



MECAP News

Medical Examiners and Coroners Alert Project

The MECAP Project is designed to collect timely information on deaths and injuries involving consumer products. Please contact us whenever you encounter a death or situation that you believe should be considered during a safety evaluation of a product.

You can report a case or ask for information about MECAP in several ways.

- Call our toll-free number (800) 638-8095.
- Use our toll-free fax number (800) 809-0924.
- Send an e-mail message to tschroeder@cpsc.gov.

MECAP reports also can be reported directly to the CPSC Web site.

- Go to www.cpsc.gov.
- Click on Report an Unsafe Product.
- Scroll down and click on File MECAP Reports.

CPSC received 1,337 MECAP reports during the months of July, August, and September of 2008. The cases listed below show the type and nature of some of the reported incidents.

*Indicates cases selected for CPSC follow-up investigations. Cases reported but not selected for follow-up also are important to CPSC. Every MECAP report is included in CPSC's injury database and will be used to assess the hazards associated with consumer products.

**Received as an online report.

ASPHYXIATIONS/SUFFOCATIONS

*A female, 2, was playing on the couch in her living room near a large window. Her family was getting ready to go out. The mother went to get the child and found her daughter sitting on the top edge of the couch facing the window. The child had the chain cord of a window blind around her neck. The cord was in a continuous loop, and was not connected to a tension device. The cause of death was accidental hanging.

(Tamara Salstrand for Thomas P. Uncini, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner, St. Louis County, Hibbing, MN)

*A male, 3, went upstairs to his room to play by himself. His grandfather was caring for him, and became concerned when he heard no sounds coming from the speaker of a monitor in the boy's room. He went to check, and found the child unresponsive, pinned underneath a sixty pound, five drawer wooden dresser. The monitor had come unplugged when the dresser tipped over. The cause of death was traumatic (compressional) asphyxia.

(Karina Gomez for Frank Sheridan, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner, San Bernardino County, San Bernardino, CA)

June 2009

*A female, 5, was playing with her younger siblings at their caregiver's home on a large playground set having a slide, a swing and a climbing platform. Their caregiver was watching them but then went into the house to make some food. She returned about 10 minutes later, and didn't see the children. She searched, and found the oldest child unresponsive, lying on the slide with a jump rope around her neck. The jump rope had been tied to the equipment, and had a loop at the end. The cause of death was asphyxiation by hanging.
(Jimmy Roberts, Coroner, Rankin County, Pearl, MS)

*A male, 4 months, was placed in his bassinet by his mother for his night's sleep. The only bedding in the bassinet was a pillow cover that loosely covered the mattress. She went to feed him several hours later, and found him unresponsive and lying on his stomach. The cause of death was asphyxia.
(Bernardino Pacris, M.D., Deputy Medical Examiner, Oakland County, Pontiac, MI)

*A female, 2 months, was found unresponsive in her bassinet by her parents. Her face was in a blanket against the side of her bassinet. The cause of death was suffocation.
(Susan Perez for Michel J. Humilier, M.D., Associate Medical Examiner, Cook County, Chicago, IL)

*A male, 3 months, was placed on his back in his crib for a nap by his mother. The crib contained eight stuffed animals of various sizes and two blankets. The mother returned a few hours later, and found her child unresponsive on his stomach. The cause of death was positional asphyxia.
(Shirley Stover-Wilkins for Cameron F. Snider, M.D., Interim Associate Medical Examiner, District 14, Panama City, FL)

*A male, 3, was sleeping in his bedroom with his older brother. His mother checked on them, and left because they were still sleeping. She noticed that the window mini-blinds were all the way down, completely covering the window. She checked later, and found her son hanging in an upright position with the loop of the blinds' cord around his neck and one foot on his bed. The cause of death was asphyxia. (Gayle F. Suzuki, M.D., Deputy Medical Examiner, The City and county of Honolulu, Honolulu, HI)

A male, 3, was playing with a sibling when he inhaled a small plastic craft bead. Resuscitative efforts including the Heimlich maneuver were unsuccessful. The cause of death was asphyxia by aspiration of a foreign body.
(Shasta Gainer for Janice Frank, M.D., Assistant Chief Medical Examiner, Ventura County, Ventura, CA)**

CARBON MONOXIDE POISONINGS

*A male, 54, was testing a gasoline-powered generator in his garage because of the arrival of a hurricane in his area. The man's family was awakened by the smell of smoke. His wife went to the garage and found him unresponsive in a lawn chair next to the still-

running generator. The cause of death was carbon monoxide toxicity.

(Luis A. Sanchez, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner, Harris County, Houston, TX)

*A male, 63, was found unresponsive in his bed. A leak had developed in a vent that exhausted fumes from both the gas water heater and furnace. The home had no carbon monoxide detectors. The cause of death was carbon monoxide toxicity.

(Mary H. Dudley, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner, Jackson County, Kansas City, MO)

*Two males, 20 and 32, were running a gasoline-powered generator inside their mobile home after a hurricane cut off their electrical power. They were found unresponsive with the generator switched on and the gas tank empty. The cause of death for both men was carbon monoxide toxicity.

(Luis A. Sanchez, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner, Harris County, Houston, TX)

DROWNINGS

*A male, 3, his mother, his step-father, and another child were swimming in the in-ground swimming pool in his backyard. All but the 3 year-old male went inside, leaving the child on the patio by the pool. The step-father returned after about five minutes to find the child floating face down in the pool. The child was taken to the hospital where he died the next day. The cause of death was hypoxic encephalopathy due to drowning. (Robert R. Pfalzgraf, M.D., Associate Medical Examiner, District 21, Fort Myers, FL)

*A male, 13 months, was being bathed by his mother when the telephone rang. The

mother pulled the plug on the drain to empty the bath, and went to answer the phone. She returned about five minutes later and found the child unresponsive floating on his back. One of the plastic toys in the bathtub had plugged the drain. The cause of death was drowning. (Phil Pascuzzi for Andrew M. Baker, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner, Hennepin County, Minneapolis, MN)

*A female, 2, was attending a birthday party at a family member's home with her grandmother. They were in an in-ground swimming pool along with about twenty other family members and friends. Everyone, including the child, went inside the home to see birthday presents opened and to get some birthday cake. The grandmother went to give the child some cake and could not find her. The child was discovered

floating at the bottom of the deep end of the pool. The cause of death was drowning. (Susan S. Ignacio, M.D., Associate Medical Examiner, District 6, Largo, FL)

*A male, 2, was playing in the backyard of his babysitter's home with his twin brother and the babysitter's two young children. The babysitter did not feel well so she went inside. About ten minutes later, she heard some of the children screaming outside and asked her husband to check them. He went outside and found the child laying facedown in an inflatable wading pool with his twin brother standing next to him. The cause of death was drowning.

(James Taylor for A. Wayne Williams, M.D., Deputy Medical Examiner, District of Columbia, Washington, DC)

*A female, 22 months, and her brother, 3, were playing in the backyard of their rented home. Their mother was with them but went

inside to go to the bathroom. She returned a few minutes later to find both children at the bottom of an in-ground pool in the backyard. The pool was surrounded by a fence with a locked gate that had a gap in it. The cause of death for both children was drowning. (Warren E. Rupf, Sheriff-Coroner, Contra Costa County, Martinez, CA) **

ELECTROCUTIONS

A male, 45, was using a metal ladder while he painted a house. The man screamed, and was seen still alive on the ladder that was leaning against electrical power lines. The man waved off assistance, and was removed by emergency personnel after the electrical power was turned off. The cause of death was electrocution. (Leah Bush, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner, Commonwealth of Virginia, Richmond, VA)

A male, 35, was using a pruning pole on an aluminum ladder to cut trees. His pole came into contact with an electrical power line. The cause of death was electrocution. (Anne Bracey, M.D., Assistant Chief Medical Examiner, Commonwealth of Virginia, Northern District, Fairfax, VA)

FIRES

*A female, 60, was sleeping in her bedroom when her smoke alarm awakened her. She went to the balcony and threw an escape ladder down to the ground. Despite a neighbor's encouragement, the woman refused to use the ladder or jump from the second floor. She went back in the house, and was found unresponsive outside of her

bedroom by firefighters. The fire was caused by a cigarette left unattended on a love seat. The cause of death was smoke inhalation. (N. Turner Gray, M.D., Medical Examiner, Tidewater District, Norfolk, VA)

A male, 50, was found unresponsive on the floor of his mobile home after a fire. A neighbor smelled smoke, and tried to alert the man but found the rear door wired shut. The fire was caused by a space heater. The cause of death was inhalation of products of combustion. (Stephen J. Nelson, M.D., District Medical Examiner, District 10, Winter Haven, FL)

A female, 26, and two males, 22 and 25, were asleep in their home when awakened by a smoke alarm. The men's father had just discovered a fire behind a clothes dryer. One of the younger men escaped the home but realized his brother and his brother's fiancée were still inside. He returned to the home to try to rescue them but he did not exit the home. The woman was briefly seen pounding on a window, and trying to remove an air conditioning unit from it. All three were found unresponsive inside. The cause of death for all three people was smoke inhalation. (Harold McNeil, M.D., D.O., Tidewater District, Norfolk, VA)

A male, 79, was asleep in his bed when a family member was awakened by the smell of smoke. She ran to a neighbor for help but when they returned the heat and smoke stopped them from rescuing the man. The fire was caused by a portable space heater. The cause of death was conflagration injuries. (Randall E. Frost, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner, Bexar County, San Antonio, TX)

MISCELLANEOUS

*A male, 4, was watching television in his living room. His grandmother was talking on the telephone in the kitchen. She heard a loud noise, and went to find the child lying on the living room floor with a large television on top of him. The child's right foot was inside the open door of the television stand. The cause of death was blunt impact head trauma.

(Olivia Perez for Kenneth Holmes, Coroner, Marin County, San Rafael, CA)**

A male, 54, was riding his mountain bike down a hill on a bike trail. He lost control of the bike and flipped over the handlebars, landing on the ground. He was wearing a helmet. The cause of death was blunt force head injury.

(Karina Gomez for Frank Sheridan, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner, San Bernardino County, San Bernardino, CA)

*A female, 13, was a passenger on a 4-wheeled all terrain vehicle (ATV) driven by a 14 year old female. The driver was driving an ATV for the first time, and both were wearing helmets. They were going along a dirt and gravel roadway at about 30 miles per hour. The ATV went off the road, struck several rocks and crashed into a tree. The girls were ejected from the ATV. The driver suffered fractures of her ankle and left arm, and the 13 year old died at a hospital. The cause of death was multiple injuries.

(A. L. Mosley, M.D., Deputy Medical Examiner, Maricopa County, Phoenix, AZ)

*A male, 36 was driving his 3-wheeled ATV in the open desert. He drove over a 15-foot high berm, and the ATV became airborne. The front wheel of the ATV broke off when it landed, and the man was ejected. He was

wearing a half helmet that cracked. The cause of death was blunt head and neck injuries.

(Karina Gomez for Steve Trenkle, M.D., Medical Examiner, San Bernardino County, San Bernardino, CA)

--- Denny Wierdak, Directorate for Epidemiology