She had been locked in a bedroom with her mother while her mother showered. One of her siblings had entered the bedroom and left the door unlocked. The child exited the bedroom and made her way to the unfenced pool. The cause of death was drowning.

(Joseph F. Blaise, M.D., Forensic Pathologist Resident, District 11, Dade County, Miami, FL)

A male, 2, was found in the swimming pool of his home by his mother. The child opened two locked doors and a cage around the pool while his mother was on the telephone. He died almost eight weeks after the incident. The cause of death was complications due to near drowning.

(Marie H. Hansen, M.D., Associate Medical Examiner, District 6, Largo, FL)

A female, 12 months, was left in a bathtub with the water slowly running and the drain open — so the tub wouldn't fill up. Her sister, 3, was also in the bathroom but not in the tub. Their mother went back and forth between the bathroom and the kitchen while preparing dinner. The 3-year-old told her mother that her sister had fallen, and the mother found the younger child lying in the tub water. The cause of death was drowning.

(Noel Palma, M.D., Medical Examiner, District 15, Palm Beach County, West Palm Beach, FL)

## ELECTROCUTION

A male, 34, received a fatal electric shock when he plugged a fan he was wiring into an outlet. The cause of death was electrocution.

(Carol Koop for Susan Roe, M.D., Medical Examiner, Ramsey County, St. Paul, MN)

## FIRES

A male, 74, died in a flash fire in his camper. He had changed the propane tanks in the morning and returned in the evening to close up the camper. He lit a disposable charcoal lighter inside the camper, which ignited the propane and caused a flash fire. The cause of death was thermal injuries.

(Jeffery Jentzen, M.D., Medical Examiner, Milwaukee County, Milwaukee, WI)

\*A female, 46, died in an electrical fire. A faulty electrical wire caught a sofa on fire. The cause of death was asphyxiation due to smoke and soot inhalation.

(Dolores Butler for I. C. Hood, M.B., ChB., Deputy Medical Examiner, Philadelphia, PA)

A female, 31, and four children, ages 1, 2, 4, and 9, died in a house fire caused by a gas dryer. The cause of their deaths was carbon monoxide poisoning.

(Carol Koop for Susan Roe, M.D., Medical Examiner, Ramsey County, St. Paul, MN)

## MISCELLANEOUS

\*A male, 5, was sitting on the crossbar of his sister's 10-speed bike. The brakes did not work, and they ran head-on into a guardrail at the end of a dead-end street. Both children, who were not wearing helmets, were thrown from the bike, and the male struck the guardrail. His sister did not receive serious injuries. The cause of death was blunt trauma to the chest.

(Michael A. Graham, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner, St. Louis, MO)

\*A male, 8 months, died when he fell from a bed onto a space heater. He was found wedged between the bed and a wall. The cause of death was complications from thermal injuries.

(Carol Koop for Michael B. McGee, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner, Ramsey County, St. Paul, MN)

— *Denny Wierdak, Directorate for Epidemiology*



## 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](http://www.cpsc.gov).*

**Product:** About 755,000 18-volt **battery packs** by the DEWALT® Industrial Tool Co. The battery packs, for use with various battery-operated tools, are model number DW9095. The model number is located on the nameplate on the bottom of the battery pack. The battery packs have date codes from 9719 to 9810 located on the top of the battery pack. The battery packs are black with "DEWALT," and "18V" in yellow on the sides of the packs. Major home centers and hardware stores, as well as industrial distributors, sold the battery packs nationwide from May 1997 through June 1998 for between \$70 and \$85. Battery packs with an "R" etched after the date code or with a red dot on the name plate already have been repaired and are not included in this recall.

**Problem:** The battery packs' clips can come loose causing the battery packs to fall. A falling battery pack weighing about 2.2 pounds can cause injury. DEWALT has received 53 reports of battery packs falling from the tools. There have been five reports of injuries, including a battery pack striking a consumer on the head.

**What to do:** Stop using the battery packs and call DEWALT® for a free repair kit toll free at 1-877-457-0478 between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. ET Monday through Friday or go to the company's web site at [www.dewalt.com/pressroom/fullstory.asp?article=27](http://www.dewalt.com/pressroom/fullstory.asp?article=27).

**Product:** About 1.9 million in-wall **electric heaters** by Cadet Manufacturing Co. The heaters are Cadet and Encore brands: FW, FX, LX, TK, ZA, Z, RA, RK, RLX, RX and ZC distributed mainly in California, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington. The brand and model are located on a label on the front of the heat box, behind the grill. This recall announcement follows the resolution of the lawsuit filed by CPSC staff against the company on January 14, 1999.

**Problem:** The CPSC alleges that the over-temperature limit switches, the heating elements and internal wiring connections are defective and can fail. CPSC alleges that the electric heaters are defective and can overheat and catch fire. Flames, sparks or molten particles can spew through the front grill cover of the heater into the living area of a residence, putting consumers at risk from fire, including burn injuries, smoke inhalation and property damage. The heaters can also become energized creating a risk of electric shock. CPSC is aware of more than 320 reports of heaters that smoked, sparked, caught fire, emitted flames, or ejected burning particles or molten material. The incidents have allegedly resulted in three deaths, two serious burn injuries and property damage claims exceeding \$1.2 million, which include five partial or total house fires.

**What to do:** Cadet is offering consumers replacement heaters at a significantly reduced cost. Each heater will cost between \$25 and \$57, depending on the model. Consumers who already have replaced the recalled units from October 23, 1997 until February 17, 2000 can file a claim for partial reimbursement for \$25 per heater. Consumers must register to participate in this recall by February 17, 2002. To register, contact Cadet anytime at 1-800-567-2613 or at [www.cadetco.com/recallprogram.html](http://www.cadetco.com/recallprogram.html).

**Product:** About 126,000 **ceiling-mounted light fixtures**. The light fixtures are TSI Prime, Inc. four-bulb, flush mount with an eight-sided glass and brass enclosure. A sticker on the fixture near the base of one of the light sockets reads, "MADE IN CHINA," and "E181045." Wal-Mart and Lowe's stores nationwide sold the light fixtures for between \$16 and \$25. Wal-Mart sold the fixtures individually packaged from February 1998 through March 1999. Lowe's sold the fixtures in two-packs from January 1998 through January 2000.

**Problem:** The light fixtures can short circuit and pose a fire hazard. TSI Prime has received three reports of these light fixtures short circuiting, resulting in scorch marks on the ceiling. No injuries have been reported.

**What to do:** Stop using the lights immediately and call TSI Prime to arrange for a free replacement. For more information, call TSI Prime toll-free at 1-877-317-9237 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. CT Monday through Friday.

**Product:** About 136,000 cans of **fire and smoke suppressant** by various distributors for The Colbra Group. The Colbra Group is now out of business. The 16-ounce "FIRE CAP" brand aerosol cans are red, orange, yellow, black, and white with a red plastic cap and red aerosol button. Wording on the front of the can reads in part, "FIRE CAP...FIRE and SMOKE SUPPRESSANT." "FOR USE ON SMALL SPOT FIRES..." is on the back of the can along with drawings of the product being used on a trash can fire, a stove fire, a car fire, and a campfire. "Manufactured by the Colbra Group" is written on the back of the can. Snap-On Tools dealers, Home Shopping Network, and direct market distributors, including Mid-State Fire Systems and Contract Filling Inc., sold the product nationwide from February 1996 through September 1999 for about \$10.

**Problem:** The fire and smoke suppressant does not suppress fires and could intensify fires. CPSC is not aware of any incidents or injuries with this product.

**What to do:** Stop using the product immediately and either throw out the can or return it to the place where purchased for a full refund. Consumers should call CPSC's toll-free hotline at 1-800-638-2772 for instructions on returning the product to the place of purchase.

**Product:** About 35,000 **power strips** by Champion Power Strips-Frieder Inc. The 6-outlet 125-volt power strip is made in China and bears no UL listing. The back of the power strip has a date code indicating it was manufactured on 4/97. Writing on the cord includes "Chang RVV 300/500V." "Champion Quality Tools" and model number 10741 are written on the packaging. Discount outlets nationwide sold the power strips from January 1997 through July 1998 for about \$3.

**Problem:** The wiring in these power strips is undersized and poses shock, electrocution, and fire hazards. No incidents or injuries have been reported involving these products.

**What to do:** Stop using these power strips and return them to the store where purchased for a refund or send them to Frieder for a refund plus postage. For more information, consumers should call Frieder at 1-800-321-8192 between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. ET Monday through Friday.

**Product:** About 19,000 **mountain bikes** by Dynacraft Industries Inc. The chrome-framed mountain bikes have model name "Vertical XL2" written on the bike frame in yellow and black lettering. A label affixed to the frame near the crank reads "Model No. 8526-26" and "99.10.11," which show they were manufactured

the week of October 11, 1999. Only bikes with this date code are part of this recall. Target stores nationwide sold these mountain bikes from November 1999 through February 2000 for about \$140.

**Problem:** The front suspension forks might not have been welded properly and can break apart during use resulting in serious injury to the rider. Dynacraft has received eight reports of injuries to riders when the front forks on these bikes broke apart. Injuries included cuts, bruises, back strain, and chipped and lost teeth.

**What to do:** Stop riding these bikes and take them to the Target store where purchased for a choice of a free replacement fork or a free replacement bike. For more information or to receive a free replacement fork by mail, call Dynacraft Industries Inc. at 1-800-551-0032 between 7 a.m. and 4 p.m. PT Monday through Friday.

**Product:** About 44,000 **jogging strollers** by InSTEP™ LLC. The recall involves InSTEP and HEALTHRIDER brand single and double jogging strollers manufactured from December 1998 through July 1999 with the model numbers: ZS100, ZD200, ZS100WS, ZD200WS, ZS100HR, ZD200HR, PR100 or PR200. The manufacturing date, written as T "month" R "year" I is located on a sticker on the lower cross tube (for example, T01R99I is January 1999). "InSTEP" and the model number are also on the sticker. Burlington Coat Factory, J.C. Penney, Healthrider, The Sports Authority, and Target stores nationwide, among others, sold the strollers from December 1998 through July 1999 for about \$100 for a single jogger and \$250 for a double jogger.

**Problem:** The stroller's brake can fail causing the stroller to unexpectedly roll away resulting in injury to a child. InSTEP LLC has received five reports of brakes failing. No injuries have been reported.

**What to do:** Stop using the strollers and contact InSTEP LLC to receive a free easy-to-install repair kit. To order the repair kit or for more information, call InSTEP LLC at 1-800-242-6110 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. CST Monday through Friday, or access the company's web site at [www.instep.net](http://www.instep.net).

**Product:** About 152,000 **baby wipe warmers** by Advance Thermo Control (ATC). The Prince Lionheart Baby Wipe Warmer is an electric appliance with style number 0224 and date codes between 9803 and 9901. The style number and date code are written on the bottom of the units and "PRINCE LIONHEART" is written on the lid. "Santa Maria, CA USA" and "MADE IN CHINA" are written on the bottom of the units. Toy, department, and baby specialty stores, including Toys "R" Us and Burlington Coat Factory, and mail order catalogs sold these wipe warmers nationwide from February 1998 through December 1999 for about \$25.

**Problem:** Cracks in the interior tub of these wipe warmers can allow water to contact the electrical components and result in consumers receiving an electric shock. Prince Lionheart has received four reports of electric shocks when consumers touched the wipes in the warmers with cracked tubs.

**What to do:** Unplug the warmers, remove the wipes, and check to see if the interior tub is cracked. If so, stop using the warmer and call ATC for more information on receiving a free replacement unit. If the tub of the wipe warmer is not cracked, the unit is not part of the recall, and consumers can continue to use the appliance. For more information, contact ATC at 1-888-843-8718 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. CT Monday through Friday.

— Marc Schoem and John Shumlansky, Office of Compliance

## Baby Products and SIDS

CPSC is warning consumers about certain baby mattresses and pads that claim to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). These products encourage the potentially deadly practice of placing babies to sleep on their stomachs.

Despite these claims, CPSC is not aware of any evidence proving that babies can be placed safely to sleep on their stomachs on these products, or that using the products will reduce the risk of SIDS.

The risk of SIDS is significantly reduced by placing babies to sleep on their backs in a crib that meets current safety standards and has a firm, tight-fitting mattress and no soft bedding.

The four products involved in CPSC's action have been sold for about \$30 to \$100 in baby, drug, and discount department stores; in catalogs; and on the Internet, including the following web sites: [www.sidsprevent.com](http://www.sidsprevent.com), [www.kidsafeprod.com](http://www.kidsafeprod.com), and [flashmall.com](http://flashmall.com).

Due to CPSC's efforts, these firms have stopped manufacturing and distributing these products. The following products make the claims through their advertising and marketing, including their instructions and packaging. CPSC has asked retailers to stop selling these products and remove them from store shelves immediately.

### The four products involved in CPSC's action:

#### **Baby Air** (Breathable Mattress)

*Kid Safe*

*Van Nuys, Calif.*

5,000 sold\*

A wood frame covered by mesh fabric. Used in place of or on top of mattress.

#### **Breathe Easy Vented Infant Sleeping Surface**

*U.S. Family Products*

*Willard, Mo.*

33,000 sold\*

Ridged foam mattress pad with air holes. Used on top of mattress.

#### **Sleep Guardian Sleeping Pad**

*Sleep Guardian*

*Charleston, S.C.*

600 sold\*

Vinyl pad with open weave fabric cover attached to an air pump. Used on top of mattress.

#### **Sleep Safe Mattress Cover**

*Jupiter Industries*

*Ontario, Canada*

1,000 sold\*

Mesh fabric mattress cover.

\*Estimated quantity sold

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*Consumer Product Safety Review* is published quarterly by the U.S.  
Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, DC 20207.

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**For editorial correspondence, contact:**  
Nancy Sachs, CPSC  
Phone: 301-504-0554/Fax: 301-504-0407.

**For marketing inquiries, contact:**  
Lynn Barclay or Lola Springer, CPSC  
Phone: 301-504-0106/Fax: 301-713-0047.

To report consumer product-related injuries or for information on  
product safety, including recalls, contact CPSC by:

**Toll-free Hotline:** 1-800-638-2772

**World Wide Web:** <http://www.cpsc.gov>

**E-mail address:** [info@cpsc.gov](mailto:info@cpsc.gov)

**Fax-on-demand service:** call 301-504-0051 from the handset of a fax  
machine

**TTY for hearing and speech-impaired:** 1-800-638-8270

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