



UNITED STATES
CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION
4330 EAST WEST HIGHWAY
BETHESDA, MD 20814

CHAIRMAN INEZ M. TENENBAUM

March 2, 2012

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
United States Senate
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Durbin:

Thank you for your letter of January 26, 2012, requesting that the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) expand its current outreach and education efforts regarding the dangers of television sets placed on unstable furniture to small children. In addition, you also request that the Commission collect additional information on the specific type and age of the television sets involved in the falls to better inform efforts to prevent future injuries.

First, let me say that I share your deep concern at the recent series of television tip-over deaths that have occurred in the State of Illinois. Since becoming Chairman of the CPSC, I have worked hard to educate the public about the dangers of television sets placed on unstable furniture – particularly in the homes of families with small children. In 2010, the Commission produced a series of video public service announcements, combined with an education campaign, that sought to graphically display the dangers of unstable televisions, as well as simple steps (such as anchoring furniture) families can take to avoid these types of tragedies.

In the wake of the tragedies in Illinois, I directed the Commission's Office of Communications to again highlight television tip-over information on the front page of our website – including links to the powerful tip-over prevention videos produced in 2010. Commission staff also conducted substantial outreach to media outlets in Chicago and around the State of Illinois to highlight tip-over dangers and spread lifesaving preventative information. We have also worked hard to get the message out through "new media" sources, and on February 16, 2012, hosted our first nationwide Twitter conversation with consumer advocates, medical professionals, and consumers on this issue. It is my understanding that information from that Twitter conversation reached hundreds of thousands of families and stakeholders.

I also addressed television tip-over hazards in a keynote address this week to more than 600 attendees at a conference hosted by the International Consumer Product Health and Safety Organization (ICPHSO). In that speech, I noted the Commission's continuing education and outreach efforts and also challenged the voluntary standards development organizations (SDOs)

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin

March 2, 2012

Page 2

that deal with furniture stability to explore new ways to strengthen the current stability standards for both children's and adult furniture. I am hopeful that this approach will yield further positive results in the near future.

The CPSC is also working hard to expand our collection of data in this area to the maximum extent possible. Attached is a Commission staff summary of the data the Commission currently collects, as well as additional information on types of additional data that we hope to collect and analyze in the near future.

Thank you again for your letter and for your continued support of CPSC and our mission to reduce deaths and injuries caused by unsafe products. Should you or your staff have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Christopher Day, Director of Legislative Affairs, by telephone at (301) 504-7660 or by e-mail at cday@cpsc.gov.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Inez M. Tenenbaum". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "I" and a long, sweeping underline.

Inez M. Tenenbaum

Attachment

CPSC Staff Responses to Questions from the Honorable Richard J. Durbin¹
TV Tip-Over Data
March 2, 2012

1. Where do child TV tip-over deaths/injuries rank in relation to the main (top 10) causes of child deaths/injuries from consumer products?

Table 1 lists the top ten product categories associated with reported fatalities of children younger than 10 years of age for 2007. CPSC staff received the highest number of fatality reports for the product categories swimming pools or spas; beds; and bathtubs or showers. Each of these product categories was associated with more than 100 fatality reports in 2007, the most recent year for which fatality reporting is complete. The majority of the reported incidents associated with the two product categories of swimming pools or spas and bathtubs or showers were fatal submersions. For the bed category, the majority of the hazards were related to unsafe sleep environments (suffocation/asphyxiation). There were 25 reported television tip-over fatalities for 2007 involving children younger than 10 years of age.

Table 1: Top 10 Product Categories Associated with Fatality Reports of Children Younger than 10 Years of Age in 2007

Product Category	2007 Fatality Reports
Swimming pools and spas	348
Beds*	210
Bathtubs and showers	104
Sofas, couches, etc.*	79
Cribs*	59
All terrain vehicles	57
Pillows (not water pillows)*	44
Bedding*	38
Mattresses*	35
Other heaters and heating systems	32
*Fatalities due to co-sleeping or unsafe sleep situations.	

Source: CPSC's NEISS, DTHS, IPII and INDP for 2007, the most recent year for which reporting is considered complete. Multiple reports may have been received for the same incidents.

For the same year, CPSC staff estimates more than 100,000 emergency department-treated injuries for seven product categories. These estimates, presented in Table 2, were produced using CPSC's National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS). The seven product categories that are associated with more than 100,000 emergency department treated injuries for children younger than 10 years of age are: beds, playground equipment, tables, toys, bicycles, floors or flooring material, and stairs or steps. The range of injuries for the product categories is very broad but the most prevalent types of injuries were cuts, fractures, contusions/abrasions, and internal organ injuries. For 2007, there were an estimated 10,000

¹ This document was prepared by CPSC staff and has not been reviewed or approved by, and may not necessarily reflect the views of, the Commission.

emergency department-treated injuries to children younger than 10 years of age associated with television tip-over incidents.

Table 2: Product Categories Associated with the Top 10 Number of Estimated Emergency Department-Treated Injuries for Children Younger than 10 Years of Age in 2007

Product Category	Estimated ED-Treated Injuries
Beds	183,500
Playground equipment	168,100
Tables (not changing, pool, or TV stands)	127,400
Toys	125,200
Bicycles	125,000
Floors or flooring materials	121,300
Stairs or steps (not folding or pull down)	117,700
Doors (non-glass)	91,300
Chairs	85,000
Child Poisonings (under five years of age)	71,500

Source: 2007 NEISS

- 2) How granular is the information we currently collect (i.e., does it record type/age of TV – CRT, LCD, etc.)? From the report, it looks like NEISS currently only has one code (572) for TVs.

Yes, there is one product code for TVs in NEISS. Each case in NEISS records information about the victim (age, gender) and injury specifics (diagnosis, body part affected, disposition). There is a short narrative that provided limited details about the hazard scenario. The product(s) involved in the incident are coded but information about specific product features is often not available.

Staff reviews narratives of cases associated with the TV product code to identify tip-over incidents. These tip-over incidents are assigned for a follow-up telephone survey to gather additional details about the products involved and the hazard scenarios. The motivation for this telephone tip-over study is to examine why and what types of televisions are falling on children. Staff developed the survey in five sections: contact/general questions, television tip-over scenario questions, television specific questions, television placement/mounting questions, and furniture associated with the television questions (if applicable). This survey is on-going. Staff will analyze and write a report once there are a sufficient number of completed surveys to project estimates nationally.

Staff also reviews incoming reported incidents for television tip-over fatalities. Television tip-over fatalities are assigned to our field investigators to collect the information that is available about the hazard scenario and the products involved but details about the televisions are often very limited. On average, CSPC staff is aware of and assigns about two such incidents a month. Staff analyzes and uses this information in the annual tip-over report.

- 3) Have we seen (or do we expect) any decrease in deaths/injuries based on the industry migration away from CRT TVs to plasma/LCD TV?

This is something to be examined using the television tip-over study when there is enough data. The survey has television questions such as type (CRT, LCD, etc.), screen size, dimensions, age, brand, and other characteristics. There are also questions about the placement or mounting of the television, victim interactions with the television, and the involvement of furniture. We are not able to predict at this time whether we should expect an increase or decrease in these incidents in the future.