



## Biggest Crib Recall in U.S. History Revives Safety Regulation Discussion

Written On November 30, 2009 By [Bob Kraft](#)

Issues concerning the safety of children's foodstuffs, products, and toys have dominated headlines over the last few years, so much so that the Consumer Product Safety Commission, under the Obama administration, is working to safeguard America's children by developing mandatory safety standards. Now, some 2,000 media outlets have picked up another problem with an essential piece of childhood furniture: baby cribs.

ABC World News (11/24, story 6, 2:45, Gibson) reported, "Worried parents flooded phone lines and websites" yesterday "following the announcement of the biggest crib recall in US history, 2.1 million cribs recalled by the Stork Craft Company after at least four babies died." That brings the number of recalled cribs over the "past two years" to six million, according to NBC Nightly News (11/24, story 4, 2:25, Holt). More disconcertingly, the "head of the Consumer Product Safety Commission admitted" that "the agency did not move quickly enough to get dangerous baby cribs off the market."

According to the [AP](#), "sales of the cribs being recalled go back to 1993." The cribs, of which some 150,000 "carry the Fisher-Price logo," have had "problems with their hardware, which can break, deform or be lost after years of use." Apparently, "problems also can arise because of assembly mistakes by crib owners." Those errors "can cause the drop-side to detach and create a dangerous space between the drop-side and the crib mattress, where a child could become trapped."

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To date, officials in Canada and the US have read a combined total of 110 accident reports involving the cribs, Reuters reported. Therefore, parents are being urged to stow the cribs away until they contact the Canadian-based company for a free repair kit.

Meanwhile, ASTM International, a “Pennsylvania-based group that sets voluntary safety standards, last week eliminated its guidelines for drop-side cribs, citing complaints about hardware failures,” Bloomberg News notes. “ASTM’s action will probably lead most major retailers to stop carrying such cribs, said Donald Mays, senior director of product safety and technical policy at Consumer Reports magazine.” He also pointed out that the “current federal regulation for cribs is grossly inadequate and they need to move quickly to update that regulation to ensure that cribs are safe after years of use.” Although CPSC “is writing rules to ensure that cribs meet durability and safety standards, it has ‘just not been acting as quickly as we should have,’” Inez Tenenbaum said during a televised interview on CBS.

In fact, the CPSC chair “is now considering banning this type of product,” WebMD reported. “We have had other drop-side crib recalls, and the chairman is proposing to write regulations in the next few months to address the bigger issue of drop-side cribs,” an agency spokesperson said.

This may come as a surprise to some consumer groups who “say that the Consumer Product Safety Commission was weakened by massive government budget cuts, and that manufacturers lobbied against inspection requirements that would have cost them money,” according to the closing minutes of the ABC World News (11/24, story 6, 2:45, Gibson) segment, which focused on reactions to the recall. What’s more, Nancy Coles, head of Kids in Danger, maintained that “most parents aren’t aware that there was no requirement that the products be tested for safety before they were sold.” Indeed, “last year, Congress passed a law requiring manufactures to safety test their products.” But “while baby products are now starting to be safety tested, critics say those tests are based on old, lax standards. And it may take years for the government to write new, tougher standards, all of which means that many American babies may be sleeping in unsafe cribs for years to come.”

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