



CPSC Plans to Ban Drop-Side Cribs – Finally!

Written On May 11, 2010 By [Bob Kraft](#)

Maybe the Consumer Products Safety Commission read my most recent post on [drop-side cribs](#)? I said, “At this point I wouldn’t recommend buying any drop-side crib. It seems every one of them will eventually be recalled for safety reasons.”

Now the consumer agency has, according to the [Chicago Tribune](#), has “committed to enacting a mandatory safety standard this year that will ban the sale and manufacture of baby cribs with sides that drop down, a fixture of the American nursery that has been linked to dozens of children’s deaths.” Here are excerpts from the newspaper article:

Consumer Product Safety Commission Chairman Inez Tenenbaum made the vow as her agency for the first time revealed that 32 children have suffocated or strangled to death in the last decade when the drop sides of their cribs separated. Most of the deaths occurred in the last few years, according to the CPSC. Another 14 entrapment deaths in cribs may be due to drop-side failure, but the agency didn’t have enough information to be certain.

The repeated stress of raising and lowering a crib’s side can weaken or break hardware, allowing the side to come off its track. When a drop side separates from a

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crib, it creates a potentially deadly gap. Babies and toddlers can fall into that gap and hang to death.

The Tribune helped prompt the scrutiny of these cribs. In 2007, a Tribune investigation exposed how missteps at the CPSC delayed the recall of deadly drop-side cribs. That investigation prompted the recall of 1 million cribs, and a wave of similar recalls followed. In all, the agency has recalled more than 7 million drop-side cribs.

More recalls may be in the works. Tenenbaum, who took office in June and made crib safety a top priority, on Friday said her agency is investigating other crib-makers for drop-side hazards.

While details of Tenenbaum's plan will be ironed out with other CPSC commissioners this summer, the implications of such a ban would be far-reaching. A law passed last year makes such a ban retroactive for most hotels and licensed child-care centers. Once the federal safety standard is enacted, these sites would have to get rid of all drop-side cribs.

Major crib manufacturers agreed to a voluntary ban on drop sides earlier this year, but that agreement does not have the same teeth as a federal safety standard.

Some manufacturers are working on designs with four fixed sides and a short fold-down gate at the top to allow parents the same easy access to babies. Such designs don't pose the same entrapment hazard.