



UNITED STATES  
CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, DC 20207

Memorandum

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TO : The File

THROUGH : Susan Ahmed, Ph.D., Associate Executive Director  
Directorate for Epidemiology  
Russell Roegner, Ph.D., Director  
Hazard Analysis Division, EPHA

FROM : Joyce McDonald, EPHA

SUBJECT : Toy-Related Deaths and Injuries, Calendar Year 2002

This memorandum provides information on toy-related deaths and injuries reported to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) that occurred during the January 1, 2002 through December 31, 2002 time period.

TOY-RELATED DEATHS

Thirteen toy-related deaths involving children under age 15 were reported to the Commission that occurred in 2002.<sup>1</sup> The toys involved in these fatal incidents were as follows:

Reported Toy-Related Deaths Children 0-14 Calendar Year 2002<sup>2</sup>

Type of Toy	Deaths
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13</b>
Riding Toys, Excluding Non-Powered Scooters (1 drowning, 3 motor vehicle involvement)	4
Balloons (choking/asphyxia)	3
Toy Dart and Dart Tip (choking/asphyxia)	2
Toy Balls (choking/airway obstruction)	2
Non-powered Scooter (motor vehicle involvement)	1
Suction Cup from a Toy Eyeball (aspiration of a foreign object)	1

Victims of the 13 fatal incidents ranged in age from 2 to 12 years old. Nine of the fatalities involved male victims.

<sup>1</sup> There were fewer deaths (13) reported to CPSC during 2002 than in 2001 (25 deaths). Fewer non-powered scooter deaths were reported in 2002 (1 death) than in 2001 (10 deaths). These numbers do not represent a sample of known probability of selection, and they may not include all the toy-related deaths occurring during the 2002 time period, in part because reporting is not complete for some data sources.

<sup>2</sup> These data are based on reports from the In-depth Investigation file, the Injury and Potential Injury Incident file, the Death Certificate file and the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System for 1/1/2002 to 12/31/2002.

### **Choking or Aspiration Deaths**

Eight deaths occurred where the child choked on or aspirated a toy. The toys involved in these fatal incidents were 3 balloons, 1 toy dart, 1 dart tip, 2 toy balls and 1 suction cup from a toy eyeball. These children ranged in age from 2 to 11 years old.

### **Head Injury Deaths**

Three of the toy-related deaths were the result of head injuries. These deaths involved 2 tricycles and 1 riding toy. The ages of the victims ranged from 2 to 12 years. Two of the deaths resulted from a collision with a motor vehicle and 1 death occurred when a child struck a tree as a result of his riding toy being towed by a motor vehicle.

### **Deaths Due to Drowning**

There was 1 death due to drowning that involved a tricycle. A 5-year-old male had been riding around the deck of a pool and was found drowned with his tricycle in the pool.

### **Incidents with an Unspecified Cause of Death**

There was 1 fatality associated with a toy where the incident report does not give a specific cause of death. A 10-year-old female was stuck by a motor vehicle while riding a scooter across a street. Given the nature of the incident, it is likely that the cause of death was some type of blunt force trauma.

Further details on all 13 toy-related deaths involving children under 15 can be found in Appendix A, attached to this memorandum.

### **Persons Age 15 and Over and Toy-Related Deaths**

Although a majority of toy-related deaths involve children under the age of 15, there are fatalities associated with toys that occur with older persons. Older children and adults also commonly use some products that are categorized as toys. An example is products used by hobbyists, such as powered model vehicles.

In 2002, 2 persons over the age of 14 were killed in incidents associated with toys. One incident involved a developmentally delayed 15-year-old girl who choked on a balloon. The other incident involved a 60-year-old man who was hit in the chest by a remote controlled plane. For additional information on these deaths, refer to Appendix A (attached).

### **ESTIMATED TOY-RELATED INJURIES ( NEISS)<sup>3</sup>**

In 2002 there were an estimated 212,400 toy-related injuries treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms. There was a statistically significant drop in the estimated toy-related injuries from 2001 (255,100) to 2002. The 2002 toy-related injury estimate is not significantly different from the 2000 injury estimate of 191,000. The decrease in toy-related injuries from 2001 to 2002 correlates with a drop in riding toy-related injuries for the same time period.<sup>4</sup> The injury estimates for the years 1998 to 2002 are shown in the table on the following page.

<sup>3</sup> The source of these data is the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS), which is based on a statistical sample of hospital emergency room treated injuries.

<sup>4</sup> The estimated injuries related to riding toys (including non-powered scooters) decreased from 121,700 in 2001 to 81,300 in 2002.

### Estimated Toy-Related Injuries 1998 to 2002

Calendar Year	Estimated Injuries
1998	153,400
1999	152,600
2000	191,000
2001	255,100
2002	212,400

Seventy-eight percent (165,200) of the injuries for 2002 were to children under 15 years of age and 34 percent (72,400) were to children under 5. Twenty-two percent (47,200) of the injuries were to persons age 15 and up.

Overall, males were involved in 58 percent of the toy-related injuries. Most of the victims (97 percent) were treated and released from the hospital.

Forty-seven percent of the total injuries (100,300) occurred to the head and face area, which includes head, face, eyeball, mouth and ear. Arms, from shoulder to finger, accounted for 25 percent of the injuries (52,200), while the leg and foot area accounted for 17 percent (36,000). The individual body parts having the most injuries overall were faces (45,400), heads (27,100) and mouths (16,200). Lacerations, contusions and abrasions were involved in over half of the total injuries (53 percent).

In 2002, riding toys (including non-powered scooters) continued to be associated with more injuries (81,300 or 38 percent) than any other category of toy. In 2001, riding toys (including non-powered scooters) were associated with an estimated 121,700 injuries.

## Appendix A

## Toy-Related Deaths CY 2002

Document #	Date	Age/Sex	City/State	Product	Narrative
1 0213018561	03/22/02	22 MO F	Folkston, GA	Balloon	Asphyxia by foreign object (balloon).
2 030612HCC3298 0206103880	05/06/02	3 YR M	Santa Maria, CA	Rubber tip of a toy dart	Died from asphyxiation after he choked on the rubber tip of a toy dart.
3 020619HCC3236 F0250160A	05/18/02	60 YR M	Tucson, AZ	Radio controlled model airplane	Was operating a radio controlled model airplane and lost sight of it as it flew in the sun. The plane struck the man in the chest. He died of blunt impact to the torso with penetration of the heart.
4 G0250205A	05/26/02	10 YR F	Findlay, OH	Scooter	Died after she was struck by a motor vehicle while riding a scooter across a street. (Injuries were not specified.)
5 020605CCN0505 G0260065A I0260038A	05/28/02	15 YR F	St Louis, MO	Balloon	A developmentally delayed child was chewing on a balloon and drinking water. She ran into the kitchen, grabbing her throat, vomited and became unconscious. At the ER a whole balloon was recovered from her. Death due to asphyxia.
6 N0270157A	06/12/02	5 YR M	Crystal River, FL	Tricycle	Child had been riding his tricycle around the narrow deck of a pool. The tricycle was found in the pool and with the child who drowned.
7 X0263011A	06/20/02	2 YR M	Marietta, GA	Tricycle	Child took his tricycle out of his house while his parents were sleeping and pedaled onto a highway where he was hit by a van. Died of closed head trauma.

8	020813HCC1763 N0270266A I0360143A	06/20/02	6 YR M	Darlington, SC	Toy eyeball with a suction cup (from a vending machine)	Had plastic eyeball with attached suction cup in his mouth when the suction cup detached and he began choking on it. Death due to aspiration of a foreign object.
9	020829CNE7458 N0280041A	06/20/02	3 YR M	Minersville, PA	Balloon	Died as a result of swallowing a small balloon which blocked his airway.
10	021205HCC3099 X02B6105A 0206136079	06/29/02	2 YR F	North Hills, CA	Balloon	Choked on a deflated balloon and died. She had been chewing on the balloon.
11	020703CNE7382 N0270008A	06/29/02	10 YR F	Aristes, PA	Toy ball	Victim was playing with the toy ball in her mouth and it became lodged behind her teeth, blocking her airway. Choking death. The toy ball had a character inside it.
12	020725CWE6015 H0270335A 0206154959	07/19/02	3 YR M	Valencia, CA	Toy ball	Victim choked on a toy ball (a little larger than a golf ball) that was semi-transparent and had a little figure inside. Death due to choking/airway obstruction.
13	N0280238A	08/12/02	12 YR M	Crofton, MD	Riding toy	Child was on riding toy holding onto a rope while being pulled by a pickup. He let go of the rope and the riding toy hit a curb, throwing the boy into a small tree. He hit the tree head first and died.
14	021122HCC2127 H02B0209A	09/18/02	11 YR M	Paris, AR	Rubber dart	Child was chewing on a rubber dart and took a drink of soda. The dart then slipped into his trachea and lodged. Death due to asphyxiation with a foreign body.
15	0206185058	10/15/02	2 YR M	San Diego, CA	Tricycle	Tricyclist struck by pickup truck in driveway. Blunt forehead injury resulting in death.

Total=15