



## **MECAP NEWS**

### **MEDICAL EXAMINERS AND CORONERS ALERT PROJECT**

The Medical Examiners and Coroners Alert Project (MECAP) is designed to collect timely information on fatalities involving consumer products. There are thousands of types of consumer products under the Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC's) jurisdiction, and we need your help in identifying hazardous or potentially dangerous products. The CPSC collects death, injury, and incident information from many sources, including medical examiners and coroners; the nation's hospital emergency rooms; and other sources, such as news clips, the Internet, our toll-free hotline, and death certificates.

You can submit fatality reports and reports of harm or potential harm involving consumer products to our website called: [www.SaferProducts.gov](http://www.SaferProducts.gov). Guidelines for completing a MECAP report are located at: <https://www.saferproducts.gov/CPSRMSPublic/Incidents/ReportIncident.aspx>.

There are several ways you can report a MECAP case:

- ONLINE MECAP reporting at link: <https://www.saferproducts.gov/CPSRMSPublic/Incidents/ReportIncident.aspx>
- Phone: 1-800-638-8095
- Fax number: 1-301-504-0038
- E-mail faxes via pdf to: [epdsfax@cpsc.gov](mailto:epdsfax@cpsc.gov)
- Mail: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission  
Medical Examiners and Coroners Alert Project (MECAP)  
Attn: Yolanda Nash  
4330 East-West Highway, Ste. 510  
Bethesda, MD 20814

Please contact us whenever you encounter a fatal incident that may be related to a consumer product. Every MECAP report is important to us and is included in the CPSC's incident database. All it takes is one MECAP report to alert the CPSC to a potentially hazardous product. Raising awareness of longstanding, hidden, and emerging product safety hazards is crucial to empowering consumers and reducing the risk of death and injury.

The following pages summarize a few medical examiner and coroner reports received during the period April 2015 through December 2015. The entries include a brief description of the incident to illustrate the type and nature of the reported fatalities. This important information helps us to carry out our mission to protect the public from product-related injuries and deaths.

We appreciate your support, and please continue to report your product-related cases to us.

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1-800-638-8095 x7502 or 301-504-7502

*\* Cases selected for CPSC follow-up investigation*

**Asphyxiation/Suffocation**

A three-month-old male was found deceased when he was placed on a king size bed for a nap. A heavy comforter was near the decedent with two pillows on each side of him. He was placed face up. His six year old sibling checked on him and he was sleeping. The mother checked on him later and found him face down. The cause of death was positional asphyxia.

\*A two-month-old male infant died when he was placed to sleep in an infant-to-toddler rocker. The rocker was positioned to the toddler mode. The infant was found hours later dead in the rocker tilted forward instead of being reclined backwards with his chin into his chest. The cause of death was positional asphyxia.

\*A four-year-old male died when he jumped off his bed to reach for a backpack hanging on a door hook. The backpack was hanging from a hook on a bedroom door approximately six feet from the floor. The deceased was found by his grandmother hanging from the backpack shoulder straps. Despite ongoing resuscitative efforts, the decedent was pronounced deceased at the hospital. The cause of death was asphyxia hanging.

A six-month-old male decedent was placed in a bassinet portable playpen that included a u-shaped pillow, soft blanket, and stuffed toy. The child's twin sister was placed in a separate bassinet to the portable playpen. The child's father checked on the infants and noticed that the male infant's face was in the pillow and unresponsive. The father drove the child to the hospital where he was pronounced dead. The medical examiner noted in the autopsy report that the decedent may have rolled over in his bassinet, but was unable to roll back over due to his age. He became smothered with his

face down in the soft bedding. The cause of death was smothering.

A 59-year-old female died while using a riding lawn tractor to cut her lawn. She went off a deep slope and dropped 12 feet. The lawn tractor pinned her underneath causing suffocation and asphyxia. She was discovered by a family member who immediately called EMS. The cause of death was asphyxiation.

**Carbon Monoxide Poisoning**

\*A 50-year-old male was found decomposed on the floor of his residence where he was in the same room with an electric generator. The electric gasoline generator was found with the power switch to the "on" position, and it was out of fuel. The decedent's sister asked law enforcement to perform a welfare check because she was unable to contact the decedent for a month. Policed discovered that the decedent was in the stages of decomposition and that a gasoline powered generator had been operating prior to the incident. The cause of death was carbon monoxide poisoning.

\*A 70-year-old male decedent died from carbon monoxide poisoning at his hunting cabin. The pilot light for the propane heater malfunctioned. The heater required the pilot to be relit multiple times. The decedent and his 67 year-old-male friend felt ill while at the cabin. The friend called 911 and both were taken to a local hospital. EMS measured the carbon monoxide level at 55 ppm. The decedent died at the hospital. The cause of death was carbon monoxide poisoning.

A 25-year-old female decedent and her dog were found unresponsive on her bed by her mother. A water leak was found in the water heater of the decedent's unit. EMS arrived and pronounced the victim and her dog dead at the scene. EMS measured the carbon

monoxide reading at 229 ppm. The cause of death was carbon monoxide poisoning.

### **Submersion/Drowning**

\*A four-year-old female was found deceased in a resort swimming pool. The decedent was watched by her mother while playing in the pool with her siblings. They were all playing in the shallow four foot section of the pool when the decedent apparently exited the shallow pool. The child was discovered by a guest at the bottom of the deep end of the pool. The child was pulled from the pool and CPR was initiated. Despite resuscitative efforts, the child died at the hospital.

\*A 17-month-old male decedent was found submerged in an above-ground swimming pool. The mother was inside the house with other people watching TV. They missed the decedent and started looking for him. The grandfather found him lying face down floating in the above-ground swimming pool. The grandfather took him out of the pool and started CPR. Fire Rescue transported the decedent to the hospital where he was pronounced dead. The cause of death was drowning.

### **Fire**

\*An 84-year-old female decedent died at her home while attempting to turn a propane stove on that caught her clothes on fire. EMS transported her to a nearby hospital. She was diagnosed with acute full thickness burns. Despite her diagnosis, the decedent refused to transfer to another hospital. She was pronounced dead the next day. The cause of death was acute full thickness burns due to fire.

A 12-year-old male was critically injured from a mortar firework. The decedent was playing with the mortar-style firework when one of the shells exploded in his hand and hit him in the chest. EMS transported him to the hospital where he was pronounced dead.

A 77-year-old male decedent died from 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> degree burns to 55 percent of his body when he backed up too close to a space heater and caught his clothing on fire. The cause of death was thermal injuries.

A 58-year-old male decedent was sleeping in a converted garage of a residence when a fire started from a lit candle. The decedent was found inside the structure and was pronounced dead on the scene. The cause of death was thermal injuries.

### **Tip-Over Incidents**

A 2-year-old male died from blunt force trauma to the head and upper torso when a large television fell from the top of a dresser onto his head. The decedent was climbing on the dresser at his home. The cause of death was blunt head trauma.

\*A 16-month-old male died from blunt force trauma to the head when a large tube television fell onto his head. The decedent's relative was caring for him, and she left the room for an undetermined amount of time. She heard a loud crash and found the decedent on the floor underneath the television. EMS transported him to the hospital where his initial evaluation revealed severe head trauma with extensive intracranial hemorrhages. He was transferred to a Level 1 trauma hospital where he was declared brain dead. The cause of death was blunt head trauma.

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

A 22-year-old female decedent was riding her ATV in the dunes at a state park. She was witnessed traveling up a steep hill. A second ATV was jumping off the top of the hill at the same time. There was a spotter who attempted to stop the jump but it was too late. The second ATV went airborne off the top of the hill and collided with the decedent knocking her off her quad and into the sand. The impact hit her

upper body and head. CPR was initiated at the scene, and she was transported to a local hospital where she died. Her helmet and face shield was significantly damaged.

A 46-year-old male decedent was driving his four-wheel ATV with a female passenger at a high rate of speed through a residential neighborhood. A witness heard the ATV “screech” around the corner and hit a parked van. Both driver and passenger, neither wearing a helmet, were thrown from the ATV and died on the scene.

A 12-year-old male decedent died while riding his four-wheel ATV. He went down a steep slope and struck a rock and tree causing the ATV to roll over. Emergency crew responded to the scene and administered resuscitative measures. The 12 year old was pronounced dead in the emergency room. The cause of death was blunt force injuries to the head.

### **Fatalities Involving Other Hazards**

A 54-year-old female died while on a snowmobile when she ran a stop sign and struck a plow truck. EMS airlifted her to a local hospital. She was admitted to the ICU and remained unresponsive and in critical condition. The decedent was later transferred to hospice where she expired. The cause of death was multiple rib fractures and subdural and subarachnoid hemorrhages.

An 8-month-old male was found unresponsive in the playpen with a balloon string wrapped around his neck. The balloons were attached to the playpen, with the string wrapped tightly around his neck. Prior to the incident, the child was sitting up playing and watching TV. The playpen had a bottle, a couple of toys, and a balloon tied to the railing. The mother left the room for approximately 30 minutes. The mother and father re-entered the room, and they found him unresponsive in the playpen with the balloon string tied around his neck.

Emergency rescue was called and the father initiated CPR. The child was transported to the hospital where he died. The cause of death was extensive hypoxic/ischemic insult.

A 42-year-old female decedent was working out at the gym on an exercise bar. The exercise bar broke causing the decedent to fall and strike her head on an elliptical machine. The cause of death was blunt force injury to the head.