



A nonprofit organization
dedicated to protecting children by
improving children's product safety

For Immediate Release
August 14, 2002

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New Report Finds Recalled Products Put Children at Risk from Fires and Burns

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(CHICAGO - July 24, 2002) A new report released today by Kids In Danger (KID) highlights the fire and burn risks to children from recalled products. "Forty-two children's product recalls, covering over 16 million individual items were issued over the past decade because of the risk of fire and burn injuries," stated Nancy Cowles, KID executive director. "Given recall effectiveness, this means that over 10 million products may still be in use that can potentially start a fire or severely burn children."

A Burning Threat: Fire and Burn Hazards of Children's Product Recalls, 1992 to 2002 found that children's products recalled by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) for fire, burn and electric shock hazards pose a sizable risk to children. Products were recalled for different reasons including battery failure, overheating, improper labeling, electrical wiring defects and flammability. Fires and burns are leading causes of unintentional injury and death of children in the United States, claiming the lives of approximately 800 children under the age of fifteen annually and injuring thousands more. Each year, 150,000 children are burned in America.

"From the beginning, Kids In Danger has addressed the great risk that recalled products pose to children," continued Cowles.

"Compelled by the danger to children from fire and burns, we undertook this report to examine the role children's products play in putting our children at risk of fire and burn injuries or death."

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DON'T LEARN ABOUT RECALLS FROM YOUR BABY

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The report looks at children's products recalled between June 1992 and June 2002. Only products intended for use by children or for their care are included.

Some of the recalls included are:

- Peg Perego children's riding vehicles that cost between \$100 and \$550 were recalled after 320 reports of electrical components overheating or pedals sticking. Thirty-five fires were reported.
- Rose Art Soap Making Kits in which the soap may get too hot when heated as instructed, leaking out of the plastic container -- ten reports of children being burned.
- Decorative children's lamps sold at Kmart that can short circuit and pose a fire hazard. Eight reports of fires, including over \$20,000 in damage.
- Baby monitors by Gerry were twice recalled because of fire hazard. These monitors are used when children are alone in the room.

Other findings of this report include:

- Electrical wiring defects led to the highest failure rate with 537 reported failures for six recalls. Overheating or melting followed at 324 failures for 11 recalls and battery defects at 44 failures for 2 recalls.
- Almost half (48%) of children's products recalled for fire, burn or electric shock hazards were toys. Clothing followed at 33%, nursery products at 14% and furniture at 5%.
- The largest recall was for 10 million Power Wheels battery powered ride-on vehicles from Fisher-Price. Four other juvenile product manufacturers issued recalls of over 500,000 units each.
- Sixty-five burn injuries were reported from these recalled products. One fatality was reported in a fire started by a Gerry Baby Products Deluxe Baby Monitor, Model 602.
- Thirty-six percent of recalled products violated the federal *Flammable Fabrics Act*.

"Kids In Danger is recommending that juvenile product manufacturers take more proactive measures and track the effectiveness of the recall process," concluded Genevieve Kirk, the report author. "In addition, children's products should be required to

certify that they meet existing mandatory standards, and manufacturers must take responsibility to design and adequately test their products before they are placed in the hands of consumers.”

“Products, especially used by children, need to be safe, properly labeled and well-tested,” stated Dave Weiner, Campaign Director for the Illinois PIRG Education Fund. “Parents and other consumers have a right to know about products they are purchasing for children and any potential dangers.”

KID was joined at the release by representatives of Illinois PIRG, the Coalition for Consumer Rights, and the Chicago Fire Department. Karen Sheehan, MD, MPH, Medical Director of Injury Free Coalition for Kids of Chicago at Children's Memorial Hospital spoke about the hazards of flammable children's clothing.

"As children's toys have gone high-tech, they have gotten higher-risk," stated Ben Edmonds, research director of the Coalition for Consumer Rights. "Kids today are not just playing with blocks and chalk. Their toys are wired, flammable and electrified. The Coalition for Consumer Rights joins Kids in Danger in calling for children's products to meet safety standards, which must be made mandatory. Otherwise, our children's safety will remain a mere illusion, one which too often, and tragically, goes up in smoke."

Kids In Danger is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting children by improving children's product safety. KID's mission is to educate the public about dangerous products, promote the development of safer children's products and advocate for children. Chicagoans Linda Ginzler and Boaz Keysar founded KID in 1998 after their 16-month-old son died in a recalled portable crib. More information about Kids In Danger and dangerous juvenile products is available at 312-595-0649 or www.KidsInDanger.org.

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