



UNITED STATES
CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, DC 20207

Memorandum

Date: October 13, 2005

TO : The File

THROUGH : Russell Roegner, Ph.D., Associate Executive Director
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FROM : Joyce McDonald, EPHA

SUBJECT : Toy-Related Deaths and Injuries, Calendar Year 2004

This memorandum provides information on toy-related deaths and injuries reported to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) that occurred during the January 1, 2004 through December 31, 2004 time period.¹

TOY-RELATED DEATHS

CPSC has reports of 16 toy-related deaths involving children under age 15 that occurred in 2004.² The toys involved in these fatal incidents were as follows:

**Reported Toy-Related Deaths to Children 0-14
Calendar Year 2004³**

Type of Toy	Deaths
TOTAL	16
Balls (choking/asphyxia)	4
Tricycles (2 drownings, 2 motor vehicle involvement)	4
Balloon (choking)	1
Game dice (choking)	1
Toy premium (choking)	1
Unpowered scooter (motor vehicle involvement) ⁴	1
Pile of stuffed animals (suffocation)	1
Unspecified Riding toy (motor vehicle involvement)	1
Reins of a toy horse (entanglement/asphyxia)	1
Toy on activity gym (entanglement/neck compression)	1

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

² The 16 fatal toy-related incidents do not represent a sample of known probability of selection, and they may not include all the toy-related deaths occurring during the 2004 time period, in part because reporting is not complete for some data sources.

³ These data are based on reports from the In-depth Investigation file, the Injury and Potential Injury Incident file, the Death Certificate file and the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System for 1/1/2004 to 12/31/2004.

⁴ There was one other fatality reported to CPSC involving a scooter. However, the incident data did not specify whether the scooter was motorized or not. Unpowered scooters are considered to be a toy, but motorized scooters are not in the toy category. Therefore, the additional scooter incident is not included in the total count for unpowered scooters.

Victims of the 16 fatal incidents ranged in age from 3 months to 9 years old.⁵ Ten of the victims were males.

Choking/Asphyxia

Seven deaths occurred where the child choked/asphyxiated on a toy. The toys involved in these fatal incidents were 4 toy balls⁶, 1 balloon, game dice⁷, and 1 toy premium (a toy helmet). These children ranged in age from 3 months to 9 years old.

Motor Vehicle Involvement

Four children died while on riding toys.⁸ These incidents occurred when the child was either struck by or ran into a motor vehicle. The children were 8, 3 and 2 years old along with a toddler of unspecified age. The riding toys involved were 2 tricycles, a foot-powered scooter and an unspecified riding toy.

Drowning

Two children drowned in incidents involving tricycles. A 2 year old boy drowned in his family's unfenced swimming pool. He was found in the water with his tricycle. A 4 year old girl was riding her tricycle on the backyard patio and was later found in the swimming pool drowned with her tricycle.

Entanglement

Two children died from becoming entangled in toys. A 1 year old boy died of asphyxia when the reins of a toy hobbyhorse became entangled around his neck. A 6 month old boy died of neck compression when he got entangled in a suspended toy component of an activity gym placed in a playpen.

Asphyxia/Smothering

There was 1 fatality involving a 6 month old male who smothered at a daycare center when older children piled stuffed animals into his crib.

ESTIMATED TOY-RELATED INJURIES (NEISS)⁹

In 2004 there were an estimated 210,300 toy-related injuries treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms. There was no statistically significant difference in the estimated toy-related injuries from 2003 (206,500) to 2004. There was a significant drop in toy-related injuries from 2001 to 2004. In 2001, there was a large number of riding toy-related injuries (including unpowered scooters) that affected the overall toy-related injury estimate of 255,100.

⁵ The age of one child was not reported, but the child was referred to as a toddler.

⁶ One of the toy balls was of unspecified type. Staff has made the assumption that it was most likely a toy ball.

⁷ It is unknown whether the referenced dice were a set (2) or only one die.

⁸ There was a fifth fatality involving an 8 year old male who was hit by a car while riding a scooter. However, it is not being included in the count, because it is not known what type of scooter was involved.

⁹ The source of these data is the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS), which is based on a statistical sample of hospital emergency room treated injuries.

Estimated Toy-Related Injuries 2000 to 2004

Calendar Year	Estimated Injuries
2000	191,000
2001	255,100
2002	212,400
2003	206,500
2004	210,300

Seventy-seven percent (161,100) of the injuries for 2004 were to children under 15 years of age and 35 percent (72,800) were to children under 5. Twenty-three percent (49,200) of the injuries were to persons age 15 and up.

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

Forty-six percent of the total injuries (96,800) occurred to the head and face area, which includes head, face, eyeball, mouth and ear. Arms, from shoulder to finger, accounted for 25 percent of the injuries (52,000), while the leg and foot area accounted for 18 percent (38,200). The individual body parts having the most injuries overall were faces (43,700), heads (24,800) and mouths (14,700). Lacerations, contusions and abrasions were involved in over half of the total injuries (51 percent).

In 2004, riding toys (including unpowered scooters) continued to be associated with more injuries (71,100 or 34 percent) than any other category of toy. 51,400 of the riding toy-related injuries were associated with unpowered scooters.