



## **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 October 2014 through March 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.

Yolanda Nash, Program Analyst/MECAP Manager  
Division of Hazard and Injury Data Systems  
Directorate for Epidemiology  
[ynash@cpsc.gov](mailto:ynash@cpsc.gov)  
1-800-638-8095 x7502 or 301-504-7502

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

Asphyxiation/Suffocation

\*A 16-month-old female was found deceased in a playpen with a curtain cord wrapped around her neck. The mother put the decedent down for a nap in a playpen. The mother stated that the playpen was approximately 20 inches away from the curtains and curtain cord. Somehow the playpen ended up next to the curtains and the infant was found hanging from the cord. The cause of death was asphyxiation.

\*A 7-month-old male decedent was laid in his crib on his back by his mother after feeding. The mother went to check on the decedent and found the decedent unresponsive and wedged between his crib mattress and the crib's drop-side railing. The mother screamed for help and the father came in and broke apart the side railing trying to free the child. The decedent's head was wedged between the crib mattress and bars of the crib. His body and legs were hanging out the bottom of the crib below the mattress. The child was transported to a local hospital where he was pronounced dead. The cause of death was asphyxiation.

A 3-year-old female died at home hanging from a purse strap on a door. The decedent and her 2-year-old brother were upstairs playing while their mother was making them lunch. The female apparently stood on a plastic tote against a bedroom door from which

an adult purse was hanging from a hook on the door. The strap somehow became entangled around the child's neck. The mother heard banging on the door, and she ran up to see what happened and discovered the child. CPR was initiated and the child died while on life support at the hospital. The cause of death was asphyxia.

A 3-year-old female was found unresponsive hanging by her neck from the window blind adjustment rope. The decedent was playing on a low windowsill at her aunt's home. She became entangled in the adjustment rope for the window blinds. Emergency response transported her to a local hospital where she died. The cause of death was accidental asphyxia while playing.

A 2-year-old female was put to bed on the upper bunk bed in her bedroom. She was found dead between the mattress and the frame of the bed hanging by her neck. She was transported to a local hospital where she was pronounced dead in the E.R. The cause of death was positional asphyxia.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

\*A 52-year-old male was found deceased in the basement of his residence. The deceased was discovered on the floor near a gasoline-powered generator that had a washing machine plugged into it. The generator was

found in the "ON" position but was out of fuel at the time of discovery. Emergency rescue measured environmental carbon monoxide level to be extremely high at 1300 ppm. The deceased's blood carbon monoxide level was 73.7 percent. Carbon monoxide detectors were not present in the residence. The cause of death was carbon monoxide poisoning.

\*An 11- year-old female was found unresponsive in the basement of her home in a supine position. EMS responded and pronounced her dead upon arrival. The fire department investigation revealed that the flue pipe for the water heater was not connected. The cause of death was carbon monoxide poisoning.

\*An 82-year-old male was found deceased by his daughter in the bathroom of his home wedged between the toilet and sink. Upon entering the residence, the daughter noticed a strong odor of gas. She found her father on the bathroom floor. A propane tank with an attached heater was found in the bathroom. The heater control valve was positioned on the lowest active setting. The decedent's blood concentration level was 57% of carbon monoxide. The official cause of death was carbon monoxide toxicity due to improper use of a heating unit.

## Submersion/Drowning

A 12-year-old male died while fishing at the dock with his great grandfather. The great grandfather went to his car for something, and he could not find the decedent when he returned. A search was performed and the decedent was found submerged under the dock. The estimated down time was 7-10 minutes. The cause of death was anoxic brain injury.

\*A 3-year-old male decedent was found by his father face down in the backyard swimming pool. The father and decedent went outside to start the grill; then the two returned to the house. The victim exited the house while unsupervised through the back door. The father told EMS responders that the back door latch was not working properly. The child entered the unfenced back yard and made his way into an in-ground swimming pool. The swimming pool had no fence or other barrier surrounding it. The decedent was transported via ambulance to a local hospital where he was pronounced dead. The cause of death was drowning.

\*A 1-year-old decedent was placed in a bathtub with his twin brother. The mother turned the faucet on and left it running with warm water while she stepped away for 2 minutes. When she returned, the decedent was found floating face down in water. She screamed and a neighbor came over to assist and dialed 911. She started CPR until ER

arrived and found him in full arrest. They transported the decedent to the local hospital. Despite emergency efforts, the child did not survive and was pronounced dead in the emergency room. The cause of death was drowning.

## Fires

A 35-year-old female decedent died after a spray paint can exploded in a fire. An object dropped from the rafters in the garage, puncturing a hole in a spray paint can. The can began to roll near a burning candle causing the can to explode. The explosion caused the contents of the can to burn the decedent's leg. She suffered second- and third-degree thermal injuries to approximately 32 percent of her body. The cause of death was second- and third-degree thermal injuries.

A 9-year-old male died from a house fire that reportedly started when a family member was deep-frying french fries on a propane stove. Police and Fire Rescue responded to the scene and found the house fully engulfed in flames. Rescue personnel located the decedent in a second-story bedroom.

\*A 59-year-old male and an 89-year-old female died inside their residence during a house fire. The fire was initiated in the kitchen due to an overloaded electrical outlet and old wiring. The two decedents' remains were discovered after firefighters put out the fire. The cause of death

was thermal injuries and inhalation of products of combustion.

## Tip-Over Incidents

\*A 3-year-old male died when a 32-inch cathode ray tube (CRT) television tipped over and landed on his head. The decedent was alone in his parents' bedroom. He reportedly attempted to climb a five-drawer dresser to turn on the television. While climbing the dresser, the CRT television tipped over, striking the victim in the head and upper torso. The cause of death was blunt impact injuries of the head.

\*An 11-month-old male decedent attempted to pull himself up, using a three legged table with a 27-inch CRT television on it. The television and table tipped over onto the victim, causing blunt force trauma to the victim's head. The decedent died in the hospital from blunt force trauma to the head.

## All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs)

A 17-year-old male died while driving an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) on the roadway. When he looked back while driving the ATV, he veered off onto the side of the road and hit a tree. There were no signs of braking before the impact. The decedent was wearing a helmet and a chest protector. The decedent arrived at the hospital with no vital signs and was pronounced dead. The cause of death was lacerations of the aorta and liver.

\*A 75-year-old male was attempting to drive cattle with his ATV, and while observing his cattle, he fell off of his ATV, striking his head, suffering head injuries. The decedent woke up confused and called 911. He was transported to a local hospital, and due to his severe injuries he was transferred to a trauma center where he succumbed in the hospital a few days later. His cause of death was abdomen and head sequelae.

### Fatalities Involving Other Hazards

A 6-year-old male died when he kicked lighter fluid onto an open fire while playing outside his home. He was taken to a hospital where he expired. The cause of death was complications of thermal injury to the legs.

A 65-year-old male died when he fell down the stairs at his home, striking his head on the cement floor at the bottom of the steps. The wooden railing alongside the stairs had broken apart from the wall, causing the victim to fall down the 11 stairs to the floor below. The cause of death was closed head injury. .

A 57-year-old female died from electrocution while installing her washer and dryer. The decedent's ex-husband came over to check on

her and found her lying prone in a grassy area behind her mobile home. Emergency rescue arrived to the scene but did not make immediate contact due to possible electrocution. The electric company was called to shut off power and removed the meter from the residence. The electricians discovered that the wires were improperly connected. The decedent was accidentally electrocuted by exposed wires on the old dryer vent. The cause of death was low-voltage electrocution due to improper wire connection.

A 50-year-old-male died from electrocution while working on a light pole wire at a parking area. The decedent was a licensed master electrician. He was found unresponsive on the ground. Emergency response arrived on the scene and transported the decedent to a local medical facility where all life-saving attempts failed and he was pronounced dead. A pair of pliers was fused to the skin on his lower left arm. The cause of death was electrocution.