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.

CPSC received 4,391 MECAP reports from October 2008 through September 2009.

MECAP News is no longer sent via mail. However, it can be accessed at http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/mecap.aspx.

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***
- ***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
  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.

Thank you for 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
1-800-638-8095 x7502 or 301-504-7502

*Cases selected for CPSC follow-up investigation
**MECAP reports filed electronically

Asphyxiation/Suffocation

A 9-month-old female was found unresponsive in her crib lying face down with her head in a corner of the crib. She was wrapped in a blanket with only her legs exposed. The blanket was 62" x 48" in size with a flexible heart shaped plastic decoration that illuminates in the corner of the blanket. The medical examiner suspects that this plastic decoration may have created a suffocation hazard. The cause of death was sudden unexplained infant death; prone sleep position, loose bedding. (Johnson County Medical Examiner Department, Iowa City, IA)*

A 3-week-old male infant was found unresponsive after being placed to sleep on an infant support/nursing pillow. The infant was propped up in/on a pillow to sleep for the night. The mother had placed the baby on her queen size bed and they both fell asleep. Approximately six hours later the mother awoke and found the infant still in/on the pillow unresponsive. The cause of death was positional asphyxia. (Genessee County Medical Examiner's Office, Flint, MI) *

***A 3-month-old male victim was found deceased inside a portable crib. The infant was at a licensed day care provider. He was placed down for a nap on his stomach in a portable crib, which had an elevated sleeping platform. The victim was found unresponsive lying face down in a crease produced by the crib platform that was partly folded. He was pronounced deceased at the hospital. The cause of death was due to entrapment in collapsed crib sleeping platform. (Commonwealth of Virginia, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Northern Virginia District, Fairfax, VA)**

A 2-year-old male was standing on a couch by a window looking outside. When the father checked on his son, he noticed that the curtain cord (rope type) of the window shade was wrapped around his neck and he was unresponsive. The curtain cord was attached to an anchor which was attached to a window sill. The child was transported to a hospital where he later died. The cause of death was asphyxia due to ligature hanging. (Stearns County Medical Examiner's Office, St. Cloud, MN)*

***A 4-year-old girl and a 5 year-old-boy suffocated in a trunk while playing hide-and go-seek with their parents. They were celebrating the little girl's birthday. The mother found the children unresponsive and entrapped inside a wicker wooden trunk. The cause of death was Asphyxia. (District Twenty Medical Examiner's Office, Collier County, Naples, FL)**

An 8-month-old female was left in a crawling position on the floor when her mother went to take care of the laundry. When her mother returned, the victim was on her back and having trouble breathing. The mother hit the victim on the back, but was unable to dislodge any item. EMS surgically opened the airway and found a balloon, fully intact. They removed the balloon with forceps and began CPR as the victim had no pulse. Efforts to resuscitate were unsuccessful, and the victim died later that day at the hospital. The cause of death was airway obstruction. (Brown County Coroner's Office, Green Bay, WI)

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

***A 50-year-old male died of carbon monoxide poisoning fumes due to a faulty heating unit at his home. (Lackawanna County Coroner, Scranton, PA)**

***A 44-year-old male was working in a detached garage with an operating generator because the garage did not have electrical power. The victim was found deceased after he had turned on the generator for power and it continued to run. The cause of death was Carbon Monoxide Poisoning. (Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office, Milwaukee, WI)**

***A 48-year-old male was found unconscious at the top of the stairs in his home. Carbon monoxide levels of 450 ppm to 1000 ppm were found in the residence from a gas clothes dryer exhaust leak. The exhaust pipe became unattached from the pipe leading to the outside. The gas company turned the gas off to the house. They reportedly found a gas leak in the supply line to the dryer. A carbon monoxide detector was checked, but no batteries had been installed in the unit. The cause of death was inhalation of clothes dryer exhaust. (Jackson County Medical Examiner's Office, Kansas City, MO)**

Submersion/Drowning

***A 17-month-old male drowned in an above ground pool located in the backyard of a family home. Investigators believed that his older brother helped the decedent up the pool ladder into the pool. The pool is approximately four feet deep with a multi-rung ladder. The father removed the boy from the pool. EMS efforts to resuscitate were unsuccessful. The cause of death was asphyxia due to drowning. (Dorchester County Coroner, Summerville, SC)**

A 1-year-old male drowned in a small blow-up plastic pool while playing with other family members. Everyone went inside to get lunch and the parents thought the decedent came inside with everyone else. The cause of death was asphyxia due to drowning. (Georgia Bureau of Investigations, Region 15, Sylvester, GA)*

***A 1-year-old male decedent was discovered unresponsive in his parents' above ground pool. The victim's parents were using a pressure washer to clean a detached garage while the decedent played nearby. The child was noticed as missing. The victim had accessed the staircase to the pool that was usually blocked by a plywood board. During the cleaning process that day, the board had been removed and not replaced. The decedent was discovered underneath the pool's soft cover. The cause of death was hypoxic ischemic encephalopathy. (King County Medical Examiner's Office, Seattle, WA)**

***A 16-month- old male was found face down floating in the family in-ground swimming pool. The mother believed that the child was out of her sight for about 5 minutes when he exited the house via an open sliding glass door. The child was transported to a hospital by emergency personnel where he died the following day from complications. The cause of death was drowning. (San Bernardino County Sheriff – Coroner Division, San Bernardino, CA)**

Fire

***A 9-month-old boy died in an apartment fire. The decedent was left in the care of 7 other minors while the parents of the decedent went to a party. The fire started when one of the children lit incense sticks inside a bedroom, which ignited a mattress and bedding and furniture. The children evacuated the apartment but forgot about the infant. Firefighters discovered the infant lying prone on a mattress with severe body charring. The cause of death was smoke and soot inhalation. (West Palm Beach Medical Examiner's Office, District 15, West Palm Beach, FL)**

A 63-year-old female died of burns when her shirt caught fire while she was cooking on a stove. The cause of death was 2nd and 3rd degree burns to her body. (Gainesville Medical Examiner's Office, District 8, Gainesville, FL)

Tip-over

***A 6-year-old male suffered a crushed head injury while at home playing with his 3-and 4-yearold brothers. A 36 inch television fell from its stand, hitting the child in the head. The cause of death was listed as crushed injury of head. (San Bernardino County Sheriff – Coroner Division, San Bernardino, CA)**

***A 5-year-old boy was found unresponsive on the floor with a television and dresser overturned. The child had gone to his bedroom to get something from a dresser. Fire rescue responded and transported the child to an area hospital where he was diagnosed with severe head trauma. The victim subsequently expired. The cause of death was craniocerebral trauma. (Miami-Dade County Medical Examiner Department, Miami, FL)**

Electrocution

***A 38-year-old male was electrocuted while attempting to repair a DVD player. His 2-year-old son had jammed items into the DVD slot, including a screwdriver and other items. The decedent was holding the unit to his chest, shaking the items loose when he was electrocuted. EMS was unable to revive him. The cause of death was electrocution. (Connecticut Medical Examiner's Office, Farmington, CT)**

Falls

A 75-year-old male decedent and his wife were carrying Christmas decorations up the stairs when the male suddenly collapsed towards his wife. They both fell down 15 steps to the basement floor. The male landed on top of his wife. The wife managed to call the fire department. The wife suffered multiple contusions and abrasions; however, her husband's injuries were life threatening. He was taken to the hospital with multiple rib fractures and subarachnoid hemorrhage. The cause of death was blunt force trauma to the head. (Summit County Medical Examiner's Office, Akron, OH)

A 94-year-old male died when his foot was caught under a chair while he attempted to stand up. He fell and sustained a hip fracture. Surgery was performed but he never regained consciousness and died a few days later. (Waukesha Medical Examiner's Office, Waukesha, WI)**

Miscellaneous

A 23-year-old male was driving his snowmobile down a county forest road at about 60-70 mph. As he drove over the crest of a steep hill, he collided with a pick-up truck loaded with firewood that was traveling about 20-25 mph. The victim was thrown from his snowmobile and suffered massive blunt force trauma to his chest and head. The victim was wearing a helmet. The cause of death was a skull fracture. (Eau Claire County Medical Examiner's Office, Eau Claire, WI)

A 15-year-old male died while riding a zip-line over a pond in his backyard of his residence with his friends. A zip-line consists of a pulley suspended on a cable mounted on an incline. It is a common way to return participants to the ground at the end of a ropes adventure course. During this incident, the boy was riding the zipline when he fell approximately 20 feet, landing supine on the ground. It appeared that the decedent's upper body hit the ground before the lower body. Emergency Rescue and police responded to the call. The decedent was

intubated in the field, and rescue Personnel continued life saving efforts enroute to the hospital. Death was pronounced upon arrival. The cause of death was fracture to the cervical spine. (Commonwealth of Virginia, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Central District, Richmond, VA)

A 2-year-old female ingested a coin shaped battery that had been removed by an adult in the home from an electronic hand-held game. The decedent's mother did not know where her daughter found the battery. The child complained of chest pains and she was taken to the doctor for an examination. An x-ray revealed the battery in her esophagus. The child was taken to a children's hospital where the battery was removed in the emergency department. The child continued to have chest and stomach pains. The child died in the ICU. The cause of death was Gastroesophageal Hemorrhage due to esophageal erosion with aortoesophageal fistula due to ingestion of battery. (Weld County Coroner's Office, Greely, CO)*

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