



**UNITED STATES
CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, DC 20207**

Memorandum

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TO : The File

THROUGH : Susan Ahmed, Ph.D., Associate Executive Director
Directorate for Epidemiology
Russell Roegner, Ph.D., Director
Hazard Analysis Division, EPHA

FROM : Joyce McDonald, EPHA

SUBJECT : Toy-Related Deaths and Injuries, Calendar Year 2003

This memorandum provides information on toy-related deaths and injuries reported to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) that occurred during the January 1, 2003 through December 31, 2003 time period.¹

TOY-RELATED DEATHS

CPSC has reports of 11 toy-related deaths involving children under age 15 that occurred in 2003.² The toys involved in these fatal incidents were as follows:

**Reported Toy-Related Deaths to Children 0-14
Calendar Year 2003³**

Type of Toy	Deaths
TOTAL	11
Toy Balls (choking/asphyxia)	5
Balloons (aspiration/asphyxia)	3
Game Piece (choking)	1
Toy Bead (choking)	1
Stuffed toy (positional asphyxia)	1

¹ This analysis, prepared by CPSC staff, has not been reviewed or approved by, and may not necessarily reflect the views of the Commission.

² The number of deaths (11) reported to CPSC during 2003 is comparable to 2002 (13 deaths). There were 6 additional deaths reported to CPSC involving scooters. However, these fatal incidents did not specify whether the scooter was motorized or not. Unpowered scooters are considered to be a toy, but motorized scooters are not in the toy category. Therefore, those 6 incidents are not included in the total count. Additionally, the 11 fatal toy-related incidents do not represent a sample of known probability of selection, and they may not include all the toy-related deaths occurring during the 2003 time period, in part because reporting is not complete for some data sources.

³ These data are based on reports from the In-depth Investigation file, the Injury and Potential Injury Incident file, the Death Certificate file and the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System for 1/1/2003 to 12/31/2003.

Victims of the 11 fatal incidents ranged in age from 4 months to 9 years old. Six of the victims were males.

Choking/Asphyxia or Aspiration Deaths

Ten deaths occurred where the child choked on or aspirated a toy. The toys involved in these fatal incidents were 5 toy balls⁴, 3 balloons, 1 game piece, and 1 toy bead. These children ranged in age from 12 months to 9 years old.

Positional Asphyxia

There was 1 fatality of a 4-month-old associated with positional asphyxia, involving the closure of the child's airway by a stuffed toy. The report of this death offers very limited information. It is unknown where in the home the child was when the incident occurred and there are no specific details concerning the scenario of the death.

Persons Age 15 and Over and Toy-Related Deaths

Although a majority of toy-related deaths involve children under the age of 15, there are fatalities associated with toys that occur with older persons. Older children and adults commonly use some products that are categorized as toys. An example is non-powered scooters, which are used by both children and adults.

In 2003, 2 persons over the age of 14 (a 62 year old male and a 43 year old female) were killed in incidents associated with toys. Both incidents involved falls from non-powered scooters⁵ and resulted in fatal head injuries.

ESTIMATED TOY-RELATED INJURIES (NEISS)⁶

In 2003 there were an estimated 206,500 toy-related injuries treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms. There was no statistically significant difference in the estimated toy-related injuries from 2002 (212,400) to 2003. There was a significant drop in toy-related injuries from 2001 to 2003. In 2001, there was a large number of riding toy-related injuries (including non-powered scooters) that affected the overall toy-related injury estimate of 255,100.

Estimated Toy-Related Injuries 1999 to 2003

Calendar Year	Estimated Injuries
1999	152,600
2000	191,000
2001	255,100
2002	212,400
2003	206,500

⁴ One of the toy balls was a ball that was meant to be shot from a plastic gun.

⁵ There was a third fatal injury of a 37 year old male involving a scooter, but it could not be determined if it was a non-powered scooter, which would classify it as a toy.

⁶ The source of these data is the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS), which is based on a statistical sample of hospital emergency room treated injuries.

Seventy-five percent (155,400) of the injuries for 2003 were to children under 15 years of age and 34 percent (71,200) were to children under 5. Twenty-five percent (51,100) of the injuries were to persons age 15 and up.

Overall, males were involved in 58 percent of the toy-related injury incidents. Most of the victims (97 percent) were treated and released from the hospital.

Forty-five percent of the total injuries (93,700) occurred to the head and face area, which includes head, face, eyeball, mouth and ear. Arms, from shoulder to finger, accounted for 26 percent of the injuries (53,200), while the leg and foot area accounted for 17 percent (35,900). The individual body parts having the most injuries overall were faces (40,900), heads (24,600) and mouths (14,700). Lacerations, contusions and abrasions were involved in over half of the total injuries (51 percent).

In 2003, riding toys (including non-powered scooters) continued to be associated with more injuries (70,600 or 34 percent) than any other category of toy. In 2002, riding toys (including non-powered scooters) were associated with an estimated 81,300 injuries.