



## **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.**

**MECAP News is no longer sent via mail. However, you can access it at our CPSC website: <http://www.cpsc.gov/whatsnew.html#mecap>.**

**We have launched a new website, called [SaferProducts.gov](http://www.saferproducts.gov), where you can submit fatality reports, and reports of harm or potential harm involving consumer products. 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**
- **Toll-free fax number: 1-800-809-0924**
- **Mail: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission**  
**Medical Examiners and Coroners Alert Project (MECAP)**  
**Attn: Yolanda Nash**  
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**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 the CPSC's incident database. All it takes is one MECAP report to alert the CPSC to a potentially hazardous product.**

***The following pages summarize a few medical examiner and coroner reports received during the months of October 2010 through April 2011. They 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

\*\*MECAP reports filed electronically



## **Asphyxiation/Suffocation**

**An 80-year-old male decedent was pinned under an automatic garage door. He was standing in the archway of the garage door when the door came down. The garage door knocked him down and pinned him under the door. He was found by his daughter. He was transported to the hospital, where he was pronounced dead. The garage door did not reverse itself at any time after contact with the decedent.**

**The cause of death was compressional asphyxia complicating hypertensive atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease. (State of Maryland Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Baltimore, MD)\*\***

**\*A 5-week-old male decedent was found in an upright position, wedged between his infant crib rails and the mattress. It was discovered that the crib was not assembled properly, and the rails were not secured firmly to the head and foot boards. The cause of death was asphyxia via entrapment between bedding and rail. (Jefferson County Coroner's Office, Jefferson County, KY)**

**\*A 6-month-old male was found by his father not breathing while in his crib. The baby had been pulling on a cord from the baby monitor beside his crib. The cord became wrapped around the baby's shoulder and neck, causing the baby to lose consciousness. When the father found the baby, he removed the cord, called EMS, and attempted infant CPR. EMS arrived and transported the infant to the hospital where efforts to resuscitate him failed. The cause of death was asphyxiation due to ligature strangulation (head caught in monitor device cord). (Horry County Coroner's Office, Conway, SC)**

**\*A 3-month-old male decedent was sleeping in an adult-size bed shared at the same time by numerous other relatives. The infant's mother awoke to find the infant partially covered by a 3-year-old child, who was also co-sleeping with him. The infant was taken to the hospital where he was pronounced dead upon arrival. The cause of death was asphyxia from overlaying. (King County Medical Examiner's Office, Seattle, WA)**

**\*An 11-month-old female died after being found with the window blind cords wrapped around her neck. The decedent was at home with her mother, when her mother left her momentarily when another relative arrived at the residence. The decedent was just learning to walk, but she still mainly crawled. The decedent was found in a seated position with the cord from the window blinds wrapped around her neck. The blind cord reportedly hung low enough to be within the child's reach. The cause of death was anoxia. (Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Baltimore, MD)**



### **Carbon Monoxide Poisoning**

**A 61-year-old female decedent was found unresponsive on the floor near her bed in her home. The fire department discovered a broken pipe on a propane gas furnace. The propane furnace was filled with gas the day before the incident, and the victim died the following day of CO poisoning. (Commonwealth of Virginia, Central District, Richmond, VA)**

**\*A 74-year old male was found deceased after a generator was left running, inside the decedent's home. The cause of death was due to carbon monoxide intoxication. (Office of the Medical Examiner, District Nine, Orlando, FL)**

**A 60-year-old male decedent was found unresponsive in his home where there was an elevated CO level due reportedly to a furnace malfunction. Other occupants of the home also were overcome by carbon monoxide and treated. His cause of death was carbon monoxide poisoning. (The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Vermont Department of Health, Burlington, VT)**

**A 58-year-old male died in his home due to carbon monoxide poisoning. A faulty gas furnace caused the death. (District of Columbia Chief Medical Examiner's Office, Washington, DC)**

**A 29-year-old female was exposed to carbon monoxide due to a faulty furnace. The decedent was pronounced dead with the cause of death stated as carbon monoxide poisoning. (Franklin County Coroner's Office, Columbus, OH)**



### **Submersion/Drowning**

A 2-year-old female decedent was found at her residence face down at the bottom of the family's in-ground swimming pool. EMS responded to the scene and transported the victim to a local medical facility where she was pronounced dead. The cause of death was drowning. (Broward County Medical Examiner's Office, Ft. Lauderdale, FL)

A 1-year-old male fell into a 5-gallon bucket of soapy water that was 3/4 full. The cause of death was asphyxia due to drowning. (Marion County Coroner's Office, Indianapolis, IN)

A 92-year-old male decedent was climbing down a pool ladder when the ladder broke, and he fell into the water. He was in the process of fixing the swim ladder/platform for his wife. He could not swim, but his wife could. EMS discovered that there was a fresh break in the platform where the decedent fell in the water. The cause of death was asphyxia due to drowning; superficial perimortem blunt force injury of the head; heart disease. (King County Medical Examiner's Office, Seattle, WA)

An 8-year-old male was found floating in an apartment complex's in-ground swimming pool. The cause of death was hypoxic encephalopathy, drowning. (San Bernardino Sheriff-Coroner Division, San Bernardino, CA)

A 15-month-old female drowned in a swimming pool. She reportedly was left unattended for a brief moment while her father went to move the car. When he returned, he noticed that the child was not where he previously had left her. The gate was open to the pool area, and he found the child in the swimming pool face up. EMS efforts to resuscitate her were unsuccessful, and she was pronounced dead at the hospital. The cause of death was complications of drowning. (North Carolina Department of Health, Chapel Hill, NC)

\*An 11-month-old female died from a bathtub drowning. The decedent was under the care of her cousin, who was babysitting at the time. It was reported that the

caregiver had fallen asleep, and that a 3-year-old sibling filled the bathtub with water, and the decedent fell into the tub. Developmentally, the decedent was able to walk while touching walls or holding onto furniture for support. The decedent was pulled unresponsive from a full bathtub. EMS responded to the scene, and transported the infant to the hospital, where she was pronounced dead. The cause of death was drowning. (Denver Office of the Medical Examiner, Denver, CO)



## **Electrocution**

A 46-year-old male decedent was working on an air conditioner unit. He was replacing the wires when he cut into a live wire. The cause of death was electrocution. (Office of the County of Nueces, Corpus Christi, TX)

\*A 17-year-old male was trimming a tree in his neighbor's yard and reportedly made contact with an electrical line. While using the power saw, a tree branch fell off the tree onto the power line. While he was removing the branch from the electrical line, he was electrocuted immediately. The cause of death was high-voltage electrocution. (Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Health, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Northern Virginia District, Manassas, VA)

\*A 40-year-old male was helping his friend paint a three story house. He was moving a large extension ladder, which hit an 8,000-volt power line, and caused electrocution. The cause of death was high-voltage electrocution. (Office of the Medical Examiner St. Louis County Minnesota, Hibbing, MN)

\*A 59-year-old female was found unresponsive in her home by her husband. The decedent was electrocuted when she was cleaning behind the refrigerator and electric stove. She partially dislodged the stove's 220V plug from the wall outlet and completed the circuit by touching the metal stove with her right elbow. The victim was transported to a local medical center and pronounced dead. The cause of death was electrocution. (Solano County Coroner, San Francisco, CA)



## **Fire**

A 5-year-old male and his mother and sister were discovered dead in a house fire. The fire originated from a stick-type candle on the window sill that ignited a nearby sofa. The victims were using the candles because their power had been turned off. The cause of death was combustion products and thermal injuries. (Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Health, Northern Virginia Office)

A 74-year-old male decedent sustained burns to his body when his nylon shirt or jacket ignited while cooking on a self-igniting gas stove. He sustained 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, full thickness burns to 46 percent of his torso, neck, and face. He survived three days in the hospital. The cause of death was burns to the body. (Westchester Medical Center, Valhalla, NY)

A 41-year-old female decedent died in a house fire. The fire was reportedly caused by faulty electric wiring. The cause of death was due to smoke inhalation and thermal burns. (Dallas County Medical Examiner's Office, Dallas, TX)

An 80-year-old female sustained smoke inhalation in a house fire believed to have been caused by a faulty microwave. There was a "V" pattern on the wall behind the microwave, and damages were limited to the kitchen. The victim was transported to an area hospital where she was treated for smoke inhalation and later transferred to a rehabilitation center. Her condition worsened over the next several months, and she died 5½ months later. The cause of death was due to complications of smoke inhalation. (Office of the Medical Examiner, Milwaukee, WI)

A 78-year-old female was the victim of a house fire believed to have been caused by a defective fan. The cause of death was smoke inhalation and thermal injuries. (Dallas County Medical Examiner's Office, Dallas, TX)



### **Tip-Over**

**\*A 3-year-old female was killed when a television fell on top of her chest. The victim was in the living room of her residence along with her mother. The mother observed her daughter playing with the television that was on a table. The mother turned her back momentarily and heard a crash. She observed the child lying on the floor with the television on top of her chest. The victim's mother responded to her and lifted the television off of her and notified EMS. The child was transported to the hospital where she was pronounced dead. The cause of death was blunt force chest trauma. (Palm Beach County Medical Examiner's Office, West Palm Beach, FL)**

**\*A 5-year-old male died when a television fell off of a stand and landed on top of him. The victim was at home alone in a room where he was apparently shifting a television. The decedent's mother found him with the television on top of him. The cause of death was blunt impacts to the head with soft tissue, skull, and brain injuries. (Cuyahoga County Coroner's Office, Cleveland, Ohio)**

**\*A 16-month-old female died from accidental head trauma when her brother climbed up on a dresser to get a DVD; the dresser and television fell onto his sister. The victim and her 3 year old brother were left alone in a room while their mother went into the bathroom across the hall. The mother stated that her son had asked to watch a movie, and she responded that she would turn the movie on after she used the restroom. The mother went into the bathroom, and moments later she heard the noise of the TV and dresser crashing down. The mother found the child lying on the floor with the television on her daughter's head. The cause of death was head injuries. (Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Baltimore, Maryland)\*\***



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

**\*A 79-year-old male was the operator and sole rider of an ATV that overturned and came to land on top of him. The victim was operating his ATV on a steep incline in a wooded area with many fallen trees. He was not wearing a helmet. The cause of death was compressional asphyxia. (Iowa Office of the State Medical Examiner, Ankeny, IA)\*\***

**\*A 32-year-old male was operating an ATV on a trail that he was unfamiliar with, when he went over a cliff, falling 25 feet onto rocks. The cause of death was blunt impact injury of the head. (Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Concord, NH)**

**\*A 58-year-old male lost control of his ATV, and his neighbor found him lying on the ground off the roadway. The victim had left his house on a four-wheeled ATV to round up the mules and put them back in the barn. He was ejected from the ATV landing approximately 15 feet from the ATV on a gravel driveway. The neighbor found him deceased, and the ATV was running and resting on its side next to the decedent with its headlight turned on. The decedent was not wearing a helmet. The cause of death was craniocerebral blunt trauma, skull, fractures, blunt chest trauma, ribs, left, fractures, acute ethanol intoxication. (Franklin County Medical Examiner, St. Louis, MO)\*\***

**\*A 48-year-old male died from a four-wheel ATV accident when he went off the road and struck a tree. He suffered significant head injuries and was not wearing a helmet. The cause of death was blunt force injury of the head. (North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Chapel Hill, NC)**

**\*A 47-year-old male was killed in an all-terrain vehicle crash. The decedent was riding on the road when he lost control of the ATV and it overturned throwing him from the ATV. The decedent was air-lifted to the hospital, where he died from his injuries. He was not wearing a helmet. The cause of death was traumatic brain injury. (Jefferson County Coroner's Office, Jefferson, KY)**



## **Fatalities involving Other Consumer Products**

**\*A 2-year-old female died a week after she swallowed a small battery. The decedent complained of a sore throat for a week. She was treated for strep throat. She continued to get worse with her symptoms. ER discovered that she had swallowed a small battery that had eroded. The cause of death was due to ingestion of foreign body. (Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Health, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Central District, Richmond, VA)**

**\*A 22-month-old male died when his stroller fell off the dock into an ocean bay where his family was crabbing. The mother brought the decedent fastened into a stroller to a dock on an ocean bay. Approximately one-half hour later, the father noticed the decedent and his stroller missing. They recovered the child in the water. He was still fastened into the stroller. They discovered that both pins on the stroller were not locked and the wheel pair was able to rotate freely. No pins were located at the scene. The cause of death was submersion. (Humboldt County Coroner's Office, Eureka, CA)**

**An 82-year-old male was trapped in his bedroom when a fire started in the adjacent room from a defective laptop computer battery that was on the bed. The roommate of the victim discovered the flames and smokes in the bedroom and exited the house. The victim was airlifted and admitted with 2<sup>nd</sup> degree burns to face, shoulders, arms, and hands. He later developed acute respiratory failure. The cause of death was septic sequelae of thermal burn injury and smoke inhalation. (Hillsborough County Medical Examiner's Office, Cape Coral, FL)**

*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).*