

NEWS from CPSC

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
August 1, 2007

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Office of Information and Public Affairs

Washington, DC 20207

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 1, 2007
Release #07-256

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CPSC Releases the "Top Five Hidden Home Hazards"

Safety Agency Places Popular Magnetic Toys on the List of Deadly Dangers

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Whether it is an apartment, duplex or single-family residence, the home is a place that is supposed to give families a feeling of safety and security. For many Americans families however, an injury or death of a loved one can turn this place of happiness into one of tragedy.

Each year, 33.1 million people are injured by consumer products in the home. Some hazards are from products the Agency has warned about for years; others come from new products and technologies. To keep Americans informed of dangers, the CPSC has identified the Top Five Hidden Home Hazards – associated with products that people may be using everyday, but are unaware of the dangers that they can cause. These home hazards are often unseen or unnoticed by consumers.

"The home is where people feel comfortable and secure, but constant awareness

is the key to keeping families safe,” said Acting Chairman Nancy Nord. “CPSC is aiming to increase awareness of the hidden hazards around the home in order to help consumers protect against these dangers.”

With no or very little investment, incidents and injuries from these dangers are preventable. Simply by being aware of these Top Five Hidden Home Hazards, many lives can be spared and life-altering injuries avoided:

#1 Magnets

Since 2005:

1 Death, 86 Injuries;

8 million magnetic toys recalled.

Today’s rare-earth magnets can be very small and powerful making them popular in toys, building sets, and jewelry. As the number of products with magnets has increased, so has the number of serious injuries to children. In several hundred incidents, magnets have fallen out of various toys and been swallowed by children. Small intact pieces of building sets that contain magnets have also been swallowed by children. If two or more magnets, or a magnet and another metal object are swallowed separately, they can attract to one another through intestinal walls and get trapped in place. The injury is hard to diagnose. Parents and physicians may think that the materials will pass through the child without consequence, but magnets can attract in the body and twist or pinch the intestines, causing holes, blockages, infection, and death, if not treated properly and promptly.

TIP



Watch carefully for loose magnets and magnetic pieces and keep away from younger children (less than 6). If you have a recalled product with magnets, stop using it, call the company today, and ask for the remedy.

#2 Recalled Products

Each year there about 400 recalls.

CPSC is very effective at getting dangerous products off store shelves, such as recalled toys, clothing, children's jewelry, tools, appliances, electronics and electrical products. But once a product gets into the home, the consumer has to be on the lookout. Consumers need to be aware of the latest safety recalls to keep dangerous recalled products away from family members.

TIP



Get dangerous products out of the home. Join CPSC's "Drive To One Million" campaign and sign up for **free** e-mail notifications at www.cpsc.gov/cpsclist.aspx - an e-mail from CPSC is not spam - it could save a life.

#3 Tip-overs

Average of 22 deaths per year; 31 in 2006 and an estimated 3,000 injuries.

Furniture, TVs and ranges can tip over and crush young children. Deaths and injuries occur when children climb onto, fall against or pull themselves up on television stands, shelves, bookcases, dressers, desks, and chests. TVs placed on top of furniture can tip over causing head trauma and other injuries. Items left on top of the TV, furniture, and countertops, such as toys, remote controls and treats might tempt kids to climb.

TIP



Verify that furniture is stable on its own. For added security, anchor to the floor or attach to a wall. Free standing ranges and stoves should be installed with anti-tip brackets.

#4 Windows & Coverings

Average of 12 deaths annually from window cords;
Average of 9 deaths and an estimated 3,700 injuries to children annually from window falls.

Children can strangle on window drapery and blind cords that can form a loop. Parents should use cordless blinds or keep cords and chains permanently out of the reach of children. Consumers should cut looped cords and install a safety tassel at the end of each pull cord or use a tie-down device, and install inner cord stays to prevent strangulation. Never place a child's crib or playpen within reach of a window blind.

The dangers of windows don't end with window coverings and pull cords. Kids love to play around windows. Unfortunately, kids can be injured or die when they fall out of windows. Do not rely on window screens. Window screens are designed to keep bugs out, not to keep kids in.

TIP Safeguard your windows: repair pull cords ending in loops and install window guards or stops today.



#5 Pool & Spa Drains

15 injuries, 2 fatalities from 2002-2004.

The suction from a pool drain can be so powerful that it can hold an adult under water, but most incidents involve children. The body can become sealed against the drain or hair can be pulled in and tangled. Missing or broken drain covers are a major reason many entrapment incidents occur. Pool and spa owners can consider installing a Safety Vacuum Release System (SVRS), which detects when a drain is blocked and automatically shuts

off the pool pump or interrupts the water circulation to prevent an entrapment.

TIP

Every time you use a pool or spa, inspect it for entrapment hazards. Check to make sure appropriate drain covers are in place and undamaged.

To learn more about these and other home hazards, and to sign up for recall information, visit our Web site at <http://www.cpsc.gov>.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission is charged with protecting the public from unreasonable risks of serious injury or death from more than 15,000 types of consumer products under the agency's jurisdiction. Deaths, injuries and property damage from consumer product incidents cost the nation more than \$700 billion annually. The CPSC is committed to protecting consumers and families from products that pose a fire, electrical, chemical, or mechanical hazard or can injure children. The CPSC's work to ensure the safety of consumer products - such as toys, cribs, power tools, cigarette lighters, and household chemicals - contributed significantly to the 30 percent decline in the rate of deaths and injuries associated with consumer products over the past 30 years.

To report a dangerous product or a product-related injury, call CPSC's hotline at (800) 638-2772 or CPSC's teletypewriter at (800) 638-8270, or visit CPSC's web site at www.cpsc.gov/talk.html. To join a CPSC email subscription list, please go to www.cpsc.gov/cpsclist.aspx. Consumers can obtain this release and recall information at CPSC's Web site at www.cpsc.gov.