

DECEMBER IS SAFE TOYS AND GIFT MONTH - MAKE SAFETY A PRIORITY

For Release

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During this time of the year, children are excited about Christmas in anticipation of the toys they will receive from Santa, friends, and family, yet if not properly selected, toys chosen may cause injury even death. A report released by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) titled ["Toy-Related Deaths and Injuries Calendar Year 2018"](#) states an estimated 226,100 toy-related emergency department-treated injuries and 17 toy-related deaths occurred in 2018 among children younger than 15. Non-motorized riding toys were the cause of many of these injuries and deaths in addition to toys that resulted in airway obstruction, mechanical asphyxia, hanging, battery ingestion, drowning and electrocution.

The CPSC has the most stringent toy safety standards in the world. Their collaboration with the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), who manages over 300 of the nation's ports, regularly seizes shipments of toys that fail to meet federal safety standards and therefore, are prohibited entry into the U.S. These toys often contain lead and are in violation of the Consumer Product Safety Act. In 2019, CBP Officers in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, seized over 200,000 small Pokémon figurines. Deemed a choking hazard, the figurines, if sold, would have had a retail value worth \$1.4 million.

The CPSC's strict enforcements and toy recalls are a part of a robust safety system informing consumers about the removal of faulty products from the distribution chain as a means of protecting children from unreasonable risks, serious injury or worse. December is Safe Toys & Gifts Month. Prince William County Fire and Rescue System Chief Tim Keen in conjunction with CPSC urges individuals to carefully select toys prior to purchase to reduce toy-related injuries and deaths.

During the holiday season and throughout the year, follow these simple safety tips when purchasing toys:

- Check the label: Choose age appropriate toys by reading the age label on the toy. Children younger than 3 should not have access to toys with small parts, which can cause choking. Also avoid marbles and small balls for children under 3.
- Get safety gear: With scooters and other riding toys, supervision is key along with proper safety gear that includes helmets. Helmets should always be worn properly and should be sized to fit. Avoid riding a scooter on a street or roadway with other motor vehicles.

- Hoverboards: Although not considered a toy, hoverboards should be compliant with [UL 2272](#) safety standard. Buy from a retailer that requires UL certification as standard. Hoverboards that don't have this certification should be avoided.
- Be careful with magnets: High powered magnet sets are dangerous and should be kept away from children under 14. Building and play sets with small magnets should also be kept away from small children.

Once Gifts Are Open

- **IMMEDIATELY** discard plastic wrappings from toys.
- Keep toys for older children away from younger children.
- Pay attention to instructions and warnings on battery chargers.
 - Battery charging should be supervised by adults.
 - Chargers and adapters can pose thermal burn hazards to young children.
 - Some chargers lack any mechanism to prevent overcharging.
- Keep button batteries away from younger children.
 - A child can swallow a button battery and suffer dangerous chemical burns in as little as two hours. **DO NOT** leave products with accessible button batteries within reach of children.

Checking It Twice

Before discarding that gift list, make sure items purchased **DO NOT** appear on the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's recalled toys or children's products list www.cpsc.gov/Recalls. Throughout the year, consumers should always check their homes and toy boxes for previously recalled toys as well.

To receive recall e-mail notification, visit U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission www.cpsc.gov/cpsclist.aspx or call their toll free hotline (800) 638-CPSC (2772) (TTY 800-638-8270).

To report an unsafe product, visit <https://www.saferproducts.gov/>.

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