

Toy-Related Deaths and Injuries, Calendar Year 1995
Suzanne P. Cassidy, EHHA

This memorandum provides current information on toy-related deaths and injuries reported to CPSC from January 1, 1995, through December 31, 1995.

1995 DEATHS

During calendar year 1995, CPSC received reports of 21 toy-related deaths.¹ The two youngest children were 7 months of age, and the oldest was 9 years. Seventeen victims were under age 5. The types of toys and hazards reported for the fatalities are shown in the table on the next page.

Choking was reported in 12 fatalities, with balloons associated with 8 of the incidents. One balloon death reportedly involved a plastic balloon fragment, while the others appeared to be whole balloons. The two youngest balloon victims were 7 months, and the oldest child was 5 years of age. The remaining choking victims were an 18-month-old who had a 1-inch in diameter rubber ball lodged in his mouth, a 2-year-old girl who choked on a marble, a 9-year-old boy who aspirated the suction cup of a ball that was part of a toss game, and an 8-month-old who choked on an imported game piece.

Riding toys accounted for six fatal incidents. Four of these involved motor vehicles. In one case 2- and 5-year-old sisters were struck by an automobile as they rode their toy car. In another incident a 2-year-old boy was hit by a car while he rode his low-slung tricycle. Another fatality associated with a motor vehicle occurred when a 3-year-old girl was riding her tricycle in a driveway and was struck by a neighbor's van. The other riding toy incidents were a 15-month-old child whose neck became wedged in a tricycle and a 20-month-old boy who reportedly fell from the back seat of a tricycle pedaled by his brother. His died from a fatal head injury when his head struck a cement surface.

Other deaths reported to CPSC for 1995 involved a 5-year-old girl who was pinned against a wall by a 24" X 36" chalkboard, a 16-month old girl who strangled in a purse strap suspended from a hobby horse, and a 4-year-old girl who drowned in a lake while wearing a flotation ring with an imprinted warning stating it was not a life-saving device.

¹This compares to 18 deaths reported for calendar year 1994; however, these numbers do not represent a statistical sample nor do they include all toy-related deaths during the time period because reporting is still in progress for some sources.

REPORTED TOY-RELATED DEATHS
January 1, 1995 - December 31, 1995

Type of Toy	Jan-Dec 1995
Total	21
Riding Toys	6
Struck by motor vehicle	4
Fell from tricycle; hit head	1
Neck wedged in tricycle	1
Balloons (choking)	8
Balls (choking)	1
Other Toys	6
Choked on piece from game	1
Aspirated suction cup of ball toss game	1
Swallowed a marble	1
Hung by purse strap on hobby horse	1
Trapped between chalkboard and wall	1
Drowned while using flotation ring	1

Source: Death Certificate, In-Depth Investigation, and Injury or Potential Injury Incident Files, January 1, 1995 through December 31, 1995.

1995 INJURIES

Data from the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS) showed an estimated 150,800 persons were treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms for toy-related injuries in 1995. The chart below shows estimated toy-related injuries for the latest five-year period.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Annual Injury Estimate</u>
1995	150,800
1994	165,800
1993	165,400
1992	177,200
1991	163,600

Slightly less than half of the injuries in 1995 were to children under age 5, and about 80 percent were to children under the age of 15. Age groups of victims are shown in the following table. The proportions are similar to those for prior years.

TOY-RELATED INJURIES BY AGE OF VICTIM CALENDAR YEAR 1995

AGE OF VICTIM	NUMBER OF ESTIMATED INJURIES (rounded) *	PERCENT (rounded)
Total	150,800	100
< 5	73,700	49
5 - 14	47,300	31
15 - 24	9,800	6.5
25 +	20,100	13.5

* Column detail does not add to total due to rounding.

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS), 1995

Most NEISS data about the types of injuries for 1995 toy incidents is similar to that for previous years. Lacerations and contusions/abrasions were reported for 62 percent of the estimated injuries. Almost 60 percent (88,600) of the injuries were to the head area, identified in hospital records as the head, face, eyeball, mouth and ear. Most injuries appeared to be minor, with just over one percent of the victims hospitalized, compared to the overall NEISS hospitalization rate in recent years of four percent. Consistent with prior years, almost two-thirds (61 percent) of the victims were males.

Where specifically identified,² riding toys continued to be associated with more injuries than any other toy group, with about 34,100 estimated incidents or about 23 percent of all toy-related injuries treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms. During 1995, wagons and tricycles were associated with the largest number of injuries within the riding toy group at 8,900 and 8,600 estimated injuries respectively.

Other riding toys associated with a large proportion of injuries included unpowered scooters (5,100) and unpowered wheeled riding toys (4,200). More than 60 percent of the riding toy incidents involved the head and face, with lacerations accounting for most injuries. Most children were hurt when they fell from the toys.

Projectile and flying toys, when identified, accounted for the second largest number of injuries, with about 8,100 estimated emergency room-treated injuries in 1995. The flying toy category had the largest number of estimated injuries (6,600) within this group. Injury patterns were similar to those for all toys, with over half of the injuries consisting of lacerations and contusions/abrasions to the head area, primarily the face and eye. The injuries usually occurred when victims were struck by the toys.

²For about 73,500 estimated toy injuries the type of toy was not identified.