Rand/Ross mountain bikes

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and Rand/Ross Bicycle Co. of Farmingdale, N.Y., are recalling 11,000 mountain bikes for adjustment. The front suspension fork can separate from the frame, causing riders to lose control and fall. Rand/Ross has received five reports of serious injuries, including fractures and lacerations, that reportedly occurred when an improperly adjusted front suspension fork separated from the frame.

The adult-sized mountain bikes were distributed under the names Rock Machine 2600, Rock Machine 3600, Tannanula MRX 1200 and Ross Mt. Washington. The bikes were sold nationwide from February 1997 to March 1998 for $200 to $300 at Target, Price-Costco, Toys R Us and some bicycle shops.

Consumers should stop using the bikes immediately and call Rand/Ross at (800) 338-7677, ext. 263, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EDT, Monday through Friday, to get the name of a local dealer who will adjust the bike free of charge. Those who want to make the adjustment themselves will be sent an Allen wrench and instructions for tightening the bolts.

Stuffed animal toys

About 25,000 stuffed Mascot Plushes animal toys have been recalled by Sanrio Inc. of South San Francisco, Calif., in cooperation with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, because small bells on the toys can come loose, presenting a hazard to young children. No injuries have been reported.

The recalled Mascot Plushes are 5-inch-high bean-stuffed animals. They include Hello Kitty, a cat, item 014380; Keroppi, a frog, item 014389; Pochacco, a dog, item 014390; and Badtz Maru, a penguin, item 014391.

Each animal has a quarter-inch-wide metal bell. A card tag attached to the toy shows each character's name, the item number and reads "Sanrio Inc." and "Made in China."

The $5 plush toys were sold at Sanrio's stores and other retail stores nationwide during October. Consumers should take the stuffed toys away from young children immediately and remove the bell or return the toy to the store where purchased for a refund.

The toy also can be returned by mail for a refund plus postage costs to Sanrio, Attn.: Quality Assurance Dept., 570 Eccles Ave., South San Francisco, CA 94080. For details, call Sanrio at (888) 311-6720 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. PDT, Monday through Friday.

Baseball training aids

In cooperation with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Schutt Manufacturing Co. of Litchfield, Ill., is recalling about 12,000 Baseball Striker and Softball Striker batting aids. The ball can separate from its cable when struck with a bat and cause serious injuries to users and bystanders. Schutt has received three reports of injuries, including a serious eye injury.

The training devices are used for a batter's warm-up. The devices are attached to a chain-link fence and have a metal extending arm with a cable that has a molded polyurethane baseball or softball hanging from the end. When a batter hits the ball, it is designed to rotate in a circle on the cable around the extending arm. The Baseball Striker and Softball Striker were produced by Hollywood Bases from January 1994 through September 1996 and by Schutt Manufacturing Co. from September 1996 through April 1998. Although both versions look similar, the Hollywood Bases models have painted rather than plated extending arms. The company names are on the products.

The devices were sold through large sporting goods chains and at small sporting goods stores nationwide from January 1994 to April 1998 for about $50 to $70.

Consumers should stop using the Baseball Striker and Softball Striker immediately and return them to the store where purchased for a refund. For details, call Schutt Manufacturing at (888) 325-3978 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. CDT, Monday through Friday, or write to Schutt Manufacturing, 610 S. Industrial Drive, Litchfield, IL 62056.

Twentieth key rings

About 2,500 Twentieth Water Timer Game Key Rings are being recalled by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and Warner Bros. Stores Inc. of Burbank, Calif., because they contain ethylene glycol that could leak. Commonly found in anti-freeze, ethylene glycol is poison to children if swallowed. No injuries have been reported.

The Twentieth Water Timer Game Key Ring is a rectangular-shaped clear plastic container with three compartments containing a blue liquid. The middle compartment also has a yellow wheel, and when the rectangle is moved, the liquid flows between compartments, spinning the wheel. Twentieth appears on the front of the key ring, which is attached to a small chain. Warner Bros. stores nationwide sold the $5 key rings from April 1996 through April 1997. Consumers should take the key rings away from children immediately and return them to Warner Bros. Stores for a refund. For details, call Warner Bros. Stores at (800) 795-9277, ext. 43288, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. PDT, Monday through Friday.

Floating balls

About 329,000 Halloween Floating Eyeballs and about 100,000 Smiley Face Floating Balls are being recalled by Atico International USA Inc. of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. The balls contain kerosene, which could poison children if the balls crack or break. The smaller balls also present a choking hazard to children and lack required warning labels. No injuries have been reported.

The yellow Smiley Face balls are 1.5 inches in diameter and have black features. The Halloween Eyeballs come in two sizes: 1.5 or 2.25 inches in diameter. They are white with red streaks to look like bloodshot eyes. All the balls float in kerosene inside a clear outer ball and are labeled "made in Taiwan."

The $1 balls were sold nationwide by retail chain stores such as Arbor Drug, Eckerd Drugs, Thrift Drugs, K&B Inc. and Walgreen drugstores from June 1995 through October 1995.

Consumers should take these balls away from children immediately and return them to the store where purchased for a refund. For details, call Atico International USA at (800) 645-3867, ext. 541, and leave your name and phone number after the recording. An Atico representative will return the call.

Baby monitors

Gerry Baby Products of Denver, Colo., and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission are recalling about 86,000 rechargeable Clear Choice baby monitors because the rechargeable battery can cause the monitor's "parent" unit to smoke and flame when an electrical short occurs. Gerry has received one report of flames and four reports of smoke coming from the parent unit. No injuries or property damage have been reported.

Clear Choice Model 618 is being recalled. The model number is on a silver plate on the front of the monitor's AC adapter. The monitor includes a "baby" unit, a parent unit, a recharging base for the parent unit and AC adapters. All of the units are white with a light blue accent color.

U.S. mass merchandise and baby stores sold the $40 monitors from April 1996 to March 1998. Consumers should disconnect and throw away the blue battery pack from the parent unit immediately.

To receive a free replacement black battery pack with a safety fuse, call Gerry Baby Products at (800) 273-3521 or write to the company at 1801 Commerce Drive, Piqua, OH 45356. The parent unit can be used safely with its AC adapter until the replacement battery arrives.

Bike passenger trailers

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and Norco Products USA of Tukwila, Wash., are recalling about 450 bike passenger trailers for repair because metal fatigue could cause failure at the hitch arm pivot bracket. The trailer could break loose from the bicycle, injuring the occupant. No injuries have been reported.

The trailers are designed to carry one or two children behind a bicycle. The recall includes Norco Stagecoach, Norco Rambler, Norco Tot Taxi, Adidas Fledgy and Bike Mate Trailer models with a folding arm. The model name is on the back of the trailer. Small, independent bicycle shops in Washington, Oregon, Northern California, Idaho and Colorado sold the trailers from January 1997 through February 1998 for $200 to $350.

Consumers should stop using the trailers immediately and call the store where purchased or Norco Products to arrange to have a safety upgrade kit installed at no charge. For additional information or details, call Norco at (800) 521-9088 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. PST, Monday through Friday, or e-mail sales@norco.com. Washington residents should call (800) 635-5550.
Disposable lighters

About 840,000 Elite-2 disposable cigarette lighters are being recalled by ERA Intermarketing Co. Inc. of City of Industry, Calif., in cooperation with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), because they don't meet the 1994 requirement for child-resistant mechanisms. No injuries have been reported.

The Consumer Product Safety Act requires a mechanism on disposable and novelty lighters that prevents ignition by most children under 5 years old. Each year, CPSC estimates, 190 deaths are caused by children under age 5 playing with lighters.

The Elite-2 lighters are made of clear plastic tinted in assorted colors. The metal top is labeled “Elite,” and the lighter label bears the bar code “16229 12001” and the date code “3/87.” Small retailers sold the $1 lighters from June 1997 to March 1998. Consumers should stop using the lighters immediately and return them for a full refund including postage to Product Recall, ERA Intermarketing Co. Inc., 200 S. Fifth Ave., City of Industry, CA 91746. For details, call ERA at (888) 682-2388 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. PDT, Monday through Friday.

Heaters, humidifiers

Honeywell Consumer Products of Southborough, Mass., in cooperation with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, is recalling about 1.6 million heaters sold under the Duracraft brand name, about 8,000 heaters sold under the DeLonghi brand name and 150,000 humidifiers sold under the Duracraft and Honeywell brand names in the United States and Canada because they can overheat, presenting a fire hazard. Honeywell has received 56 reports of heaters overheating or catching fire, causing one minor injury, and six reports of humidifiers overheating or catching fire. Some of the heater and humidifier fires caused extensive damage. Duracraft models CZ-303, CZ-304, CZ-308, CZ-318, CZ-319.

Heat Express and DeLonghi model CER-1 portable electric ceramic heaters are being recalled. The model number is on a silver sticker on the bottom of the 1,500-watt black heater. Control knobs are on the top or front of the unit.

Duracraft model DH-950 Moisture Select humidifiers and Honeywell model HCW-3040 Moisture Select humidifiers are being recalled. The model number is on the bottom of the white humidifier. The clear water tank holds about two gallons. Control knobs and two output vents are on the top of the unit.

Discount stores, home centers, club stores and catalog showrooms nationwide sold the Duracraft heaters from January 1989 through March 1998 for $50 to $75. The DeLonghi heaters were sold from January 1989 through December 1990. Similar retail outlets sold the Duracraft and Honeywell humidifiers from May 1995 through March 1998 for $50 to $80.

Consumers should stop using the heaters and humidifiers immediately and call Honeywell at (800) 632-9498 for instructions on returning the product for a free replacement.

Gance of prevention adds up to summer fun

While your youngster rushes to soak up the sights and sounds of summer, be aware that many activities could pose safety hazards (if you’re not careful):

Fireworks

Hospital emergency rooms treated about 7,600 fireworks-related injuries in 1996, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). One-third of the victims were under age 15. With Fourth of July right around the corner, the CPSC offers the following guidelines to reduce the risk of injuries but strongly recommends leaving fireworks ignition to professionals:

• Never allow young children to ignite or play with fireworks.
• Make sure the fireworks you plan to use are permitted in your state or local area.
• Follow all instructions and heed warnings.
• Never try to relight fireworks that have not ignited.
• Keep a bucket of water handy in case of malfunction or fire.
• Light fireworks only on a smooth, flat surface away from the house, dry leaves and flammable materials.
• Aim fireworks away from buildings especially those with flat or wood shake roofs.

In addition, the AAP policy statement, “Children and Fireworks,” warns about the increased dangers of fireworks use by people who have been consuming alcoholic beverages.

ATVs

Parents should limit or restrict children from riding all-terrain vehicles (ATVs). Although many people perceive the motorized cycles as toys, they can be extremely dangerous. About 100 children under age 16 died from ATV-related injuries in 1996, according to the CPSC, and in 1997, 21,300 children under age 16 were treated in hospital emergency departments. The CPSC advised:

• Children under 12 should not operate ATVs.
• Youths between 12 and 15 should not operate adult-size vehicles.
• All ATV operators should take a hands-on training course from a certified instructor, wear helmets and use safety restraints, practice on safe terrain, and be supervised by an adult.

Yard equipment

Keep your green thumb healthy. CPSC figures show more than 250,000 people were treated in hospital emergency rooms in 1996 for injuries from yard and garden equipment. Consumers should take the following precautions to prevent injuries:

• Wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts to avoid injuries from thrown objects like rocks or sticks. Wear close-fitting clothes and no jewelry to avoid getting objects caught in moving parts; sturdy shoes with slip-resistant rubber soles; eye protection; heavy gloves to protect hands when changing, sharpening or cleaning blades; and ear plugs when using motor-driven equipment.
• Before starting machinery, remove objects such as sticks, glass, metal, wire and stones from your work area.
• Check safety devices.
• Never let a child ride or operate a garden tractor or riding mower. Teen-agers should have adequate strength and maturity to operate power equipment, and adults should supervise them.

• Turn off the mower if children enter the area. Use extra care when backing up or approaching corners, shrubs and trees.
• Turn off unattended power tools, and if possible make them inoperable to prevent use by children.
• Never fill gasoline tanks while machinery is on or equipment is hot. Wipe up spills. Store gas in an approved container away from the house. Never smoke or use flame around gasoline or gas-powered equipment.

Swimming pools

Barriers and pool covers can reduce the risk of child drownings. About 300 youngsters under age 5 drown each year in residential swimming pools nationwide, and more than 2,000 children are treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms for submersion injuries such as brain damage, according to the CPSC. To prevent access to pools and give parents time to locate a child before tragedy strikes, the CPSC recommends the following:

• Install a fence or barrier at least 4 feet high with no footholds or handholds around the entire pool.
• Protect house doors with alarms if a house wall serves as a side of the barrier.
• Use a power safety cover to protect the pool when not in use.
• The CPSC also suggests parents and other caregivers learn cardiopulmonary resuscitation.