



**UNITED STATES
CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, DC 20207**

Memorandum

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TO : The File

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SUBJECT : Toy-Related Deaths and Injuries, Calendar Year 2001

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, 2001 through December 31, 2001 time period.

TOY-RELATED DEATHS

Twenty-five toy-related deaths involving children under age 15 were reported to the Commission that occurred in 2001.¹ The toys involved in these fatal incidents were as follows:

Reported Toy-Related Deaths Children 0-14 Calendar Year 2001²

Type of Toy	Deaths
TOTAL	25
Non-powered Scooters (9 motor vehicle incidents, 1 fall)	10
Balloons (all aspirations)	4
Riding Toys, Excluding Non-Powered Scooters (2 drownings, 1 motor vehicle incident)	3
Toy Boxes (1 fall, 1 suffocation)	2
Toy Building Block (choking)	1
Toy Dart (suffocation due to ingestion of a foreign object)	1
Remote Controlled Toys (2 toys involved in 1 strangulation)	1
Toy Ball (choking/anoxia)	1
Toys, Not Specified (2 asphyxia due to ingestion)	2

¹ There were more deaths (25) reported to CPSC during 2001 than in 2000 (17 deaths). More non-powered scooter deaths were reported in 2001 (10 deaths) than in 2000 (3 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 2001 time period, in part because reporting is not complete for some data sources.

² 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 1/1/2001 to 12/31/2001.

Victims of the 25 fatal incidents ranged in age from 3 months to 12 years old.³ Twenty-one of the fatalities involved male victims.

Choking or Aspiration Deaths

The 9 choking or aspiration deaths occurred with 4 balloons, a toy building block, a toy dart, a toy ball and 2 unspecified toys. These children ranged in age from 3 months to 8 years old. The children involved in the 4 balloon-related fatalities were 8 months to 4 years old.

Head Injury Deaths

Four of the toy-related deaths were the result of head injuries. All of these deaths involved non-powered scooters. The ages of the victims ranged from 8 to 12 years. Three of the deaths resulted from a collision with a motor vehicle and one death resulted from a fall on a steep slope.

Deaths Due to Multiple Injuries

Four fatalities were the result of multiple injuries suffered during the toy-related incident. These children ranged in age from 2 to 12 years. Three of the deaths involved non-powered scooters and 1 death was associated with a toy scooter/kiddie car. The scooter-related fatalities were due to blunt force trauma to the head, neck and chest; multiple injuries and fractures; and head and chest injuries. The toy scooter/kiddie car-related death was due to multiple blunt trauma injuries. All of these deaths were the result of collisions with motor vehicles (2 cars, a van and a garbage truck).

Deaths Due to Drowning

There were 2 deaths due to drowning associated with toys and both deaths involved riding toys. A 1-year-old male rode his tricycle onto a torn swimming pool cover and subsequently drowned in the pool. A 2-year-old male drowned when he fell into a residential spa while riding a tricycle.

Deaths Due to Other Diagnoses

There were 3 other diagnoses associated with the toy-related deaths, involving 3 incidents. Two of the fatalities involved toy boxes and one involved 2 remote controlled toys. A girl (age not specified) was standing on a plastic toy box that tipped over. She fell, striking her neck on the edge of the box. Her death was due to a cervical spinal cord injury. A 3-year-old male apparently got locked inside a toy box and suffocated. A 3-year old male took 2 remote controlled toys to bed with him and the cords attached to the controllers became wrapped around his neck. He fell asleep and strangled.

Incidents with an Unspecified Cause of Death

There were 3 fatalities associated with toys where the incident report does not give a specific cause of death. All of these fatal incidents occurred with non-powered scooters and motor vehicles. In 2 of the scooter-related deaths, the child was struck by a car and in 1 scooter fatality the child was run over by a van after he fell to the ground. The deceased were 2 8-year-olds and a 9-year-old. Given the nature of the incidents, it is likely that the cause of death was some type of blunt force trauma.

³ In one case the age of the female victim was not specified, but from description of the incident she appeared to be a child under the age of 15.

Further details on all 25 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. Some products that are categorized as toys are also commonly used by older children and adults. Non-powered scooters are a prime example, along with some products that are enjoyed by hobbyists, such as powered model vehicles.

In 2001, 4 persons over the age of 14 were killed in incidents associated with toys. These persons ranged in age from 18 to 57 and all the victims were males. Three of the fatalities occurred with non-powered scooters and 1 fatality occurred with a remote controlled airplane. One non-powered scooter-related death was the result of a collision with a motor vehicle; and 2 deaths were the result of falls. The cause of the deaths in those unpowered scooter cases was unspecified impact-related injuries, basal skull fracture/blunt force trauma to the head and massive head injuries.

The death associated with the remote controlled plane occurred when the plane's control wire came in contact with a power line. The victim was severely shocked and died weeks later of multiple organ failure. For additional information on these deaths, refer to Appendix A (attached).

ESTIMATED TOY-RELATED INJURIES (NEISS)⁴

In 2001 there were an estimated 255,100 toy-related injuries treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms. There was a rise in estimated toy-related injuries from 2000 to 2001. The increase from 2000 to 2001 can be primarily attributed to a rise in injuries associated with unpowered scooters (i.e., from 42,505 injuries in 2000 to 99,812 injuries in 2001).⁵ The injury estimates for the years 1997 to 2001 are shown in the table below.

Estimated Toy-Related Injuries 1997 to 2001

Calendar Year	Estimated Injuries
1997	141,300
1998	153,400
1999	152,600
2000	191,000
2001	255,100

Seventy-nine percent (202,500) of the injuries for 2001 were to children under 15 years of age and 30 percent (77,100) were to children under 5. Twenty-one percent (52,600) of the injuries were to persons age 15 and up.

Overall, males were involved in 60 percent of the toy-related injuries. Most of the victims (98 percent) were treated and released from the hospital.

⁴ 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.

⁵ The estimated injuries related to non-powered scooters rose dramatically from 3,281 injuries in 1999 to 42,505 injuries in 2000.

Forty-four percent of the total injuries (111,900) occurred to the head and face area, which includes head, face, eyeball, mouth and ear. Arms, from shoulder to finger, accounted for 27 percent of the injuries (67,900), while the leg and foot area accounted for 18 percent (46,600). The individual body parts having the most injuries overall were faces (50,900), heads (30,000) and fingers (15,300). Lacerations, contusions and abrasions were involved in over half of the total injuries (52 percent).

In 2001, riding toys (including unpowered scooters) continued to be associated with more injuries (121,700 or 48 percent) than any other category of toy. In 2000, riding toys (including unpowered scooters) were associated with an estimated 65,000 injuries.

Appendix A

Toy-Related Deaths CY 2001

	Document #	Date	Age/Sex	City/State	Type of Toy	Narrative
1	010411CAA0477 H0140116A X0110331A	01/19/01	12 YR M	Spring Hill, FL	Unpowered Scooter	Child died of blunt head trauma when he and his twin were hit by a car while on their scooters. Family's attorney believes a wobbly wheel due to steering column problems contributed to death; child couldn't maneuver to get out of the way of the car. Unknown if a helmet was worn.
2	X0151764A	02/02/01	Unk F	Freeport, IL	Plastic Toy Box	Girl was standing on a plastic toy box when it tipped over, causing her to fall onto the edge of the box. She struck her neck and died of a cervical spinal cord injury.
3	0120005372	03/05/01	3 YR M	Manhattan, KS	Toy Box	Apparently got locked inside of a toy box in his room. Suffocation.
4	X0151902A	03/26/01	8 YR M	Stockton, CA	Unpowered Scooter	Riding a scooter when he was struck by a car at an intersection. Death due to blunt craniocerebral trauma.
5	010419CAA2412 X0141587A	04/03/01	11 YR M	Sterling, KY	Unpowered Scooter	Child was struck by a car when the brakes on his scooter supposedly failed and he couldn't stop. He was not wearing a helmet. Death was due to blunt force trauma to the head, neck and chest.
6	010411CWE6001 F0146001A H0190329A	04/09/01	10 YR M	San Leandro, CA	Unpowered Scooter	Driving a scooter down a road with a steep slope and the wheels slid out from under him. He fell backwards, hitting his head on the pavement after accidentally stepping on the wheelie bar. Blunt head trauma (no helmet).
7	010613HWE5010 F0165006A	04/09/01	8 MO M	West Valley City, UT	Balloon	Child swallowed a balloon and asphyxiated. Foreign body Aspiration. Balloon found in posterior oropharynx.

8	N0150140A N0150262A X0172988A	04/23/01	9 YR M	Miami, FL	Unpowered Scooter	Died of multiple injuries and fractures after being hit by a van while riding his push scooter out of his driveway.
9	X0162413A	05/06/01	3 MO M	Allen Park, MI	Toy Building Block	Died after choking on a toy building block. Parents took item from him and he appeared okay, but a short time later went into respiratory distress. A piece of the block was later recovered from the child.
10	X0173234A	05/17/01	1 YR M	Cleveland Heights, OH	Tricycle	Child drowned when he rode his tricycle onto a torn swimming pool cover and fell from the trike into the pool.
11	G0160100A	06/17/01	8 YR M	Detroit, MI	Unpowered Scooter	Child died of unspecified injuries when he darted into traffic on his scooter and was struck by a car.
12	N0170380A	06/24/01	18 YR M	Harper's Ferry, WV	Unpowered Scooter	Killed when the scooter he was riding swerved into the roadway and was struck by an oncoming pickup truck. He was killed instantly by the impact, but injuries were not specified.
13	010716CCC1730 H0170165A X0183630A	07/10/01	3 YR M	High Point, NC	Robotic puppy and racecar, both remote controlled toys	Child took 2 toys to bed. Toys were remote controlled with controllers that had electrical cords attached. The cords became wrapped around his neck and he fell asleep, rolling over which wrapped the cords tighter. He strangled.
14	G0180067A	07/10/01	12 YR M	Lexington, KY	Unpowered Scooter	Child was killed when the scooter he was riding collided with a garbage truck. He was wearing a helmet, but died of head and chest injuries.
15	0137042789	07/19/01	4 YR F	Chapel Hill, NC	Unspecified Toy	Swallowed a toy. Asphyxiation.
16	N0180253A	07/21/01	2 YR F	Bristol, CT	Toy Scooter or "Kiddie" Car	Child was killed when the toy scooter she was riding on was struck by an oncoming car. Died from multiple blunt trauma injuries.

17	X0193961A	07/31/01	10 YR M	San Diego, CA	Unpowered Scooter	Child sustained severe head trauma and died after being struck by a car while riding a scooter. He was riding down the hill at a high speed and wore no protective equipment.
18	X0194116A	07/31/01	57 YR M	Temecula, CA	Unpowered Scooter	Man fell off scooter and struck his head. Basal skull fracture/blunt force trauma to the head.
19	010817CCN0830 G0180127A X0183781A 0126057974	08/13/01	4 YR M	Kalamazoo, MI	Balloon	Child placed a balloon in his mouth and choked on it. He died from respiratory and cardiac failure due to aspiration of a foreign object.
20	020207CCC2197 012655853 X01A4353A	08/18/01 Died 09/04/01	49 YR M	Sterling Heights, MI	Remote Controlled Airplane	Man was flying a remote controlled plane when the control wire came in contact with a power line. He was severely shocked and died several weeks later of multiple organ failure.
21	X0183889A 0124027100	08/22/01	50 YR M	Elk Neck Park, MD	Unpowered Scooter	Man was killed when he lost control of his scooter while coming down the hill from his camp site. He was not wearing a helmet and suffered massive head injuries.
22	020109HCC2139 X01C5544A 0106157408	09/08/01	2 YR M	Mecca, CA	Unidentified plastic toy	Child playing with toys on a couch and had trouble breathing. Died of asphyxia due to an identified plastic toy measuring 1x1.25 inches. Toy was removed from airway during the autopsy.
23	0106157571	09/09/01	2 YR M	Banning, CA	Tricycle	Fell in residential spa while riding a tricycle. Drowning.
24	N0190160A	09/12/01	9 YR M	Altamone Springs, FL	Unpowered Scooter	Child riding a scooter died when he was run over by a van driven by his father when he either lost his grip or let go of the van's mirror. He fell to the pavement and was struck. Death was due to unspecified injuries.

25	020228HCC1354 0145026482	09/19/01	2 YR M	McColl, SC	Balloon	Child stopped breathing and at the hospital a piece of a balloon was removed from his throat. Died due to airway obstruction from foreign body aspiration.
26	X01A4356A 011011CCC1034	09/30/01	4 YR M	Lake Hiawatha, NJ	Toy ball	Child swallowed a small "high-bouncing" ball which obstructed his airway. Died of cerebral anoxia due to choking.
27	0104034733 020910HCC3296	10/15/01	13 MO F	Mesa, AZ	Balloon	Aspirated a balloon.
28	N01B0051A	11/08/01	8 YR M	Fayette County, PA	Unpowered Scooter	Died of unspecified injuries after riding his scooter into the path of an oncoming car.
29	H01B0302A 011129CCC1149 I01B0324A	11/17/01	8 YR M	Braxton, MS	Plastic Toy Gun with Suction Cup Darts	Playing alone with toy gun and suction cup darts and somehow swallowed a dart. Died of suffocation due to ingestion of a foreign object.

Total=29