



# **U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission**

***Saving Lives  
and Keeping Families Safe***

**1999 Performance Report  
March 2000**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Inside the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission ..... ii

Overview of the Strategic Plan..... iii

1999 Performance Report Summary .....iv

I. 1999 Performance Report by Strategic Goal .....1

    Keeping Children Safe from Head Injuries ..... 1

    Keeping Children Safe from Poisoning Hazards .....9

    Keeping Families Safe from Fire Hazards.....13

    Keeping Families Safe from Carbon Monoxide Poisonings .....25

    Keeping Families Safe from Electrocutions .....31

    Informing the Public .....36

    Industry Services .....41

    Consumer Satisfaction with CPSC Services.....44

II. Program Evaluations .....48

APPENDIX A: Major Contributors to this Report .....51

## Inside the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

### Big Mission

CPSC is responsible for protecting the American public from unreasonable risks of injury and death from 15,000 types of consumer products.

### What We Do

- ◆ Save the nation over \$10 billion annually in health care, property damage, and other societal costs through our work on hazards, such as children's head injuries, child poisonings, fire, carbon monoxide poisonings and electrocutions.
- ◆ Complete about 300 cooperative recalls of defective products each year. In 1999, these recalls involved 75 million products.
- ◆ Work cooperatively with industry to develop safety standards. Since 1994, we developed over 89 voluntary safety standards while issuing only 20 mandatory rules – over a four to one ratio of voluntary to mandatory safety standards.
- ◆ Provide an easy way for the public to learn about product hazards and contact us through our award-winning Hotline and “user friendly” web site. In 1999, we had a record-breaking 410,000 calls to our Hotline and about 2 million visits to our web site.

### Did You Know?

- ★ Unintentional injury is the leading cause of death among persons under 35 years old; it is the fifth leading cause of death in the nation.
- ★ Injuries kill more children than disease. Injuries account for one out of six hospital days in this country.
- ★ There are an average of 22,000 deaths and 29.5 million injuries each year related to consumer products under CPSC's jurisdiction.
- ★ The deaths, injuries and property damage associated with consumer products cost the nation over \$500 billion annually.



## **OVERVIEW OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)**

**CPSC's Mission:** To reduce unreasonable risks of injury and death from consumer products, and to assist consumers in evaluating the comparative safety of consumer products.

**CPSC's Vision:** A marketplace where consumer products are as free as reasonably possible from defects and hidden hazards; product designs that minimize the potential for failure and human error; routine use of early warning and protection systems; state-of-the-art information technology that rapidly identifies potentially hazardous products; and world safety standards that are modeled on the often higher standards of the United States.

### **STRATEGIC GOALS Reduce Product-Related Injuries and Deaths (10-year goals)**

- Reduce the product-related head injury rate to children by 10 percent.
- Prevent any increase in the death rate to children under 5 years from unintentional poisoning by drugs or hazardous household substances.
- Reduce the fire-related death rate by 10 percent.
- Reduce the carbon monoxide poisoning death rate by 20 percent.
- Reduce the electrocution death rate by 20 percent.

### **Provide Quality Services to the American Public (3-year goals)**

- Increase the number of visits by the public to CPSC's web site by 500 percent.
- Increase the reach of the *Consumer Product Safety Review* by 200 percent.
- Maintain the capability to respond to at least 250,000 Hotline calls per year.

### **Maintain High Levels of Customer Satisfaction with CPSC Services (3-year goals)**

- Attain 80 percent success with the timeliness and usefulness of the Fast Track Product Recall program and the Small Business Ombudsman program.
- Maintain consumer satisfaction with the Hotline, Clearinghouse and CPSC's State Partnership Program at 90 percent or better.

## 1999 Performance



## Report Summary

- 
- We met or exceeded almost all our 1999 Performance Plan activities.
  - There are no changes in our long-range hazard reduction trends to note at this time based on available information.
  - In our successful pursuit of our 1999 plan, we made these safety advances:
    - Worked to develop or improve nearly two dozen voluntary national safety standards,
    - Issued final rules for multi-purpose lighters and two household products that required the lighters to be child resistant and the household products to be in child-resistant packages. Continued technical research for possible rulemaking to address the risk of small, open flame-ignited fires involving upholstered furniture;
    - Completed several important studies to examine different product-related hazards, including analyzing fire incident data for portable electric heaters and testing gas ranges to determine the carbon monoxide emission rates;
    - Completed national studies of child care settings and thrift and other resale stores and as a result, informed the public that in over two-thirds of the sites visited potentially serious hazards or products were found; and
    - Initiated voluntary recalls with industry for over 160 types of potentially hazardous products contributing to injury and death reductions set forth in our strategic goals. These recalls involved over 26 million products. We informed the public of these recalls in nearly 100 news releases; 20 video news releases reaching a cumulative potential audience of over 300 million viewers; appearances on network TV morning shows by the Chairman, and through our consumer Hotline, web site, and National Injury Information Clearinghouse.
  - We concentrated on improving and publicizing our services for the web site, the *Consumer Product Safety Review* and the Hotline. Since 1997, web site visits increased by 885% and the *Review's* readership increased by 154%. Hotline callers increased from 252,000 in 1995 to a record 410,000 in 1999.
  - We continued to assist industry in complying more quickly with our regulations through two successful programs: the Fast Track Product Recall Program and Small Business Ombudsman Program. Surveys of firms who participated in these programs showed that 100% found them to be useful and that they should be continued.
  - We found that over 90% of our customers we surveyed reported high levels of satisfaction with our Hotline and Clearinghouse, as did the states with our State Partners Program.

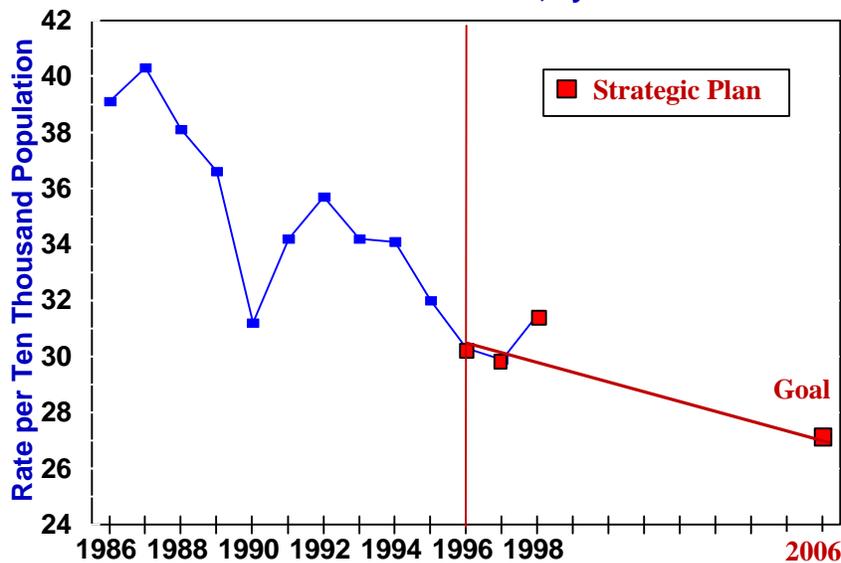
## I. 1999 Performance Report by Strategic Goal



### KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE FROM HEAD INJURIES

**STRATEGIC GOAL:** Reduce the rate of head injury to children under 15 years old by 10 percent from 1996 to 2006.

Head Injury Rates, Children Under 15  
71 Selected Products, by Year



Data source: CPSC National Electronic Injury Surveillance System, 1998; U.S. Census Bureau population projections, June 1999.

Note: We now have data for three years under our Strategic Plan. We cannot yet make projections about the trend in head injury rates based on these data.

### THE HAZARD

Head injury is a leading cause of death and disability to children in the United States. Almost 500 children under 15 years old die each year from head injury trauma related to consumer products. In 1998 alone, there were an estimated 650,000 product-related head injuries to children under 15 years old treated in hospital emergency rooms, or about 60 percent of all

head injuries.<sup>1</sup> Typically, over half of the head injuries were to children under 5 years old. Studies have shown that children have a higher risk of head injury than adults and that children's head injuries are often more severe than many other injuries and can have life-altering consequences.

<sup>1</sup> Estimates for 1999 are not available because the data are not complete.

Recently, about 80 percent of the head injuries to children under 15 years old were diagnosed as concussions, fractures and internal head injuries, potentially the more serious head injuries. The types of consumer products under the Commission's jurisdiction that are most often associated

with head injuries to children include bicycles, playground equipment, and other juvenile products. Participation in sports is also associated with high numbers of children's head injuries.

## ANNUAL HEAD INJURY-RELATED GOALS FOR 1999

### A. Hazard Assessment and Reduction

Annual Goals	1998 Actual	1999 Goal	1999 Actual
A-1. Send recommendations to voluntary standards organizations	5	6	6
A-2. Complete testing/data collection/hazard analysis activities	6	1	1

#### A-1. Prepare and send to voluntary standards organizations recommendations to strengthen or develop six voluntary standards.

##### Baby Swings

300 head injuries<sup>2</sup> (1998)<sup>3</sup>

*Develop a new voluntary standard that addresses falls and head injuries, as well as other hazards.*

**Done:** Based on recommendations provided by CPSC staff, a subcommittee of ASTM (an organization that develops voluntary standards by bringing together representatives of industry, government, and consumers) finalized a new draft standard for baby swings. The standard addresses structural integrity, stability, restraints, and warning labels to prevent falls, head injuries, and other hazards to infants.

##### Infant Carriers

8,300 head injuries (1998)

*Develop a new voluntary standard that addresses falls and head injuries from infant carriers, as well as other hazards.*

**Done:** At the urging of CPSC and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and based on technical recommendations provided by CPSC staff, an ASTM subcommittee developed a new draft standard that contains requirements for handle latch integrity. These requirements address handle separation from the carrier, a cause of falls that can result in serious injuries to infants.

<sup>2</sup> Head injury estimates for all products in this section are for children under 15.

<sup>3</sup> Year in parentheses is for latest available data.

**Bassinets and Cradles**

60 head injuries (1998)

*Develop a new voluntary standard that addresses collapses and head injuries, as well as other hazards.*

**Done:** At the request of CPSC staff, ASTM established a new subcommittee to develop standards for bassinets and cradles. Based on technical input from CPSC staff, a first draft of the new standards was completed. The standard addresses collapse, head injury, and other hazards to infants. CPSC staff is participating in the standards development.

**Sports-Related Head Gear**1,850 head injuries (1998):  
skiing and snowboarding

*Evaluate the voluntary standards for such sports-related head gear as mountain bike helmets, ski helmets, and roller hockey headgear, to ensure adequacy in protecting against head injury.*

**Done:** CPSC staff evaluated the draft voluntary standard for ski helmets and is participating in standards-development for roller hockey helmets. CPSC staff reviewed a new voluntary standard for mountain bike helmets that will afford greater protection against head injury.

**Trampolines**

3,800 head injuries (1998)

*Revise the voluntary standard to address falls and head injuries resulting from impact with the frame and ground.*

**Exceeded:** Based on recommendations from CPSC staff, ASTM issued a revised safety standard for components, assembly and use of trampolines in May 1998 several months early. The revised standard includes a requirement to cover springs with padding and adds labeling and warning requirements to provide information about safe use. In addition, CPSC staff worked with manufacturers on possible future changes to the performance of frame padding and on a test for padding retention. At the urging of CPSC staff, ASTM initiated round-robin impact testing of trampoline frame padding, being conducted by industry and CPSC laboratories.

**Window Guards**1,685 head injuries (1998)  
associated with windows

*Develop voluntary standards requirements for guards for non-egress windows to address falls and head injuries.*

**Done:** With input from CPSC staff, ASTM completed and approved a new provisional standard for window guards to be used on windows that are not appropriate for emergency escape and rescue. These guards will help prevent young children from falling out of windows.

**A-2. Complete one data collection activity.****Head Injury Costs**

*Complete data collection for a study to determine the long-term consequences of head injuries to provide realistic cost estimates.*

**Completed in 2000:** The project officer on CPSC's contract for the Head Injury Study left the project due to illness. This caused a delay in completion of interviews with victims of about 4-5 months. The interviews and data collection were completed in 2000 and the results will be available in 2000.

**B. Compliance**

<b>Annual Goals</b>	<b>1998 Actual</b>	<b>1999 Goal</b>	<b>1999 Actual</b>
B-1. Initiate recalls and corrective actions (unregulated)	13	15	20
B-2. Correct violations and initiate recalls (regulated)	2	10	14
B-3. Monitor existing voluntary standards	--	2	0

**Identify and act on products that present a risk of head injury through:****B-1. Recalls and Corrective Actions**

*Pursue for recall or other corrective actions a projected 15 products that present a substantial risk of head injury.*

**Exceeded:** In 1999, we obtained 20 recalls for over 2.3 million products that presented a substantial risk of head injury.

Examples of these recalls are:



In cooperation with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, CPSC obtained a recall of 670,000 infant car seats/carriers. When used as an infant carrier, the handle locks on each side of the seat can unexpectedly release, causing the seat to flip forward. There were 151 reports of the handle unexpectedly releasing, resulting in 29 injuries to children. These reports included skull fractures, a broken arm, and bumps to the head. Consumers can receive free repair kits from the manufacturer.



We initiated a recall of about 5,800 bicycle helmets used for bicycle motocross (BMX) and downhill mountain biking and racing. A defect with the helmets' chin strap rivets can result in the helmet coming off the rider's head, potentially causing a serious head injury in a fall or crash. One incident was reported where the chin strap assembly became detached from a helmet during a crash. No injury was reported. Consumers can receive free replacement helmets from the manufacturer.



CPSC initiated three recalls of over 580,000 soft infant carriers and backpack child carriers manufactured by three firms. Small infants could slip through leg openings and fall or topple out of the top of these carriers. Infants under 2 months of age were at greatest risk. There were 47 reports of infants falling from these carriers; seven infants suffered fractured skulls and seven received injuries including head bumps, a fractured wrist, bruises, abrasions, and contusions. Consumers can receive a retrofit kit, refund, or exchange depending on the type purchased.

## B-2. Violations and Recalls

*Identify and correct a projected 10 products that fail to meet mandatory safety standards and are likely to be involved in head injury.*

**Exceeded:** In 1999 we identified and corrected 14 products, all bicycles, that failed to meet mandatory safety standards and were likely to be involved in head injury. One was recalled due to problems with the brake system.

## B-3. Monitoring Voluntary Standards

*Monitor two existing voluntary standards likely to reduce head injuries to determine the number of firms in compliance.*

**Will complete in 2000:** In 1999 we planned to monitor two existing voluntary standards. These were home playground equipment and toy chests. For playground equipment, we found the work to be more complex than originally anticipated, including the need to train investigators to measure openings and protrusions, develop a statistically valid sample, and buy equipment. For toy chests, we contracted with four states to complete the retail surveillance. The work is continuing and will be completed in 2000.

### C. Consumer Information

Annual Goals	1998 Actual	1999 Goal	1999 Actual
C-1. Conduct public education efforts	2	4	4
C-2. Alert the public of recalls through press releases	17	15	19
C-3. Produce VNR for recalled product	6	1	6
C-4. Respond to consumer requests for publications	121,500	150,000	567,000

#### C-1. Issue four public alerts or warnings on:

##### Bicycles

*Promote the use of bicycle helmets and safe bicycle-riding practices that prevent head injuries to children.*

**Done:** We worked with McDonald's Restaurants to promote bike helmets by distributing booklets with "Happy Meals," providing television public service announcements; conducting bike rodeos; giving away helmets; and maintaining a "bike helmet" web site. We also distributed information about CPSC's new bike helmet safety standard.

##### All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs)

*Warn teenagers, parents and other caregivers of ATV hazards and promote the use of helmets and safe riding practices that prevent head injuries to children.*

**Done:** We negotiated extensively with ATV companies for their post-ATV Consent Decree voluntary programs designed to disseminate safety information to consumers and directed primarily at the large number of injuries to children. The companies submitted their proposals for their programs to us, including a proposed curriculum on ATV safety for young riders, a program to send ATV safety materials to public schools, and paid advertisements. We reviewed and commented on the materials they developed for their programs over an extended period of time.

Full-page advertisements with ATV safety messages were published in a number of nationally distributed magazines in late 1998. During 1999, members of the industry developed a curriculum and classroom materials on ATV safety directed at young riders. The curriculum was distributed in early 2000 to approximately 22,000 middle, junior, and senior high schools. Additional paid print advertisements are being published in nationally distributed magazines during Spring 2000. Actions under the information and education

programs to disseminate ATV safety information will continue over a three-year period at a cost of approximately \$10 million.

**Shopping Carts**

*Work with safety groups and industry to continue a program to equip shopping carts with safety straps, provide discount straps to stores that participate in the program, and encourage customers to buckle up their children.*

**Done:** We continued distribution of the safety alert and video news release produced the previous year promoting the use of safety straps. The Food Marketing Institute and the “Safe Strap” Company continued to provide safety straps to retail stores and to distribute posters and brochures urging parents to strap their children into the seat.

**Winter Sports**

*Provide safety tips for winter sports activities.*

**Done:** As part of an overall strategy to reduce head injuries, we conducted a special study on skiing and snowboarding injuries. The study showed that about 50 percent of the 16,000 head injuries associated with these sports in 1998 could be prevented or reduced in severity for both children and adults through the use of ski helmets. We issued a news release urging skiers and snowboarders to wear helmets designed for these sports. In addition to wearing helmets, the news release included other safety tips.

**Alert the public to the hazards of head injury through:**

**C-2. Press Releases**

*For recalled products presenting a substantial risk of head injury, initiate a projected 15 press releases to warn the public.*

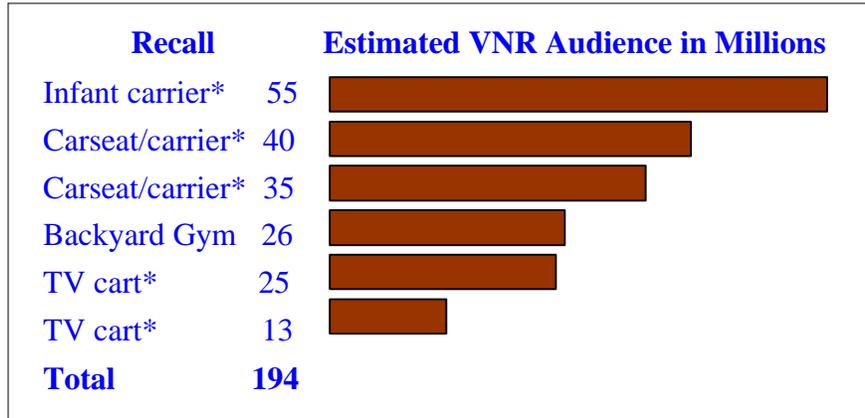
**Exceeded:** We issued 19 press releases warning about head injuries to children from recalled products. Some examples of products we warned about are:

<b>Recalled Product</b>	<b>Hazard</b>
• TV Carts	Tipover
• Car Seat/Carrier	Defective handle locks
• Bungee Baby Bouncer	Defective support rope
• Two-Way Tandem Strollers	Locks can break causing collapse
• Amusement rides	Ejection from rides

**C-3. Video News Release (VNR)**

*For at least one recalled product, work with the manufacturer of the recalled product to produce a VNR.*

**Exceeded:** For six recalled products listed below, we worked with manufacturers to produce VNRs. In 1999, these VNRs reached a total of almost 200 million potential viewers.



\*Recalls from different manufacturers

**C-4. Publications**

*Respond to consumer requests for a projected 150,000 checklists, booklets, and safety alerts warning about head injury hazards.*

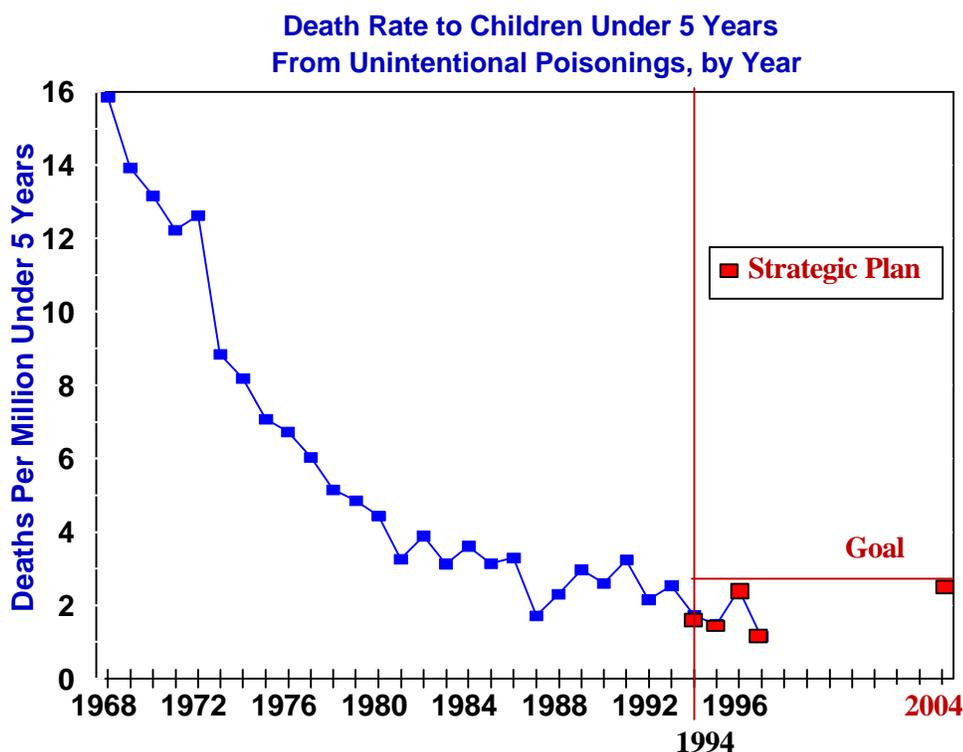
**Exceeded:** We distributed about 570,000 checklists, booklets and safety alerts warning about head injury hazards. We substantially exceeded our goal this year because we engaged in a one-time effort to distribute publications to state and local safety representatives who then distributed these publications to the public. The five most popular publications in this hazard area were:

Five Most Popular Publications	Distribution
• Handbook for Public Playground Safety	56,000
• Sprocketman Comic Book (Bicycles)	44,000
• What's New About Bicycle Helmets	32,000
• Ten Smart Routes to Bicycle Safety	29,000
• Use Your Head Before You Buy a Bicycle Helmet	24,000



## KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE FROM POISONING HAZARDS

**STRATEGIC GOAL:** The rate of death from unintentional poisonings to children under 5 years old from drugs and other hazardous household substances will not increase beyond 2.5 deaths per million children from 1994 to 2004.



Data Source: National Center for Health Statistics, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Mortality Branch, 1997; U.S. Census Bureau population projections, June 1999.

Note: We now have data for four years under our Strategic Plan. We cannot yet make projections about the trend in unintentional poisoning rates based on these data.

### THE HAZARD

Children can easily open packages containing drugs and other hazardous household chemical substances that are not in child-resistant packaging. Before 1974, an average of 200 children under the age of 5 years died each year from poisonings by

unintentional<sup>4</sup> ingestion of these substances. In 1970, Congress enacted the Poison Prevention Packaging Act (PPPA) requiring child-resistant packaging. Since the PPPA became law, deaths to children under 5 years

<sup>4</sup>Unintentional ingestions are those not supervised or administered by an adult.

have declined substantially to an average of less than 30 deaths annually.

While child poisoning deaths have been relatively low for a number of years, the Commission has seen evidence that without continued surveillance, the death rate could increase. When oral prescription drugs, which require child resistant packaging, are granted over-the-counter status, they no longer require child resistant packaging. When ibuprofen was granted over-the-counter status, a substantial increase in ibuprofen ingestions and injuries resulted. CPSC responded by passing a rule to require child resistant packaging for ibuprofen.

Based upon the experience with ibuprofen, CPSC has enacted rules on other non-steroidal anit-inflammatory drugs immediately upon their being granted over-the-counter status to prevent the expected ingestions and injuries. Additionally, CPSC staff monitors databases to identify emerging hazards among household chemical products and drugs. Since new household chemical products or new uses for these products and new over-the-counter drugs emerge on an ongoing basis, Commission staff is constantly vigilant in order to minimize the number of ingestions and injuries to children under the age of five.

**ANNUAL POISONING-RELATED GOALS FOR 1999**

**Strategic Goal:** In 1999, we met our strategic goal to maintain the low death rate of 2.5 million children under 5 years old. The death rate for unintentional poisonings from drugs and other hazardous household substances for 1997, the last year for which data was available, was 1.2 per million children under 5 years old.

**A. Hazard Assessment and Reduction**

<b>Annual Goals</b>	<b>1998 Actual</b>	<b>1999 Goal</b>	<b>1999 Actual</b>
A-1. Provide candidates for rulemaking	2	1	2

**A-1. Prepare for Commission consideration an advanced notice of proposed rulemaking, a notice of proposed rulemaking, or a final rulemaking, on at least one hazardous substance for child-resistant packaging.**

**Packages containing more than 14 milligrams of minoxidil**

**Done:** The final rule for child-resistant packages containing more than 14 milligrams of minoxidil went into effect in May 1999. Topical minoxidil is a liquid medication that can be applied to the scalp to stimulate hair growth. Ingestion of small amounts can cause adverse effects in children.

**Household products containing methacrylic acid**

**Done:** CPSC issued a notice of proposed rulemaking in December 1998 and the final rule in June 1999. The rule becomes effective in June 2000. Methacrylic acid is a

chemical used as a primer for cleaning and etching fingernails prior to applying artificial nails. It is associated with severe corrosive injury on contact with skin, eyes, and mucous membranes.

## B. Compliance

Annual Goals	1998 Actual	1999 Goal	1999 Actual
B-1. Correct violations and initiate recalls	15	30	21
B-2. Conduct performance tests	4	4	3

### B-1. Violations and Recalls

*Pursue for recall or other corrective actions a projected 30 products that violate safety regulations.*

In 1999, we found 21 violations of safety regulations. This was somewhat below our goal, which was a projection based on past history. There was no effect on overall program performance. We obtained five recalls for over 207,000 products in violation of requirement for child resistant closures. For example:



We initiated two recalls of about 140,000 bottles of dietary supplements containing elemental iron. The supplements were not packaged in child-resistant packaging as required under the Poison Prevention Packaging Act. If accidentally swallowed by children in toxic amounts, these supplements can cause serious injury or death. Consumers can return the products to the store where purchased for a refund or a child-resistant package.

### B-2. Performance tests

*Conduct performance tests on four packaging designs for compliance with child-resistance and adult-friendly requirements.*

We conducted performance tests on three packaging designs for compliance with child-resistance or adult-friendly requirements in 1999. We identified these three packages as candidates for testing because they were the only designs we encountered for which we had no child-resistant packaging test data. All three packages passed the tests.

**C. Consumer Information**

<b>Annual Goals</b>	<b>1998 Actual</b>	<b>1999 Goal</b>	<b>1999 Actual</b>
C-1. Coordinate health and safety campaign	1	1	1
C-2. Produce VNR for recalled product	1	1	1

**C-1. Health and Safety Campaign**

*Coordinate a health and safety campaign by partnering with the Poison Prevention Council and related organizations to promote child-resistant packaging and other poison prevention measures during National Poison Prevention Week.*

**Done:** CPSC serves as the "Secretariat" of the Poison Prevention Week Council, a coalition of 38 national organizations dedicated to preventing childhood poisonings. Since Congress authorized National Poison Prevention Week in 1961, the federal government has played the role of coordinator of this annual public health campaign. CPSC distributes the publications, produces the video news release, organizes the news conferences, responds to the calls and letters, and prepares an annual report documenting the national, state, and local activities for National Poison Prevention Week. All of the funds to produce the print and audiovisual materials are donated by the members of the Poison Prevention Week Council. This public health effort has an impressive national constituency including poison control centers, pharmacists, hospitals, and health departments. By promoting the use of child-resistant packaging and by urging parents to keep medicines and chemicals locked up, we help prevent childhood poisonings.

**C-2. Video News Release (VNR)**

*Produce a VNR on the hazards of unintentional poisonings to children.*

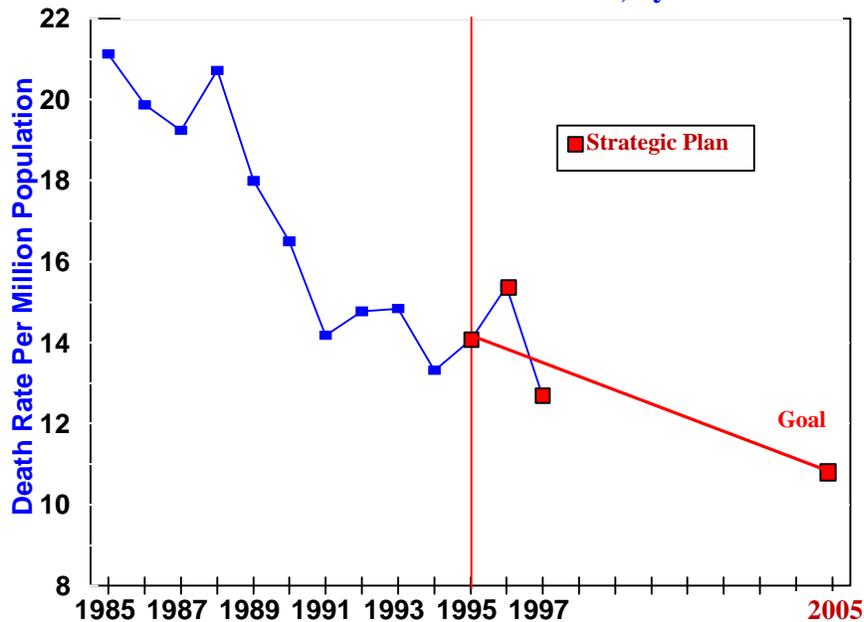
**Done:** We produced a VNR on poison prevention to air during National Poison Prevention Week. The VNR reached a potential audience of over 500,000 viewers.



## KEEPING FAMILIES SAFE FROM FIRE HAZARDS

**STRATEGIC GOAL: Reduce the rate of death from fire-related causes by 10 percent from 1995 to 2005.**

**Death Rate from Fire-Related Causes, by Year**



Data source: U.S. Fire Administration and National Fire Protection Association; U.S. Census Bureau population projections, June 1999.

Note: We now have data for three years under our Strategic Plan. We cannot yet make projections about the trend in fire-related death rates based on these data.

### THE HAZARD

In 1997, nearly 3,400 people died and 18,000 were injured because of fires that started in their homes. These fires resulted in property losses of over \$4.5 billion. Children are particularly vulnerable. Each year about 900 children under the age of 15 die of fire-related causes and about 600 of these deaths are to children under the age of 5 years. In fact, children under age 5 have a fire death rate more than twice the national

average. Children at increased risk are often those from low income and minority families who live in poorer urban and rural areas.

Most deaths occur from fires that start at night while families are asleep. Four times as many victims die of inhaling smoke and toxic gases than from burns. Products most often involved in fire deaths are upholstered furniture, mattresses and bedding, and heating equipment. These three product

categories account for about 50 percent of the fire deaths. The source of the flames is

primarily from lighters, matches, and heating equipment.

## ANNUAL FIRE-RELATED GOALS FOR 1999

### A. Hazard Assessment and Reduction

Annual Goals	1998 Actual	1999 Goal	1999 Actual
A-1. Provide candidates for rulemaking or other alternatives and continue technical review of another candidate	0	2	2
A-2. Send recommendations to voluntary standards organizations	7	8	8
A-3. Complete hazard analysis/data collection/technical feasibility studies	6	7	5

#### A-1. Prepare for Commission consideration one new candidate for final rule or other alternatives and continue technical research on another regulatory development project.

##### **Multi-Purpose Lighters**

45 deaths (since 1988)

*To address the risk of injury or death from young children who start fires by playing with these lighters, it is anticipated that staff will draft a proposed safety standard in 1998. In 1999, the Commission will: (a) issue a final rule for a mandatory performance or labeling standard; (b) work with standards-setting groups to complete a voluntary safety standard; or (c) consider other alternatives.*

**Done:** In December 1999, CPSC published a final rule that requires multi-purpose lighters to be child-resistant. The rule applies to lighters manufactured in the U.S. or imported on or after December 22, 2000.

##### **Upholstered Furniture**

Average 90 Deaths per year from small open flame ignition

*To address the risk of small open flame-ignited fires involving upholstered furniture, the staff will continue to develop technical information to support a possible standard. The staff will prepare toxicity reviews for flame retardant chemicals that may be used to meet a standard, and will award a contract to the National Academy of Sciences to carry out a congressionally-mandated study of these chemicals.*

**Done:** CPSC staff continued work to develop a small open flame standard, including laboratory testing and analysis of flame retardant chemical issues. CPSC awarded a contract

to the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) in January 1999. The CPSC staff prepared toxicity reviews for 16 chemicals and provided them to the NAS. The NAS study is expected to be completed in 2000. When it is completed, CPSC staff will analyze the findings and present alternatives for future action to the Commission.

## **A-2. Prepare and send to voluntary standards organizations recommendations to strengthen or develop eight voluntary standards.**

### **Arc Fault Circuit Protection**

300+ deaths per year related to home electrical system fires

*Develop recommendations for the national electrical code (NEC) to include arc fault protection in branch circuits of all new residential construction.*

**Done:** An arc fault circuit interrupter (AFCI) is a category of new residential electrical safety devices that provides families enhanced protection from fires caused by certain unsafe home wiring conditions. The 1999 NEC requires AFCIs for bedroom circuits, starting in January 2002. In 1999, CPSC staff proposed expansion of AFCI coverage for the 2000 NEC by requiring AFCIs for lighting and appliance circuits whenever electrical service equipment is replaced.

### **Plastic Applications**

100 deaths per year from electrical appliance fires

*Develop recommendations to address the fire hazards resulting from the use of plastic components in unattended small electrical appliances.*

**Done:** CPSC staff developed recommendations, and after extensive negotiations with Underwriters Laboratories (UL) and industry, Underwriters Laboratories (UL) agreed to issue proposed changes to the standard to prohibit the use of non-flame retardant plastics in enclosures for unattended portable electrical appliances.

### **Electrical Reinspection**

300+ deaths per year related to home electrical system fires

*Propose new requirements to update the current electrical reinspection code.*

**Done:** In January 1999, CPSC staff submitted six proposals to revise the National Fire Protection Association's residential electrical maintenance code for one- and two-family dwellings. Three were accepted in principle, including use and testing of AFCIs and electrical testers to aid in identification of improperly wired receptacles.

**Ranges and Ovens**

Average 95 deaths per year from ignition of cooking materials

*Develop recommendations to reduce range-top cooking fires and minimize fire spread.*

**Done:** CPSC staff sent letters to standards developers for gas and electric ranges, requesting that they develop requirements to reduce range-top cooking fires. Along with the letters, staff enclosed CPSC technical reports, providing support for such requirements. Cooking fires are a leading cause of residential fire and fire injuries.

**Fire Suppression Towels**

Average 95 deaths per year from ignition of cooking materials

*Develop recommendations to specify performance requirements to ensure that the products perform adequately in case of fire.*

**Done:** ASTM approved a new provisional standard based on CPSC staff recommendations that covers towels intended for use in extinguishing small fires in and around containers during cooking.

**Fire Escape Ladders**

4,000+ residential fire deaths each year

*Develop recommendations to specify performance requirements to ensure that the product performs adequately in case of fire.*

**Done:** Based on CPSC staff recommendations, ASTM developed and approved a new provisional standard for portable escape ladders for residential use.

**Battery-Operated Toys**

1 death (1987)

*Develop recommendations to reduce fire hazards from toys with high-energy batteries.*

**Done:** CPSC staff drafted recommendations for a voluntary safety standard for battery-powered ride-on toys. At the request of CPSC staff, ASTM established a working group to develop performance requirements for inclusion in an existing standard. The goal of such requirements is to ensure that battery-operated toys do not overheat or cause fires under normal and abnormal use conditions.

**Clothes Dryers**

10 deaths associated with clothes dryer fires (1996)

*Develop recommendations to reduce fire hazards from improper venting, lint buildup or other hazards.*

**Done:** CPSC contracted with an outside expert to conduct an independent assessment of clothes dryer-related fires. The results were consistent with the CPSC staff findings from a 1998 study. CPSC staff used the information from these

assessments to develop recommendations to address clothes dryer fires.

### **A-3a. Complete five hazard analysis and data collection activities:**

#### **Cigarette Lighters**

190 deaths annually from children under 5 playing with lighters

*Assess the effectiveness of the 1994 standard requiring lighters to be child-resistant.*

**Done:** CPSC staff completed its assessment and prepared a final report. The report is undergoing review.

#### **Dishwashers**

10 deaths (1996)

*Assess the causes of fires from dishwashers and the adequacy of existing standards requirements.*

**Done:** CPSC staff conducted an assessment of the adequacy of the UL voluntary standard for household dishwashers. Based on evaluation of the incident data the staff concluded that the existing standard's requirements are adequate.

#### **Wall Coverings**

190 deaths (1996)

*Complete collection of data on the factors contributing to wall covering fires.*

**Deleted:** CPSC deleted this project due to difficulties in obtaining relevant cases from fire departments.

#### **Sprinklers**

4,000+ residential fire deaths per year

*Collect samples from fire departments and assess the causes of failures.*

**Exceeded:** Completed a failure analysis using samples collected from fire departments that resulted in CPSC's support of a recommendation of the NFPA code concerning the installation and maintenance of dry sprinklers. This amendment was approved and it reduced the time until maintenance is required from 50 years to 10 years.

#### **Portable Electric Heaters**

130 deaths (1996)

*Analyze data to assess the adequacy of existing voluntary standards requirements.*

**Done:** CPSC staff analyzed CPSC fire incident data for fires attributed to portable electric heaters and performed a limited assessment of market data. Staff also reviewed the current requirement in the UL standard for movable and wall- or ceiling-hung electric room heaters, with particular focus on the substantial changes made to the standard in 1991. Finally, CPSC staff conducted an engineering analysis of

available portable heater models and tested available models, using fire indicators representative of items that the incident data often listed as the material first ignited. Staff will consider proposals to improve the standard based on these analyses.

### A-3b. Complete two technical feasibility studies on:

#### Cigarette Lighters

190 deaths annually from children under 5 playing with lighters

*Develop and construct a mechanical system for testing child-resistant lighters using robotic technology that will be more efficient and effective in screening lighters for child resistance.*

**Deleted:** After extensive review, CPSC staff determined that developing and constructing such a system was not technically feasible and would be cost-prohibitive. Consequently, the project was deleted.

#### Gas-Fired Water Heaters

20 deaths per year from ignition of flammable vapors

*Participate in the development of performance test requirements to address the risk of flammable vapor ignition from spilled gasoline or solvents.*

**Done:** During 1999, CPSC staff participated in industry development of a voluntary standard to eliminate the risk of ignition of flammable vapors. The ANSI (a standards development organization) water heater subcommittee and full committee adopted a flammable vapor ignition-resistance test method. One manufacturer introduced vapor ignition-resistant water heaters in October 1999. Other technologies are being field-tested.

## B. Compliance

Annual Goals	1998 Actual	1999 Goal	1999 Actual
B-1. Initiate recalls and corrective actions (unregulated)	58	50	70
B-2. Correct violations and initiate recalls (regulated)	526	350	595
B-3. Monitor existing voluntary standards	1	1	2
B-4. Conduct import surveillance	1	1	2

### Identify and act on products that present a risk of fire-related death through:

**B-1. Recalls and Corrective Actions**

*Pursue for recall or other corrective actions a projected 50 products that present a substantial risk of fire-related death.*

**Exceeded:** In 1999, we obtained 70 recalls for over 17.3 million products that contained defects that presented a substantial risk of fire-related deaths. We stepped up our efforts because of the Commission's focus on reducing the rate of fire deaths and injuries.

Examples of these recalls are:



CPSC initiated a recall of nearly 11 million battery operated ride-on cars and trucks sold for children 2 to 7 years old because their electrical components could overheat and cause fires. There were 150 reports of fires and 700 reports of electrical components failing and overheating while the cars and trucks were being ridden, charged, parked, or stored. Nine children suffered minor burns and up to \$300,000 in property damage to 22 houses and garages was reported. Service centers installed new parts free of charge.



We obtained a recall of up to 1 million fire sprinklers manufactured from 1961 through 1976 because these sprinklers could fail in a fire. The sprinklers were installed nationwide, primarily in nursing homes, and also in hospitals, schools, resorts, stores, office buildings, warehouses and supermarkets. The manufacturer provided free replacement sprinkler heads and reimbursement for the labor costs of removing and replacing the old units.

**B-2. Violations and Recalls**

*Identify and correct a projected 350 products that fail to meet mandatory fire safety standards.*

**Exceeded:** In 1999, 595 violations of products that failed to meet mandatory fire safety standards were identified and corrected. Of these, we obtained 40 recalls for over 4 million products. We stepped up our efforts because of the Commission's focus on reducing the rate of fire deaths and injuries.

Examples of these recalls are:



CPSC initiated a recall of about 3 million cigarette lighters because they lacked child-resistant features and may have presented a fire hazard. Consumers can return them to the store where purchased for a full refund.



We obtained a recall of about 65,000 robes because they fail to meet children's sleepwear flammability standards and present a serious burn risk to children. The standards require sleepwear, including robes, to be flame-resistant, and if the garment ignites, the flame must self-extinguish. Parents were advised to immediately stop their children from wearing these robes and can return the robes to the store for a refund of the full retail price or exchange.

### **B-3. Monitoring Voluntary Standards**

*Monitor one existing voluntary standard likely to reduce fire-related deaths to determine the number of firms in compliance.*

**Exceeded:** We conducted active import surveillance of extension cords, power strips, surge suppressors and holiday lights, all subject to voluntary standards. These types of products have frequently been implicated in residential fires. Working with U.S. Customs, we stopped noncomplying products at the docks. These activities also led to the recall of products that had already been admitted into and distributed in the U.S.

### **B-4. Import Surveillance**

*Conduct port-of-entry surveillance for at least one product for which fire safety standards are in effect.*

**Exceeded:** In 1999 we conducted port-of-entry surveillance for two products for which fire safety standards are in effect.

CPSC's safety standard requiring child resistance in disposable and some novelty cigarette lighters became effective in July 1994. CPSC and the U.S. Customs Service continue to work closely to enforce these requirements. In 1999, CPSC and the U.S. Customs Service prevented approximately 13 million noncomplying lighters from entering the country.

As part of its focus on reducing the potential number of fireworks injuries during Millennium celebrations surrounding the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and year-end periods, CPSC targeted imported fireworks. CPSC and the U.S. Customs Service selectively sampled 522 shipments of fireworks to ascertain the level of compliance with fireworks regulations. About 31%, or 164 shipments, were found to violate CPSC's mandatory safety requirements. These shipments accounted for more than 6 million units presenting violations serious enough to warrant seizure or other action by the U.S. Customs Service.

### C. Consumer Information

Annual Goals	1998 Actual	1999 Goal	1999 Actual
C-1. Conduct public education efforts	4	6	6
C-2. Alert the public of recalls through press releases	43	35	57
C-3. Produce VNR for recalled product	7	2	11
C-4. Respond to consumer requests for publications	180,000	150,000	469,000

#### C-1. Issue six public alerts and warnings on:

##### Fireworks

*Conduct an annual campaign for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday season to alert consumers to the common hazards associated with legal and illegal fireworks. The campaign will include a news conference to demonstrate the hazards; announcements of fireworks recalls; and publication of injury prevention tips.*

**Exceeded:** In 1999, CPSC announced fireworks recalls, held its annual July 4th news conference on the Mall in Washington to demonstrate the dangers associated with sparklers, bottle rockets, and some illegal fireworks, and issued fireworks safety tips, all to prevent deaths, blindings, amputations, and severe burns.

CPSC also established a two-year Millennium Fireworks Safety Initiative in 1999 to promote fireworks safety and prevent fireworks-related injuries and deaths throughout the nation during millennium celebrations, when use was expected to be high. This safety campaign will continue through New Year's Eve 2001 Millennium celebrations. To maximize the reach of this safety effort, CPSC is partnering with a broad range of some 60 national organizations and

state health, fire, consumer, and safety agencies. We also developed "Fireworks Safety Tips for the Millennium," which are posted on our web site. Through our joint efforts, we hope to reach the entire population with fireworks safety messages, in an effort to reduce preventable injuries and deaths.

### Home Heating

*Issue safety information designed to give consumers information related to home electrical system inspections; fuel-fired heating equipment; coal and woodstoves; and smoke detectors.*

**Done:** Continued distribution of publications about fire hazards from home heating equipment (gas, electric, wood, kerosene) and the need for smoke detectors. Also emphasized the need to check smoke detector batteries monthly and replace them annually to assure a working power source.

### Halloween Hazards

*Warn about the dangers of costumes catching on fire from children carrying candles, and using matches and cigarette lighters.*

**Done:** Issued a news release that provided safety tips to prevent Halloween-related injuries. These tips included recommendations for purchasing and using costumes and a warning of the risk of contact with candles or other sources of ignition. We emphasized the fire hazard of homemade 100% cotton loose-fitting costumes. There have been tragic cases where people have died because homemade costumes ignited and burned quickly.

### Holiday Hazards

*Warn about the risk of fire from defective decorative light strings and natural trees, as well as the safe use of candles and fireplaces.*

**Done:** In December, we issued a press release providing consumers with safety tips for trees, lights, decorations and fireplaces. We also initiated five recalls of holiday lights and candles during this same time period. For each recall, we issued a press release warning consumers about the hazards of lights from undersized wires, candleholders that can crack, and candles with painted or coated surfaces that can ignite. We conducted surveillance of holiday lights and decorations at stores nationwide.

## Cigarette Lighters

*Warn about the risk of fire from children under 5 years playing with cigarette lighters.*

**Done:** We warned about this risk in two 1999 news releases in which we announced indictments of individuals from two retail organizations.

During April 1999, after previously agreeing to stop selling non-child resistant lighters, a California retail chain again sold or offered for sale such lighters, this time to CPSC investigators posing as consumers. In some instances the salesperson removed the safety mechanism in front of the investigator. In a May 1999 press release, we announced an injunction against this retail chain and are seeking civil penalties.

In a July 1999 press release, CPSC announced criminal indictments for two additional people from another retail organization who were charged with removing child safety mechanisms from disposable cigarette lighters. In both of these news releases we noted that in the past, an average of 150 persons were killed and over 1,000 injured each year as a result of residential fires started by children younger than 5 who were playing with lighters.

## Alert the Public to Fire-Related Hazards through:

### C-2. Press Releases

*For recalled products presenting a substantial risk of fire-related deaths, initiate a projected 35 press releases.*

**Exceeded:** We issued 57 press releases warning about fire-related hazards from recalled products. Some examples are:

<b>Recalled Product</b>	<b>Hazard</b>
• Extension cords	Cords have undersized wire – fire, shock, electrocution hazard.
• Tractors	Improper wiring on fuel line – potential fire or burn injury.
• Water Distillers	Can overheat and catch on fire.
• Children’s fleece robes	Serious burn injury.
• Scented jewel candles	Candles can explode or break; pots can melt or catch on fire.
• Lighters	Lighters leak excess butane causing unexpected flashbacks and burst of flames.

**C-3. Video News Releases**

*Complete two VNRs: (1) for at least one recalled product, work with the manufacturer of the product to produce a VNR; and (2) produce a VNR for the fireworks safety campaign.*

**Exceeded:** We met our goal by completing VNRs for the products listed below. In 1999, these VNRs combined reached over 70 million potential viewers.

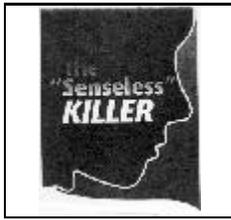
<b>Recall</b>	<b>Estimated VNR Audience in Millions</b>
Power Wheels toy cars	45 
Electric toy vehicle	18 
Fireworks campaign	7 
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>

**C-4. Publications**

*Respond to consumer requests for a projected 150,000 checklists, booklets, and safety alerts warning about fire-related hazards.*

**Exceeded:** We distributed about 470,000 checklists, booklets and safety alerts warning about fire-related hazards. We substantially exceeded our goal this year because we engaged in a one-time effort to distribute publications to state and local safety representatives who then distributed these publications to the public. The five most popular publications in this hazard area were:

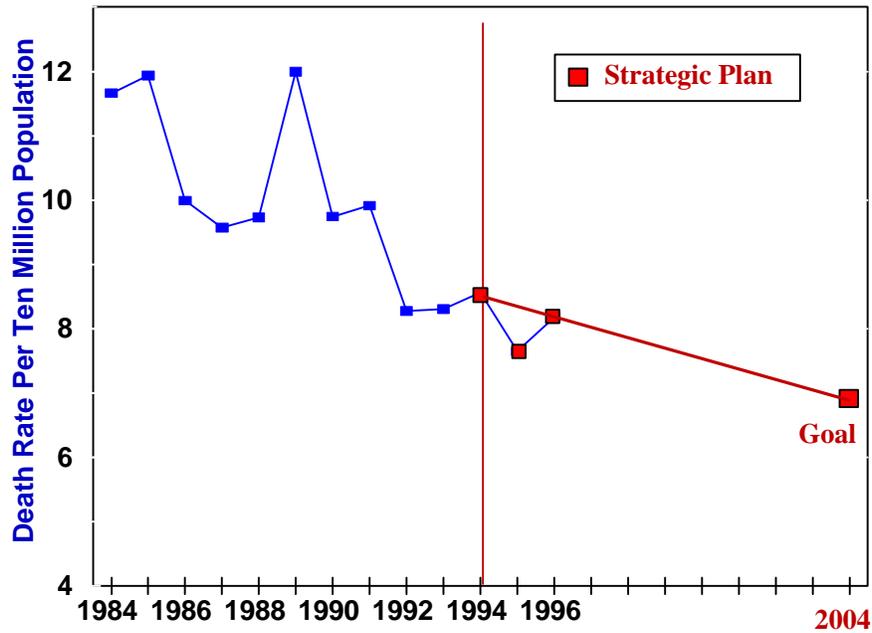
<b>Most Popular Publications</b>	<b>Distribution</b>
• Fireworks Safety Tips for the Millennium (English and Spanish)	200,000
• Your Home Fire Safety Checklist	43,000
• Smoke Detectors Can Save Your Life (English, Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, Tagalog)	41,000
• Merry Christmas with Safety	18,500
• Fire Safety Checklist for Older Consumers	14,000



## KEEPING FAMILIES SAFE FROM CARBON MONOXIDE POISONINGS

**STRATEGIC GOAL: Reduce the rate of death from carbon monoxide poisoning by 20 percent from 1994 to 2004.**

**Estimated Non-Fire Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Death Rate Associated with Consumer Products, by Year**



Data source: CPSC Death Certificate File, National Center for Health Statistics Mortality File 1980-1996; U.S. Census Bureau population projections, June 1999.

Note: We now have data for three years under our Strategic Plan. We cannot yet make projections about the trend in CO poisoning rates based on these data.

### THE HAZARD

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a poisonous gas that has no smell, color or taste -- truly a "senseless" killer. This gas is produced by burning any fuel, such as gas, oil, wood, or coal, so that any fuel-burning appliance is a potential CO source.

The latest available data show that over 200 people die and almost 8,000 are injured

each year from unintentional CO poisoning-related incidents, excluding incidents involving auto exhaust and fires, at a societal cost of about 2 billion dollars annually. Children under 15 years account for almost 10 percent of the deaths and over 35 percent of the injuries. Because some of the symptoms of CO poisoning may mimic common illnesses such as influenza or colds, there is a high incidence of missed initial diagnosis. Not only are victims frequently

unaware of exposure to CO, but health care providers often do not suspect or check for

CO poisoning.

## ANNUAL CARBON MONOXIDE-RELATED GOALS FOR 1999

### A. Hazard Assessment and Reduction

Annual Goals	1998 Actual	1999 Goal	1999 Actual
A-1. Send recommendations to national code groups and develop model legislation	--	2	2
A-2. Send recommendations to voluntary standards organizations	3	2	2
A-3. Complete hazard analysis/data collection/testing activities	2	3	2

#### A-1. Develop and submit a change in the International Building Code and develop model legislation.

##### International Building Code

200+ non-fire CO deaths per year

*Develop proposal to require installation of CO alarms in new residential construction.*

**Done:** CPSC staff developed a draft proposal that would require the installation of CO alarms that meet the requirements of the most recent applicable voluntary standards.

##### State and Local Jurisdictions

200+ non-fire CO deaths per year

*Develop model legislation for state and local governments to require CO alarms in new residential construction.*

**Done:** CPSC staff compiled existing CO alarm statutes from localities around the country and distributed that information, upon request, to jurisdictions considering CO alarm legislation.

#### A-2. Prepare and send recommendations to voluntary standards organizations to strengthen or develop two voluntary standards.

##### Camping Heaters

Average 17 deaths per year

*Revise the voluntary standard to address the risk of CO poisoning.*

**Done:** CPSC staff testing of camping heaters demonstrated that heaters can produce hazardous levels of CO under certain conditions. CPSC staff made recommendations

regarding CO emissions to the ANSI camping equipment subcommittee. The subcommittee adopted CPSC's recommendations and developed new requirements for CO emissions, effective in early 2000.

### **Furnaces**

160 non-fire CO deaths  
related to heating systems (1996)

*Develop recommendations to address CO emissions from gas furnaces by improving vent safety shut-off performance requirements.*

**Done:** CPSC staff responded to industry concerns regarding recommendations made by CPSC staff in 1997 to the ANSI central furnace subcommittee. These recommendations addressed the potential CO hazard presented by disconnected vents. We reviewed our recommendations and re-confirmed our view that the standard should include vent-safety shut-off performance requirements to address CO emissions from gas furnaces. The recommendations were not accepted and CPSC staff began emissions testing of furnaces to obtain data to buttress our original proposal.

## **A-3. Complete three hazard analysis and data collection activities on:**

### **Investigation Guidelines**

200+ non-fire CO deaths  
per year

*Revise and consolidate investigation guidelines for combustion appliances to provide more details on injury and death-related causes and contributing factors.*

**Done:** CPSC revised and consolidated its investigation guidelines and distributed them to CPSC investigators and fire departments across the country.

### **Gas Ranges**

15 CO deaths (1996)

*Assess the levels of CO emissions from gas ranges and the adequacy of the existing standards requirements.*

**Done:** In 1999, CPSC staff completed emissions testing of gas ranges by replicating various cooking and heating usage conditions. Before staff can complete an assessment of the existing standards requirements, the results must be modeled on conditions in a typical home. At the end of 1999, staff was exploring ways to model the emissions results.

### **Furnaces**

160 non-fire CO deaths  
related to heating systems (1996)

*Complete CO emissions testing of gas furnaces under various vent conditions.*

**Will complete in 2000:** This work was begun in 1999, but was more complex than was originally anticipated and was

not completed. Staff plans to complete this furnace testing in 2000.

**B. Compliance**

Annual Goals	1998 Actual	1999 Goal	1999 Actual
B. Initiate recalls and corrective actions	4	4	2

**Identify and act on products that present a risk of death from CO poisoning through:**

**Recalls and Corrective Actions**

*Pursue for recall or other corrective actions a projected four products that present a substantial risk of death from CO poisonings.*

In 1999 there were two recalls of CO detectors implemented by the firm and announced to the public.



CPSC obtained the recall of about 1 million carbon monoxide alarms. Two different models were involved in the recall. One model could alarm late or not alarm at all, and the other could alarm late. When the alarms don't work, consumers can be unknowingly exposed to hazardous levels of CO, and suffer injury or death. There were no reports of injuries involving the products. The recall was conducted to prevent the possibility of injury. Consumers could return alarms to manufacturer for repair.

As noted in the plan the actual number of recalls and corrective actions depends on the mix of safety-related problems that arise during the year. The goal was a projection based on prior experiences. Note also that several product recalls, which are counted under the fire goals because they present a primary risk of fire, also present a secondary risk of CO poisoning. Thus, there was no effect on the overall program performance.

### C. Consumer Information

Annual Goals	1998 Actual	1999 Goal	1999 Actual
C-1. Conduct public education efforts	2	2	2
C-2. Alert the public of recalls through press releases	1	3	1*
C-3. Respond to consumer requests for publications	51,000	50,000	74,500

\* We issued one press release for two CO detector recalls.

#### C-1. Issue two public alerts or warnings.

##### Nationwide Outreach

*Through the State Partners Program, develop and implement a public health campaign with all 50 states to inform consumers, and health and medical professionals about the hazards of CO poisoning and promote CO alarms manufactured to the revised Underwriters Laboratories standard. Hold press conferences and media events in 25 locations nationwide.*

**Done:** We worked with State Designees (a state representative who provides a link between CPSC and state governments) to distribute information about carbon monoxide hazards and the need for every home to have a carbon monoxide alarm. CPSC staff conducted several media interviews after tragic incidents of carbon monoxide poisoning and publicized the recall of two brands of carbon monoxide alarms because of defects in the chemical sensing cell. We also warned about the hazard of using gasoline-powered generators indoors. This was a concern after floods and winter ice storms knocked out electric power.

##### CO Safety Awareness Week

*Issue a press release and safety alert to inform consumers about the sources of CO poisoning and the means to prevent and detect CO buildup in homes.*

**Done:** In September each year, we issue a news release reminding people to have a professional check their home heating systems to make sure there are no carbon monoxide leaks and that their furnaces are working efficiently. In 1999, we also warned about the hazard of plastic vent pipes that could crack or separate at the joints and leak CO. Through our efforts working cooperatively with industry, there is now a program to replace, free of charge, an estimated 250,000 of

these pipe systems attached to gas or propane furnaces in consumers' homes.

### Alert the public to the hazards of CO poisoning deaths through:

#### C-2. Press Releases

*For recalled products presenting a substantial risk of death from CO poisoning, initiate a projected three press releases to warn the public.*

We obtained recalls of two products in 1999 for which we issued one press release. This press release alerted the public about the recall of the carbon monoxide alarms. The alarms did not alarm or would alarm too late at high CO levels. A total of 1 million alarms were involved in the recall.

#### C-3. Publications

*Respond to consumer requests for a projected 50,000 checklists, booklets, and safety alerts warning about CO poisoning hazards.*

**Exceeded:** We distributed about 74,500 checklists, booklets and safety alerts warning about carbon monoxide hazards. We substantially exceeded our goal this year because we engaged in a one-time effort to distribute publications to state and local safety representatives who then distributed these publications to the public. The three most popular publications in this hazard area were:

#### **Most Popular Publications**

#### **Distribution**

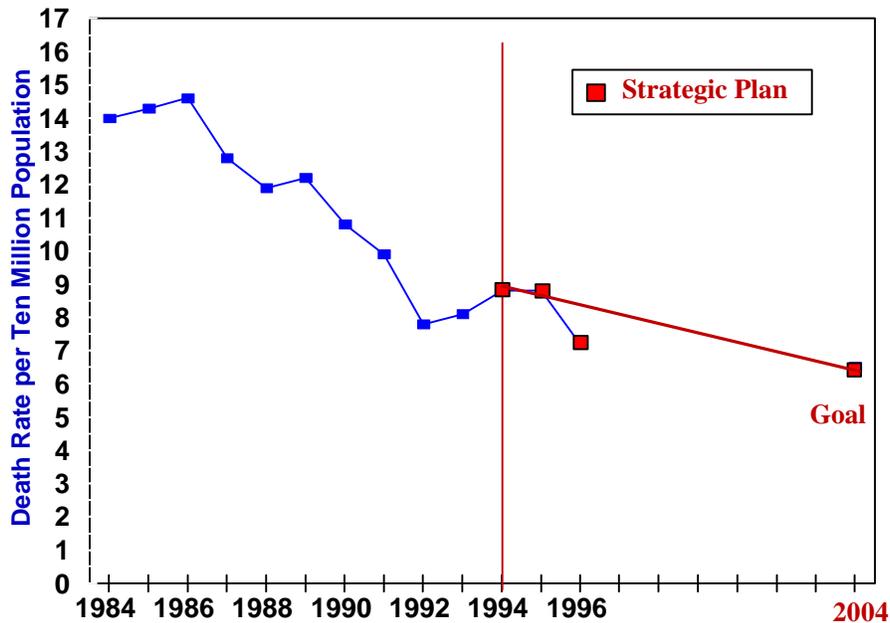
- |  |        |
|--|--------|
| • The Senseless Killer (English and Spanish) | 39,000 |
| • What You Should Know About Space Heaters   | 8,500  |
| • Carbon Monoxide Fact Sheet                 | 7,000  |



## KEEPING FAMILIES SAFE FROM ELECTROCUTIONS

**STRATEGIC GOAL: Reduce the rate of death from electrocutions by 20 percent from 1994 to 2004.**

Electrocution Rates for Consumer Products, by Year



Data source: CPSC Death Certificate File, National Center for Health Statistics Mortality File 1980-1996; U.S. Census Bureau population projections, June 1999.

Note: We now have data for three years under our Strategic Plan. We cannot yet make projections about the trend in electrocution rates based on these data.

### THE HAZARD

There are almost 200 deaths from consumer product-related electrocutions each year in the United States. About 10 percent of the deaths are to children under 15 years old. The deaths occurred most often because an electrical current came in contact with a victim's body and traveled through the victim to the ground. Most of the deaths could have been prevented by

installing ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). These are inexpensive electrical devices that are installed in household electrical circuits and in some small appliances. However, not all homes and products are adequately protected by GFCIs. The Commission continues to receive reports of electrocution deaths from products such as house wiring, lamps and light fixtures, antennas, power tools, and small and large appliances.

## ANNUAL ELECTROCUTION-RELATED GOALS FOR 1999

### A. Hazard Assessment and Reduction

Annual Goals	1998 Actual	1999 Goal	1999 Actual
A-1. Send recommendations to voluntary standards organizations	0	2	2
A-2. Send recommendations to national code groups	1	1	1

#### A-1. Prepare and send to the voluntary standards organization two recommendations to strengthen the requirements for ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs).

##### Installation

200 electrocution deaths per year

*Make recommendation to require easier installation for GFCIs.*

**Done:** CPSC staff made recommendations to the National Fire Protection Association to require a lock-out feature on GFCIs so they will not function when improperly installed.

##### Enhanced Design

200 electrocution deaths per year

*Make recommendation to incorporate electronic self-test requirements for GFCIs.*

**Done:** CPSC staff made recommendations to the National Fire Protection Association to incorporate electronic self-test requirements for outdoor GFCIs, which pose the highest risk for electrocution. CPSC staff subsequently met with manufacturers to discuss issues of GFCI reliability.

#### A-2. Provide recommendations to national code groups.

##### National Electrical Code

200 electrocution deaths per year

*Develop code recommendations for improved appliance grounding.*

**Done:** CPSC staff submitted a proposal to the National Fire Protection Association to update the National Electrical Code for 2000. The proposal recommends requiring a lockout feature for devices that are used to provide ground fault circuit protection for outdoor receptacles in dwelling units.

**B. Compliance**

Annual Goals	1998 Actual	1999 Goal	1999 Actual
B-1. Initiate recalls and corrective actions	38	20	23
B-2. Monitor existing voluntary standards	1	1	1

**Identify and act on products that present a risk of electrocution through:**

**B-1. Recalls and Corrective Actions**

*Pursue for recalls or other corrective actions a projected 20 products that present a substantial risk of electrocution.*

**Exceeded:** In 1999, we obtained 23 recalls for nearly 1.4 million products that presented a substantial risk of electrocution.

Examples of recalled products are:



CPSC initiated a recall of about 660,000 corded electric screwdrivers. The screwdrivers' wiring design could result in the user being shocked. There were 40 reports of these screwdrivers causing shocks during use and three reports of injuries resulting from these shocks. Consumers can take them to a service center for a free repair.



We obtained a recall of about 144,000 two-pole ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) circuit breakers, typically used with hot tubs and spas, to prevent shock or electrocution. These GFCI circuit breakers could overheat and lose their ability to prevent injury or death. Consumers could arrange to have qualified personnel replace the breakers at no charge and were advised to not use their hot tubs and spas until a replacement breaker has been installed. Consumers were also advised to not attempt to remove the GFCI circuit breaker because high voltage can cause death or serious injury.

**B-2. Monitoring Voluntary Standards**

*Monitor one existing voluntary standard to determine the number of firms in compliance.*

**Done:** In 1999 we planned to monitor one voluntary standard relating to Christmas tree lights. In the past, we have encountered many imported substandard light sets that not only fail to meet the voluntary standards but also present

substantial risks of injury to the public. Working with U.S. Customs, we stopped noncomplying holiday lights at the docks. These activities also led to the recall of products that had already been admitted into and distributed in the U.S.

### C. Consumer Information

Annual Goals	1998 Actual	1999 Goal	1999 Actual
C-1. Conduct public education efforts	0	1	1
C-2. Produce VNR for recalled product	0	1	1
C-3. Alert the public to recalls through press releases	8	8	13
C-4. Respond to consumer requests for publications	47,500	40,000	75,500

#### Alert the public to electrical hazards through:

##### C-1. Roundup-for-Safety Campaign

*Develop and implement a campaign to encourage consumers to dispose of older power tools which have poor insulation and a high risk of electrocution.*

**Modified:** As part of the annual Recall Round-up campaign, we decided to concentrate our efforts on warning about electrocution hazards from old hair dryers. New hair dryers have built-in shock protection devices to prevent electrocution if the hair dryers fall into water. Old hair dryers should be discarded. In future performance plans, we will continue to focus on old electrical products that have a high risk of electrocution to feature in our recall roundup safety campaign.

##### C-2. Video News Release (VNR)

*For at least one recalled product, work with the manufacturer of the recalled product to produce a VNR.*

**Done:** We worked with a manufacturer of vacuum cleaners to produce a VNR to warn about 226,000 upright vacuum cleaners. They were recalled because they can cause shocks or burns. The VNR reached over 25 million potential viewers.

##### C-3. Press Releases

*Initiate a projected eight press releases to advise the public of recalled products with a substantial risk of electrocution.*

**Exceeded:** We issued 13 press releases warning about electrocution hazards from recalled products. Some examples are:

<u>Recalled Product</u>	<u>Hazard</u>
• Under-cabinet lights	Shock due to improper assembly
• Oil-filled electric heaters	Shock and electrocution
• Treadmills	Electrocution
• Soldering Iron	Shock and electrocution
• Marine-type batteries	Negative terminal can crack causing explosion

#### C-4. Publications

*Respond to consumer requests for a projected 40,000 safety alerts, checklists and booklets.*

**Exceeded:** We distributed about 75,500 checklists, booklets and safety alerts warning about electrocution hazards. We substantially exceeded our goal this year because we engaged in a one-time effort to distribute publications to state and local safety representatives who then distributed these publications to the public. The three most popular publications in this hazard area were:

<u>Most Popular Publications</u>	<u>Distribution</u>
• Home Safety Checklist for Older Consumers (English and Spanish)	38,000*
• Electrical Safety Room-by Room Audit Checklist (English and Spanish)	19,000
• GFCIs Fact Sheet	12,000

\* A total of about 115 thousand checklists were distributed. To avoid "double-counting," the total number distributed was allocated between fire, electrical and electrocution hazards.

## INFORMING THE PUBLIC

**STRATEGIC GOAL: An increase in consumer awareness of CPSC safety information from 1997 to the year 2001 through:**



**Increasing contacts to CPSC's web site by 500 percent,**

**Maintaining the increase of 200 percent in subscriptions and web site contacts to the *Consumer Product Safety Review*, and**

**Maintaining the capability to respond to Hotline calls for safety information at or above 250,000 per year.**

### THE PROGRAM

Part of the Commission's mission is to assist consumers in evaluating the comparative safety of consumer products. To accomplish this requires a communication network that educates and informs the public about the safe use of consumer products and product recalls. CPSC also receives reports from the public about unsafe products, as well as inquiries about

product recalls. CPSC uses a variety of techniques to effectively and economically communicate safety information to the public and encourage feedback, including Hotline services, Internet services, the National Injury Information Clearinghouse, media programs, publications, consumer information and education programs, and partnership programs.

## ANNUAL GOALS FOR 1999

**Web Site Contacts – Increase web site contacts by 250%:**

Strategic Goal	1998 Actual	1999 Goal	1999 Actual
A. Cumulative increase in visits to CPSC's web site from 1997.	148%	250%	885%

### A. Web Site Visits

**Exceeded.** The number of visits to our web site increased by 885% over our 1997 baseline. While part of this increase is likely due to increased use of the Internet by the public, we also improved our web site to encourage increased use by the public. These improvements include the ability to: search the

site using a faster and more powerful search procedure; report hazardous products through on-line forms; access just-issued recalls and other special events through a special "Spotlight" section; and see pictures of recalled products in color for easier identification.

Annual Goals	1999 Goal	1999 Actual
A-1. Develop procedures for access to Commission databases by the public.	1	1
A-2. Enhance the educational capacity of the web site.	1	1
A-3. Update current hardware to increase the rate of response.	1	1

### A-1. Access to Commission Databases

*Develop procedures to allow the public direct access to national estimates from the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS). Access to NEISS estimates will provide the public with up-to-date product-related injury statistics. Staff continues to work to make CPSC data as available as possible.*

**Done:** In 1998, there were about 500,000 user sessions on our website; in 1999, there were about 2,000,000 user sessions, an increase of 300%. In 1999, CPSC bought the equipment and software, and developed the procedures, to allow public access to Commission databases, such as NEISS, via its web site.

### A-2. Enhance Educational Capacity

*Improve the "4 Kids" section of the site and link to the Department of Education's Network of up to 50 other educational sites to increase contacts made by teachers, students, and researchers.*

**Done:** We improved the "4 Kids" section of the web site by adding a specially designed sub-site with graphically-based games having a safety theme. This improvement resulted in the Kids' sub-site getting the second highest amount of traffic as compared to other sections of CPSC's site. Links were made from our "4 Kids" section to the Department of Education's "America Goes Back to School" program.

### A-3. Update Current Hardware

*Replace current equipment so that more web site visitors can connect and obtain information quickly.*

**Done:** We updated our equipment to include a load-balancing system and a second server to increase the rate of response to the public. We made other improvements to the

site, such as an online web form for subscribing to CPSC's e-mail subscription list.

**Consumer Product Safety Review (Review) – Maintain the reach of the Review, the Commission's quarterly publication on safety issues, through subscriptions and web site visits.**

Strategic Goal	1998 Actual	1999 Goal	1999 Actual
B. Maintain the reach of the <i>Review</i> from the 1997 base	38%	38%	154%
Subscriptions	1,500	1,500	1,000
Web site visits	12,500	12,500	24,600

#### **B. Maintain Reach of Review**

**Exceeded:** The readership of the *Review* has jumped from base year 1997 at 10,100 to nearly 26,000 in 1999. The biggest increase in readership has come via CPSC's web site, which nearly tripled from 8,500 to 24,600. In 1999 alone, it jumped from 12,500 to 24,600. By contrast, paid subscriptions declined some 38 percent due largely to free access to the *Review* via CPSC's web site.

Annual Goals	1999 Goal	1999 Actual
B-1. Contacts with National Non-Profit Organizations	50	50
B-2. Contacts with Companies, Professional Organizations, and Individuals	500	700

#### **B-1. Contacts with National Non-Profit Organizations**

*Contact 50 national non-profit organizations interested in consumer safety to persuade them to promote the Review in their newsletters, electronic bulletin boards, and on their web sites.*

**Done:** (See below.)

#### **B-2. Contacts with Companies, Professional Organizations, and Individuals**

*Contact 500 companies, professional organizations, and individuals to persuade them to subscribe to or access the Review on CPSC's web site. Based on results of ongoing, preliminary outreach, groups with most potential will be contacted more heavily and may include manufacturers; trade associations; attorneys; university schools of public health, medicine, nursing, pharmacy, law, and business; and medical societies.*

**Exceeded:** In 1999, CPSC made special mailings promoting the *Review* to nearly 700 targeted health professionals, non-profit organizations, companies, professional societies, trade associations, and other individuals. Since 1997, we have sent more than 28,000 such mailings. During the year we also promoted the *Review* in the course of our ongoing outreach at conferences, seminars, and other gatherings of those concerned about injury prevention and product safety.

We will continue our special mailings and other outreach efforts to promote the *Review*. We expect not only to maintain the reach of the *Review*, but also to expand it. Based on current trends, we believe most of this expansion will occur via CPSC's web site.

**Hotline – Maintain the capacity of the Hotline to respond to calls from the public for safety information at or above 250,000 per year.**

Strategic Goal	1998 Actual	1999 Goal	1999 Actual
C. Maintain the capacity to respond to calls from the public	300,000	250,000	410,000

**C. Maintain Hotline Capacity**

**Exceeded:** The agency received a record 410,000 Hotline calls in 1999 resulting from increased public exposure. The primary reasons for this increase were the appearance by CPSC's Chairman on television network morning shows and appearances by staff on network daytime talk shows, such as the Oprah Winfrey show.

**C-1. Maintain the capacity of the Hotline to respond to calls from the public by publicizing the Hotline number.**

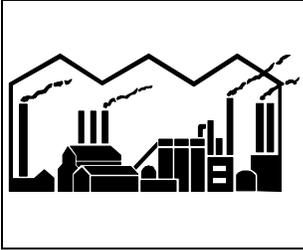
Annual Goal	1999 Goal	1999 Actual
C-1. Increased Public Exposure to the Hotline Number	200	355

**Increased Public Exposure to the Hotline Number**

*Publish the Hotline number in 200 CPSC publications, including press releases, safety alerts, 50 documents on CPSC's web site, 12 video news releases and other publications.*

**Exceeded:** We distributed 132 different publications, issued 177 news releases and safety alerts, posted 33 documents on our web site and issued 13 video news releases, all displaying CPSC's hotline number.

## INDUSTRY SERVICES



**STRATEGIC GOAL: By the year 2001, attain 80 percent<sup>5</sup> success with the timeliness and usefulness of the Fast-Track Product Recall and Small Business Ombudsman programs for industry.**

### THE PROGRAM

The Commission's Compliance program ensures that firms comply with the laws, regulations and safety standards that protect consumers from hazardous and defective products. When a violation of a safety standard is found, or a defective product is identified, CPSC works cooperatively and quickly with industry to obtain a correction of the violation or recall of the hazardous product, as appropriate. Recently, the agency initiated two programs to assist industry in complying more quickly with CPSC's regulations: the Fast-Track Product Recall (Fast-Track) and Small Business Ombudsman programs.

With the Fast-Track program, a firm that reports and corrects a problem quickly will not be subject to a preliminary determination that the product presents a substantial risk of injury. The advantages of this program to industry include reductions

in paperwork, red tape, and potential legal expenses related to the recall of potentially defective products. The advantages of this program to CPSC include removing hazardous products from consumers' hands more quickly. The Fast-Track program was a 1998 winner of the Innovations in American Government Award given to the ten most creative and effective government programs and sponsored by the Ford Foundation and Harvard University. The Fast-Track program also received Vice-President Gore's National Partnership for Reinventing Government Hammer Award.

With the Small Business Ombudsman program, Commission staff helps small businesses comply more easily with product safety guidelines and manufacture safer products. This program provides firms with a single point of contact that expedites a clearly understandable response from the CPSC technical staff.

<sup>5</sup> After a review of the data, the goal to attain 80 percent success with the timeliness and usefulness of the Fast Track Product Recall program was increased to 85 percent.

## ANNUAL GOALS FOR 1999

**Complete a review of the timeliness and usefulness of CPSC's advice and guidance through:**

Strategic Goals	1998 Actual	1999 Goal	1999 Actual
A-1. Meeting Fast-Track timeliness standards	90%	80%	95%
A-2. Meeting Small Business Ombudsman timeliness standards	60%	80%	84%
A-3. Usefulness of Fast Track Program	*	80%	100%
A-4. Usefulness of Ombudsman Program	*	80%	100%
B-1. Develop databases to provide more accessible performance information to staff	--	Complete	Completed

\*Survey conducted every other year.

### **A-1. Timeliness, Fast Track**

*Complete a technical review and initiate a recall within 20 days 85 percent of the time.*

**Exceeded:** During 1999, there were 133 recalls involving 12 million products under the Fast Track program. A review of the records for the Fast Track program found that recalls were initiated within 20 days 95 percent of the time. This exceeded the goal set for this timeliness standard.

### **A-2. Timeliness, Ombudsman**

*Respond to requests from small businesses through the CPSC Small Business Ombudsman within 3 business days 80 percent of the time.*

**Exceeded:** CPSC staff responded to and offered guidance to over 250 small business in 1999. During 1999, a review of the Small Business Ombudsman program's records found that requests were responded to within three business days 84 percent of the time. This exceeded the published customer service standard.

### **A-3. Usefulness, Fast Track**

*Assess industry's response to the Fast-Track program.*

**Exceeded:** Staff conducted confidential telephone interviews with randomly selected company representatives who participated in the Fast Track program. The representatives were interviewed by staff from the Office of Planning and Evaluation. The assessment showed a high level of satisfaction with the Fast Track Program. All of the respondents agreed that the compliance officer that they

worked with was courteous, knowledgeable and provided clear information. All of the respondents also agreed that the Fast Track program should be continued.

**A-4. Usefulness, Ombudsman** *Assess industry's response to the Ombudsman program.*

**Exceeded:** Staff conducted confidential telephone interviews with representatives of small businesses that were randomly selected from those who contacted the Small Business Ombudsman office in 1999. The representatives were interviewed by staff from the Office of Planning and Evaluation. About 87 percent of the respondents agreed that their call was responded to in a timely manner. All of the respondents agreed that the program should be continued.

**Improve Staff's access to performance data through:**

**B-1. Tracking Performance** *Develop databases to provide more accessible performance information to staff.*

**Done:** In 1999, we made a number of changes to the Fast Track database so that staff would have better accessibility to performance information. For example, the database was updated to provide detailed reports containing the number of recalls, the number of products involved, and other identifying information about the recall. The search capability was enhanced to provide for advanced searches and the capability to capture a reason why the 20-day timeliness standard was not met.

The Small Business Ombudsman database was improved by moving it to a more user-friendly and compatible format. New features include programming to allow for automatic generation of the number of business days it takes us to respond to small businesses and reports that provide greater detail about our performance.

## CONSUMER SATISFACTION WITH CPSC SERVICES

**CPSC's Toll-Free  
Hotline Number:  
1-800-638-CPSC**



**STRATEGIC GOAL: Maintain the high level of satisfaction of consumers with the Hotline, Clearinghouse, and the States with CPSC's State Partnership Program at 90 percent or better through the year 2001.**

### THE PROGRAM

The Commission alerts the public to important safety information through the agency's Hotline, National Injury Information Clearinghouse, and State Partners Program. The Hotline is a toll-free service that allows consumers to report product complaints or product-related injuries, learn about recalls and safety hazards, and obtain safety publications. The National Injury Information Clearinghouse provides data to the public in response to

over 5,000 requests each year. It also alerts manufacturers to potential hazards associated with their products, providing them with consumer complaints, reported incidents and accident investigations involving their products. The Commission's State Partners Program, using limited CPSC funds and CPSC-developed safety information, brings product safety services to consumers through cooperative programs with state and local governments. The program extends CPSC's reach throughout the Nation.

### ANNUAL GOALS FOR 1999

***Hotline (1-800-638-CPSC) – Maintain consumer satisfaction with Hotline services at 90 percent or better:***

Strategic Goal	1996* Actual	1999 Goal	1999 Actual
A. Customer satisfaction with Hotline	97%	90%	95%

\* Customer satisfaction surveys are conducted every three years.

#### **A. Satisfaction with Hotline Services**

**Done:** We contacted randomly selected callers by telephone and mail. We found no significant difference in satisfaction with Hotline services between 1996 baseline levels and 1999 responses in all of the published customer service standards, with one exception. We returned calls to

requestors who left messages at night, weekends or holidays the next business day 90% of the time in 1999 compared to 97% in 1996.

## **Maintain consumer satisfaction with Hotline services through:**

### **A-1. Reaching a Hotline Representative**

*Maintain the time of 30 seconds or less to reach a Hotline representative.*

**Done:** Our Hotline is operated under contract. Spot checks of contractor performance levels by CPSC staff confirmed that the firm met the requirement to answer calls placed to Hotline staff in 30 seconds or less. The contract has a built-in incentive feature that provides increased compensation if established performance levels are exceeded and reduced compensation if these levels are not met.

### **A-2. Performance Contract**

*Continue a performance-based contract with monetary incentives for meeting customer service standards by contract staff.*

**Done:** Our Hotline contract includes a requirement to meet established customer service standards as part of the scope of work. We have a provision in the incentive payment portion that allows for up to \$2,500, per quarter, in additional payments, if the contractor's staff meets a list of criteria above what is considered a basic performance year. In 1999 we proposed payments totaling approximately \$5,600.

In addition to regular monitoring by CPSC staff of the contractor's performance in meeting these standards, the agency conducted two customer surveys to measure the extent to which these standards were met. The results showed a 95 percent level of satisfaction by our customers with the service they received from our Hotline. In addition, in 1999, the agency invested in updated computer equipment that rapidly handles callers' requests for recorded safety information.

**National Injury Information Clearinghouse – Maintain consumer satisfaction with Clearinghouse services at 90 percent or better:**

Strategic Goal	1996 Actual	1999 Goal	1999 Actual
B. Consumer satisfaction with Clearinghouse	97%	97%	95%

**B. Satisfaction with Clearinghouse services**

*Contact Clearinghouse requesters in 1999 to determine satisfaction and compare to 1996 baseline levels.*

**Done:** We contacted randomly selected requesters by telephone and mail. We found no statistically significant difference in satisfaction with Clearinghouse services between 1996 baseline levels and 1999 survey results for all published Clearinghouse customer service standards.

**Maintain consumer satisfaction with Clearinghouse services through**

**B-1. Customer Service**

*Respond to over 5,000 requests for information in a manner fully consistent with published customer service standards.*

**Done:** In 1999, the Clearinghouse received approximately 4,000 requests for information. From our customer surveys conducted in 1999 we found more than 95 percent of those contacted were satisfied with the service they received from Clearinghouse staff.

**State Partners Program – Maintain consumer satisfaction with the State Partners Program’s services at 90 percent or better:**

Strategic Goal	1996 Actual	1999 Goal	1999 Actual
C. States’ satisfaction with State Partners Program	97%	97%	95%

**C. Satisfaction with State Partners Program**

*Continue to meet customer service standards at or above 1996 levels.*

**Done:** In 1999 we conducted a telephone survey of state contacts to ascertain their level of satisfaction with the State Partners Program. About 63 percent of the states, territories,

and District of Columbia were reached and agreed to participate in the survey. We found no statistically significant differences from the 1996 levels compared to 1997 for all standards.

### Work with our state partners to distribute CPSC safety messages:

Annual Goals	1998 Actual	1999 Goal	1999 Actual
C-1. Recall Round-Up in all 50 states	50	50	54
C-2. Rapid Communications Network	--	1	1

#### C-1. Recall Round-Up

*Develop and implement a Recall Round-Up program with our State Partners in all 50 states to encourage the repair, return, or destruction of selected consumer products not meeting safety standards. Hold press conferences and/or media events in 25 states.*

**Exceeded:** We conducted 164 safety events in 1999 during Recall Round-Up by partnering with all 50 states, territories and the District of Columbia, through state and local officials, national and grassroots organizations. The range of program activities included observation of daycare centers and thrift stores for hazardous products, distribution of detailed education curriculum guides, presentations to parenting classes, and exhibits at shopping malls. We estimate that we reached over 55 million consumers with our important safety messages. Hotline calls on Recall Round-Up were twice as high as they were last year; hits on CPSC's web site for recall list information increased almost three times (3,300 in 1998 and 8,100 in 1999). We held press conferences and/or media events in 30 states.

#### C-2. Rapid Communications Network

*Develop and implement procedures to automatically link CPSC to 135 state and local partners through the Internet. This capability will allow for the immediate sharing of safety and product hazard information.*

**Done:** CPSC currently is linked with designees for all 54 states and territories via the Internet. In addition CPSC links with approximately 30 federal agencies and consumer organizations. Many other organizations link to CPSC, but we have no way to measure this.

## II. Program Evaluations

This section provides a summary of the evaluations we scheduled for completion in 1999 in each of our strategic goal areas, as required in the Office of Management and Budget's Circular No. A-11.

### A. Reducing head injuries to children

**Bicycle-related head injuries.** As part of our approach to reduce head injuries to children, we actively promote helmet use, particularly for bicycle riders. In 1999, as part of a joint safety campaign with CPSC, McDonald's Corporation released the results of a national survey on helmet use. The survey found that for children under age 16, estimated helmet use increased from about 15 percent in 1991 to about 69 percent in 1998, an increase of over 300 percent. In 1999, we also:

- Worked jointly with McDonald's Corporation to promote bicycle helmet usage by: holding a "kick-off" press conference; producing a video news release made available to television stations around the country; launching a web site [www.bikehelmet.org](http://www.bikehelmet.org); and distributing bike helmet safety information booklets.
- Issued a new bike helmet standard effective in 1999 that provides one uniform mandatory safety standard that all bike helmets must meet; and
- Identified and corrected 14 products, all bicycles, that failed to meet mandatory safety standards and were likely to be involved in head injury. One was recalled due to problems with the brake system.

### B. Maintaining the low death rate from unintentional poisonings (PPPA)

**Tracking of child poisoning deaths.** CPSC has continued to track household product-related pediatric poisoning fatalities for children under 5 years old in the U.S. The most recent data is for 1997 and is from the National Center for Health Statistics. Before 1974, more than 200 children under 5 years old died from unintentional poisonings from household substances. These deaths have decreased by 90 percent to less than 30 deaths in 1997, the most recent year for which we have complete death data.

### C. Reducing Fire-Related Deaths

**Portable electric heater-related fire deaths.** In 1996, the latest year for which national fire estimates are available, portable electric heaters were associated with about 2,500 fires, 130 deaths, 200 injuries, and about \$45.4 million dollars in property loss.

We had a project on portable electric heaters in the late 1980s that resulted in CPSC staff providing recommendations to UL to improve their standard for movable and wall or ceiling-hung electric room heaters. UL adopted most of the recommendations in 1991.

In 1999, we initiated a project to evaluate the effectiveness of the 1991 changes to the UL standard and to determine if further changes were warranted. We did not have enough information to complete the evaluation in 1999. It has proven very difficult to collect detailed incident information on portable heaters, often because the product is destroyed in the fire. We will continue our data collection in 2000 to gain more information about the ages and types of heaters involved in fires.

## D. Reducing CO Poisoning Deaths

**CO detectors sold.** Beginning in 1996, we asked UL to consider incorporating 20 recommendations that we developed into the UL standard for CO detectors. We believed that adoption of the recommendations would result in more reliable CO alarms as well as fewer nuisance alarms. The new UL standard, effective in October 1998, adopted nearly all of our recommendations in full; UL has either adopted the remaining recommendations or is considering them.

In 1999, we gathered information about the extent to which consumers were using CO alarms and the availability of alarms meeting the latest safety requirements. We estimate that currently about 15 to 20 million households use CO alarms, or about 15 to 20 percent of all households in the U.S. This is about double the use of CO alarms four years ago.

We anticipate that even more consumers will buy and use CO alarms because of changes to the standards that will reduce the number of nuisance alarms. We found that consumers are able to find CO alarms fairly readily on market shelves, although the current retail market is marked by transition from inventoried alarms that meet older versions of the UL standard to alarms that meet the October 1998 requirements of the UL standard.

## E. Reducing Electrocuting Deaths

**Hair dryer-related electrocution deaths.** Most hair dryer-related electrocutions have occurred when the hair dryer falls, or is pulled, into a bathtub of water. CPSC's recommendations to improve the UL standard for hair dryers resulted in a substantial reduction in these electrocutions.

Based on CPSC recommendations, the UL standard was strengthened to require

protection with the switch in both the "on" and "off" positions. This requirement became effective on January 1, 1991. In the 1980s, there was an average of 18 hair dryer-related electrocutions each year while in 1996-1997 the average number of deaths dropped to two per year. We expect it to drop further at pre-standard hair dryers go out of use.

The ability to provide complete protection for hand-held hair dryers was the direct result of CPSC research into miniaturized GFCIs that demonstrated the feasibility of building electrocution protection into these products. A leading manufacturer further developed the technology so that now all hand-held hair dryers are completely protected using an inexpensive component.

In 1999, CPSC conducted three recalls of hair dryers. The recalls involved nearly 18,000 products that were not equipped with GFCIs.

## F. Assessments by Industry

**Fast-Track.** Staff conducted confidential telephone interviews with randomly selected company representatives who recalled their products using the Fast Track program. Staff from the Office of Planning and Evaluation interviewed respondents. All of the respondents agreed that the compliance officer that they worked with was courteous, knowledgeable and provided clear information. All of the respondents also agreed that the Fast Track program should be continued. A review of the records for the Fast Track program found that recalls were initiated within 20 days 95 percent of the time. This exceeded the goal of 90 percent that was set for this timeliness standard.

**Ombudsman.** Staff conducted confidential telephone interviews with randomly selected representatives of small businesses who

contacted the Small Business Ombudsman office. Staff from the Office of Planning and Evaluation interviewed respondents. About 87 percent of the respondents agreed that their call was responded to in a timely manner. All of the respondents agreed that the program should be continued. A review of the program's records found that requests were responded to within three business days 80 percent of the time. This exceeded the published customer service standard.

### **G. Customer Satisfaction**

**Hotline.** We asked a randomly selected group of callers for their opinions and comments through telephone interviews and mail surveys. The results showed a high level of satisfaction with the Hotline with over 95 percent of respondents either satisfied or very satisfied with the way the Hotline worked. In evaluating the program's tracking systems, we found that copies of complaint reports taken by Hotline staff were sent to callers so that the information could be confirmed 90 percent of the time within two days. This is well within the program's published customer service standards. Also, recorded messages on product safety recalls and consumer products were available on the Hotline the

same day of the news release 100 percent of the time.

**Clearinghouse.** Staff conducted both telephone and mail surveys for the Clearinghouse. Requesters were randomly chosen to participate in the surveys. Respondents had a very high level of satisfaction with the Clearinghouse. About 95 percent of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the way the Clearinghouse worked. A review of the Clearinghouse's records found that 94 percent of the requests for information were acknowledged in writing within five days. This is well within the published customer service standards for the Clearinghouse.

**State Partners.** We interviewed state contacts by telephone. We made attempts to reach a person from each state, territory, and District of Columbia and 68 percent agreed to participate and be interviewed. About 94 percent of the respondents said that they were either satisfied or very satisfied in general, with the way the State Partners Program worked. All of the respondents were satisfied with the information that they receive from CPSC. Of those states that have a partnership agreement with CPSC, 90 percent report that having the partnership is very useful or useful in accomplishing state consumer product safety objectives.

## APPENDIX A

### Major Contributors to this Report

Arlene C. Clyburn-Miller, M.S., Operations Research Analyst

Lynn Barclay, M.A., Management and Program Analyst

Elaine Tyrrell, M.S., Management and Program Analyst

N.J. Scheers, Ph.D., Director, Office of Planning and Evaluation

**U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission**

Washington, D. C. 20207