



## Crib-Makers Approve Tougher Safety Tests

*Written On May 17, 2010 By [Bob Kraft](#)*

Major crib manufacturers on Wednesday agreed to perform tougher safety tests on cribs before they are sold, a victory for consumer advocates who have pushed for years for stronger tests in the wake of babies' deaths. That's the lead sentence of an article in the [Chicago Tribune](#) last week. Of course I've written many times about the safety hazards of drop-side cribs, and I'm very glad to see this good news, finally.

The crib-makers approved a voluntary safety standard that will include more stringent tests that simulate the stresses a baby puts on a crib. The tests should expose cribs with components that are too weak. The manufacturers hope the new tests will influence the mandatory federal crib safety standard due later this year. Of course the crib-makers really hope the federal standards will not be tougher than the voluntary ones. Here are excerpts from the article:

One broken slat, missing screw or loose mattress support can turn a crib into a death trap. That's because any of those hazards can create a gap in a baby's sleeping environment. Babies' small, flexible bodies can slide into the resulting gap. But their heads — too big to pass through — get caught. Trapped, the infants hang to death or strangle. Because their airways get blocked, babies often cannot cry out for help.

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Dozens of babies have died in recent years, and federal regulators have recalled more than 7 million cribs. The new standard also includes a previously approved ban on cribs that have sides that move up and down.

For years, consumer advocates have pushed for tougher tests for cribs. The voluntary standards process is built on consensus, making it easy for crib manufacturers to thwart efforts to pass more stringent rules. Crib manufacturers and importers far outnumber the consumer advocates and government regulators on the committee that crafts the safety tests, giving companies in effect the final say. In the past, crib-makers have argued that they tried to devise tests to ferret out cribs with problems, but the tests they devised were not effective.