



CPSC Releases Top Three Tips for a Safer Holiday Toy Shopping and Playing Experience

Written On November 22, 2010 By [Bob Kraft](#)

The Consumer Product Safety Commission has issued a timely [press release](#) about toy safety, just before the Holidays. The report notes the decrease in toy recalls in 2010 compared with 2008, and the decrease in child deaths during the same period. This is great progress, and perhaps a sign of tougher oversight under the new administration in Washington.

Unfortunately, child injuries from toys are on the increase, so parents need to continue to take care, and to properly supervise their children's play. Here is the press release, with some good safety tips for buying toys:

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As the holidays approach and toy catalogs begin to arrive in the mail, toy shoppers can become overwhelmed with all the choices. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) wants parents and consumers to know that safeguards put in place in recent years are making a positive impact and helping to restore confidence in the safety of toys in the marketplace.

The new toy safeguards include: establishing the lowest lead content and lead paint limits in the world; setting limits on the use of certain phthalates; converting the voluntary toy standard into a mandatory standard; and working with Customs and Border Protection data systems to track shipments as they are in transit from other countries thereby increasing our effectiveness in discovering dangerous products coming into U.S. ports.

These safeguards, along with safety-conscious steps taken by many toy makers and sellers, have contributed to a dramatic decline in toy recalls since 2008. There were 44 toy recalls in fiscal year 2010. This is down from 50 recalls in 2009 and 172 recalls in 2008. Toy recalls related to lead in 2010 were down to 3, which is far fewer than 9 in 2009 and 19 in 2008.

In addition to a decline in recalls, toy-related fatalities decreased in 2009. A new [report](#) (pdf) released by CPSC today notes that for 2009 CPSC received reports of 12 deaths to children under the age of 15, which is down from 24 toy-related fatalities in 2007 and 2008. Riding toys were associated with almost 60 percent of the reported deaths in 2009: 3 with tricycles, 2 with powered riding toys, and 2 with nonmotorized riding toys or

unspecified riding toys. Most deaths were from drowning, motor vehicle accidents, or airway obstruction from a small toy or small part of a toy.

While recalls and deaths have declined, new statistics from CPSC released today show that toy-related injuries are increasing. In 2009, there were an estimated 186,000 emergency room-treated injuries related to toys with children younger than 15, which is up from 152,000 injuries in 2005. Frequently these injuries involved lacerations, contusions, and abrasions that most often occurred to a child's face and head. Importantly many of the incidents were associated with, but not necessarily caused by, a toy.

“By limiting metals and chemicals in toys and making the voluntary standard mandatory, CPSC has put safeguards in place for toys to better protect children,” said Chairman Inez Tenenbaum. “The increase in injuries is a concern, and we want parents to make safe purchases and for children to be safe at play. To help keep what has been called the most wonderful time of the year happy and incident-free, CPSC is encouraging consumers to adopt a three-pronged safety approach.”

1. **Which Toy for Which Child** – Always choose age appropriate toys.
2. **Gear Up for Safety** – Include safety gear whenever shopping for sports-related gifts or ride-on toys, including bicycles, skates, and scooters.

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3. **Location, Location, Location** – Be aware of your child’s surroundings during play. Young children should avoid playing with ride-on toys near automobile traffic, pools or ponds. They also should avoid playing in indoor areas associated with hazards such as kitchens and bathrooms and in rooms with corded window blinds.

Here are some additional safety steps that consumers can take while shopping this holiday season:

- Scooters and other Riding Toys – Riding toys, skateboards, and in-line skates go fast, and falls could be deadly. Helmets and safety gear should be worn properly at all times and be sized to fit.
- Small Balls and other Toys with Small Parts – For children younger than age three, avoid toys with small parts, which can cause choking.
- Balloons – Children can choke or suffocate on deflated or broken balloons. Keep deflated balloons away from children younger than eight years old. Discard broken balloons at once.
- Magnets – For children under age six, avoid building or play sets with small magnets. If magnets or pieces with magnets are swallowed, serious injuries and/or death can occur.

Once the gifts are open:

- Immediately discard plastic wrappings or other packaging on toys before they become dangerous play things.

- Keep toys appropriate for older children away from younger siblings.
- Charging batteries should be supervised by adults. Chargers and adapters can pose thermal burn hazards to young children. Pay attention to instructions and warnings on battery chargers. Some chargers lack any mechanism to prevent overcharging.

Along with educating the public, CPSC is committed to working with foreign and domestic toy manufacturers, importers, and retailers to help them understand and comply with these requirements while keeping their doors open and their businesses competitive.

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