



## **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) jurisdiction, and we need your help in identifying hazardous or potentially dangerous products. 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.***

***Thank you for your support throughout the year. CPSC received 5,525 MECAP reports from October 2009 through September 2010.***

***MECAP News is no longer sent via mail. However, it can be accessed at <http://www.cpsc.gov/whatsnew.html#mecap>.***

***Guidelines for filing a MECAP report are located at: <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/mecap.pdf>***

***There are several ways you can report a MECAP case:***

- ***Phone: 1-800-638-8095***
- ***Toll free fax number: 1-800-809-0924***
- ***ONLINE MECAP reporting at link: [www.cpsc.gov/cgibin/mecap.aspx](http://www.cpsc.gov/cgibin/mecap.aspx)***
- ***Mail: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission  
Medical Examiners and Coroners Alert Project (MECAP)  
Attn: Yolanda Nash  
4330 East-West Highway, Ste 604  
Bethesda, MD 20814  
[ynash@cpsc.gov](mailto:ynash@cpsc.gov)  
1-800-638-8095 x7502 or 301-504-7502***

***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 CPSC's incident database. All it takes is one MECAP report to alert CPSC to a potentially hazardous product.***

***The following pages summarize a few medical examiner and coroner reports with 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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\*Cases selected for CPSC follow-up investigation

\*\*MECAP reports filed electronically

## **Asphyxiation/Suffocation**

**\*A 14-day-old female infant was found lying supine in her crib unresponsive with the infant size comforter pulled up over her face. The mother had fed her and swaddled her in a receiving blanket. She had two infant size comforters covering her from her chest down, while placed supine in her crib. The mother discovered her with one comforter pulled up over her face. Life-saving efforts were performed by EMS to the hospital, but were not successful. The cause of death was suffocation from unsafe sleep environment. (Jefferson County Medical Examiner's Office, St. Louis, MO)**

**\*A 3-week-old male decedent was placed on his back, face up, in his bassinet after feeding. He was placed on top of an adult sized pillow in his bassinet. He was found leaning on the right side with his face down where the bassinet wall and pillow meet. The cause of death was positional asphyxia. (New York City, OCME, NY)**

**A 20-month-old male pulled a gas stove over onto himself while his parents were asleep. His 3-year-old sibling may have assisted him in pulling the stove over. The cause of death was traumatic asphyxia. (Saint Louis County Health, St. Louis, MO)**

**A 2-month-old female infant slept in a full size bed with her mother, father, and older brother. After feeding the infant, she was put to sleep on her back, on the mother's left arm. The mother found her "blue" in the face, unresponsive, lying prone in the bed. The decedent had no blankets covering her face. The police noted that on the bed was a comforter, 4 large pillows, two throw pillows, a decorative pillow and 2 small blankets on top of a fitted sheet. The cause of death was suffocation/asphyxiated on adult-type bedding material and/or overlay by bed sharing. (Travis County ME, Austin, TX)**

## **Carbon Monoxide Poisoning**

**\*A 55-year-old male died of carbon monoxide poisoning while he slept in a trailer. He was trying to keep himself warm with a heater that was connected to a 5 gallon propane tank. He sealed himself in the trailer and died from carbon monoxide poisoning. (Santa Cruz County Coroner, Santa Cruz, CA)**

**\*A 39-year-old male was found unresponsive in a shed when his mother went to check on him. The decedent went to listen to music in the shed. The mother discovered him sitting unresponsive on a chair. She also discovered that the propane heater was on and she turned it off. The cause of death was carbon monoxide poisoning. (Michigan Public Health Institute)**

**\*A 38-year-old female was found unresponsive on the floor of a tent during a camping trip. A grill was placed into the tent during the evening for warmth. The decedent was pronounced at the scene. The cause of death was carbon monoxide poisoning. (Iowa Office of the State Medical Examiner, Akeny, IA)\*\***

## **Submersion/Drowning**

**\*A 20-month-old male drowned in a four foot deep above ground pool. He was reportedly with family members in his home when he was not seen for approximately five to seven minutes. Upon searching, he was discovered fully submerged in a four-foot deep above-ground pool. EMS efforts to resuscitate were unsuccessful and he was pronounced at the hospital. The cause of death was drowning. (Laurens County Coroner's Office, Greenville, SC)**

**A 3-year-old male drowned in a neighborhood pool. The decedent was not wearing any flotation device in the 1-2 feet deep children's area pool. The pool was divided into two sections, children's and adult section with a safety net. The uncle went to check on him and he was found in the adult section of the pool approximate 3 feet deep. The cause of death was drowning. (Travis County Medical Examiner, Austin, TX)**

**An 88-year-old female was doing her morning exercises inside a community swimming pool. She was found face down in the water, floating at the shallow end of the pool. She had a barbell in her hand. The cause of death was drowning. (West Palm Beach Medical Examiner' Office, West Palm Beach, FL)**

## **Electrocution**

A 17-year-old male decedent was standing in a tree picking mangos via the use of an aluminum pool skimmer pole. The pole came in contact with an electrical wire containing over 7,000 volts. The cause of death was electrocution. (West Palm Beach Medical Examiner's Office, West Palm Beach, Florida)

## **Fire**

\*Two people were discovered dead in a house fire. The fire originated near an enclosed porch. The fire Investigator stated that a burnt mattress was also found on the enclosed porch. The fire marshal mentioned the probable accidental ignition source was the mishandling of smoking materials. (Summit County Medical Examiner's Office, Akron, OH)

A 48-year-old female was cooking in her kitchen when her clothes caught fire. She was able to call the fire department. When the fire department arrived, they found the victim fully engulfed in flames, on the kitchen floor. (Santa Clara Medical Examiner's Office, San Jose, California)

A 79-year-old male was mowing weeds on his property near a creek bank. The left wheels of the lawn tractor went off the edge of the bank and down a 4-5 foot drop. The tractor rolled into the creek pinning the victim underneath the tractor. The tractor then caught on fire and burned the victim. Family members attempted to free the victim but he was under the tractor for about 20 minutes. He was airlifted to an area hospital where he died later that day. (Dane County Medical Examiner's Office, Madison, WI)\*\*

## **Tip-over**

\*A 2-year-old male died from a television tip-over when he attempted to retrieve candy that was on top of a dresser. Both the dresser and the 32-inch television tipped forward, and fell upon the decedent. The victim's mother responded from an adjacent room, lifted the television off of the victim and called 911. The cause of death was blunt force head trauma. (Rhode Island State Medical Examiner's Office, Smithfield, RI)

\*A 2-year-old male was climbing the drawers of a dresser that had a television on top. As he was climbing, the dresser started to tip over, and the 25-inch television fell off the dresser, onto the child striking his head. The child was transported to an area hospital where surgery was performed. Following surgery, his condition worsened and he died three months later. The cause of death was blunt force head injury. (Office of the Medical Examiner, Milwaukee, WI)

## **Falls**

An 82-year-old female fell to the floor backwards while using a walker. The cause of death was closed head injuries due to fall from standing position with contributories of anticoagulant (warfarin) therapy for atrial fibrillation. (Onondaga County Medical Examiner's Office, Syracuse, New York) \*\*

A 61-year-old male decedent fell to the floor over his grandson's toys at home. He sustained a left femur fracture from the fall incident. He was transported to the hospital by EMS where he later died. The cause of death was multiple organ failure due to acute renal failure and pulmonary effusion from a recent left femur fracture with rhabdomyolysis. (Cuyahoga County Coroner's Office, Cleveland, OH)

A 29-year-old male decedent had suffered a fall while wearing his roller skates. The cause of death was complications of fracture of right ankle and broken tibia. (Tallahassee Medical Examiner's Office, Tallahassee, FL)

## **All Terrain Vehicles (ATV)**

\*A 20-year-old male decedent and 18-year-old female passenger was riding a four wheel ATV on a county road. The victim failed to negotiate a curve in the roadway and drove 50 feet over an embankment. The ATV and the surviving passenger landed on the embankment. The victim continued to fall another 150 feet down the embankment, coming to a stop against a tree. The victim was pronounced at the scene. He was wearing a helmet. (Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, State of West Virginia, Charleston, WV)

\*A 21-year-old male decedent was involved in a four wheel ATV rollover accident. He went over a sand dune and the ATV rolled over. The cause of death was head injury, blunt force trauma. (Imperial County Coroner's Office, El Centro, CA)

\*A 2 year-old male was sitting in front of his dad on a four wheel ATV as they went around the yard for a ride. They were traveling at a low rate of speed as they approached a cement slab when they were going to the park on the ATV. As they started to drive up onto the slab, the ATV rose up and flipped over backwards landing on top of the 2 year old. The child was airlifted to a hospital where he was pronounced. The cause of death was blunt force trauma. (Brown County Medical Examiner's Office, Green Bay, WI)

A 30-year-old male decedent was involved in a three wheeled ATV accident at night. He struck a tree branch which caused him to roll over and eject from the vehicle. The tree branch had apparently fallen on the roadway; however, the vehicle did not have any headlights. The decedent did not have a helmet. He skidded on his head 18 feet as measured by the Police Department. The cause of death was blunt impact to head, trunk, and extremities with skeletal and brain injuries. (Cuyahoga County Coroner's Office, Cleveland, OH)

\*A 2-year-old male decedent was riding on a four wheeled ATV with his mother along with his 1-year-old sister when they crashed into a tree. The impact ejected all three of them from the vehicle. As a result of the fall, the 2 year old decedent sustained severe head damages. The cause of death was head trauma. (Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Roanoke, VA)\*\*

### Miscellaneous

A female, approximately, 20-years-old, was riding her bicycle against traffic on the roadway. She was listening to an MP3 player with ear bud style headphones while riding her bike. She failed to see an oncoming truck and was struck by the truck. The driver of the truck reports that he tried to swerve but the decedent did not hear him coming. The cause of death was multiple injuries. (Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Baltimore, MD)

\*A 1-year-old female decedent was asleep when placed inside her crib. She was placed on her stomach with her head turned to the right. A stuffed toy (cow) was placed inside the crib with her. She was found unresponsive the next morning with her face to the toy and not breathing. She was transported by Fire Rescue to an area hospital where she was pronounced. The cause of death was positional asphyxia. (Broward County Medical Examiner's Office, Ft. Lauderdale, FL)

A 2-year-old male decedent put a small rubber bouncing ball into his mouth and choked on it. The decedent's mother had purchased the ball for the decedent. The decedent and the mother's boyfriend were playing with the small 1 inch ball in the hallway. He was transported to a hospital where he was pronounced dead. The cause of death was anoxic/ischemic encephalopathy due to asphyxia by choking on foreign object (toy ball). (Sacramento County Coroner's Office, Sacramento, CA) \*\*

A 19-year-old male employed by a fireworks company to discharge fireworks at a community park, was discovered deceased lying on the ground. The decedent was lying near the fireworks mortar set where he was to set them off for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. He suffered trauma to the neck, face, chest, arms, abrasions, lacerations

**and burns and burn marks on clothing. (Bucks County Coroner's Office, Warminster, PA)**

*The link for past editions of the Consumer Product Safety Review that included the MECAP NEWS is:  
[www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/cpsr.html](http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/cpsr.html).*