United States
CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20207

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: OCT 25 1996

TO : Troy Whitfield, ESME

Through: Mary Ann Danello
Associate Executive Director for Epidemiology and Health Sciences MAD
Robert E. Frye, Director, Division of Hazard Analysis (EHHA) B

FROM : William Rowe, EHHA B for WR

SUBJECT: Hair Entanglement, Entrapment, and Disembowelment Associated with Spas, Swimming Pools, and Wading Pools Since January 1, 1990.

This sketch describes the incidents reported to CPSC on hair entanglement, body entrapment, and disembowelment associated with spas, swimming pools, and wading pools from January 1990 through May 1996.

Hair Entrapment

There were 30 cases where a female's hair became entangled in a water circulation system, almost always the drain. Twenty-nine were in spas, and one was in a very small pool. These incidents resulted in 10 deaths, 11 hospitalizations, 5 treated and released incidents, and 4 with no medical treatment. The youngest victim was 5 years old, the oldest was 42, and the median age was 10 years. Approximately 60 percent of the units were installed in homes and 40 percent were public facilities.

Body Entrapment

There were 9 cases were an arm or leg was caught in a drain line or the trunk of a body was held against a drain. Of the nine cases, 7 involved males and 2 involved females. Eight incidents were in swimming pools, and one was in a wading pool. These incidents resulted in 7 deaths, one hospitalization, and one treated and released. The youngest victim was 8 years old, the oldest was 16 and median age was 10 years. The cases included both home and public facilities. In at least 5 of these cases, questionable maintenance and operation of the facilities (such as broken or missing grates and swimming in a pool being drained) were associated with the incidents.

Disembowelment

Two children, a 3 year old male and a 5 year old female were partially disemboweled by sitting on drains in public wading pools. Both children were hospitalized. Pool maintenance and operation may have been a factor in each incident. In the case of the 3 year old male, the pool was operating with only one open drain line, so the full suction of the circulating pump was applied to the child. The 5 year old female sat on a drain which was missing its cover.

END