HEALTH ALERTS

Children's sneakers

Reebok International Ltd., of Stoughton, Mass., in cooperation with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, is recalling 140,000 children's Classic Leather Zip sneakers because the side pocket's pull tab can come off, posing a choking hazard to children.

No injuries have been reported.

The sneakers were sold in family shoe, children's shoe, athletic and sporting goods stores nationwide from September 1998 through June 1999 for $32 to $40. Available in many colors and styles, the sneakers came in toddler and children's sizes up to size 9. The zipper's pull-tab has the Reebok name and logo, and "Reebok Classic" is on the front of the sneaker's tongue.

Consumers should return the sneakers to the store where purchased for a refund or exchange. For more information, call Reebok at (800) 648-5550 or access the company's Web site at www.reebok.com.

Snowmobiles

The Polaris Industries Inc., of Minneapolis, Minn., in cooperation with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, is recalling 67,000 snowmobiles because the hydraulic disc brakes can fail, resulting in serious injury or death.

There have been 17 reports of brakes failing, but no injuries have been reported.

All 1999 Polaris model snowmobiles with hydraulic brakes and some year 2000 models are being recalled. "Polaris" is written on the front of the hood and side of the seat. The snowmobiles were sold under numerous names and numbers, and in a variety of colors. Polaris dealers nationwide sold the snowmobiles from June 1998 through July 1999 for $4,000 to $8,000.

Consumers should arrange to have their snowmobile's disc brakes replaced at no charge at a Polaris dealer before winter begins. Polaris also will replace the brake pads at no charge. To locate the nearest dealer, call Polaris at (800) POLARIS.

Bicycles

Road Bicycles-Specialized Bicycle Components Inc., of Morgan Hill, Calif., in cooperation with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, is recalling 4,000 Specialized 1999 Allez and Allez Sport model bicycles because the handlebars can come out of the stem during use.

There has been one report of a consumer suffering serious injuries when the handlebar pulled out of the stem.

The model "Allez" bicycle is blue, and the model "Allez Sport" bicycle is orange. The bicycles were sold through authorized Specialized dealers from October 1998 through June 1999 for $1,000 to $2,000. Consumers should stop riding the bicycles and take them to an authorized Specialized dealer for a free inspection and replacement of the handlebar and stem.

For more information, call Specialized at (800) 214-1468 or access its Web site at www.specialized.com.

Children's garments

Little Me, of Cumberland, Md., in cooperation with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, is recalling 7,200 newborn and infant garments because ornamental cherries attached to the garments pose a choking hazard to young children.

One incident has been reported of a child beginning to choke on an ornamental cherry.

The Mini Fruit Girl's Rompers are made of 100 percent cotton with a white top, cherry print bottom and white embroidered collar. The outfits were sold with a floppy hat with cherry print material. Ornamental cherries are attached to a string on the waist. They were sold in sizes 3 to 24 months in major department and children's clothing stores from March 1999 through July 1999 for $20 to $22.

Consumers should stop using these garments and return them to Little Me for a refund and a voucher for a 30 percent rebate on a future Little Me purchase. For more information, call Little Me at (800) 843-8460 or access the company's Web site at www.littleme.com/productrecall/index.html.

Infant garments

Shopko Stores Inc., of Green Bay, Wis., in cooperation with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, is recalling 68,000 Peek-A-Babe newborn and infant creepers, a short-sleeved body suit with two snaps at the left shoulder and three snaps at the crotch. The snaps can detach, posing a choking hazard. No injuries have been reported.

The creepers are 100 percent cotton in sizes 0 to 24 months. The girls' creepers were made in pastel shades of pointelle knit fabric, with a satin bow attached to the neck and an embroidered figure below the bow. The boys' creepers were made in solid and striped knit fabrics. Shopko stores sold the garments from December 1998 to June 1999 for $4 to $6.

Consumers should stop using the garments and return them to Shopko for a refund. For more information, call Shopko at (800) 791-7333 or access the company's Web site at www.shopko.com.

Doll set

Toys "R" Us, of Paramus, N.J., in cooperation with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, is recalling 71,000 Bath-tub Baby doll sets because a small ball within the set poses a choking hazard.

No injuries have been reported.

The Bath-tub Baby doll set includes a blue plastic bathtub; a 5.5-inch soft vinyl doll wearing a blue diaper; a pink, fish-shaped strainer and a pink ball about 1.25 inches in diameter. The $2 set is packaged in a clear plastic bag. Toys "R" Us stores nationwide sold the doll sets from October 1998 through July 1999.

Consumers should take the doll sets away from young children and return the sets to the store where purchased for a refund. For more information, call a local Toys "R" Us store or access the company's Web site at www.toysrus.com/recalls/index.cfm.

Water bottles

Nike USA Inc., of Beaverton, Ore., in cooperation with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, is recalling 250,000 sports water bottles because the drinking valve on the cap can detach and cause a choking hazard.

Nike has received one report of a valve detaching during use. No injuries have been reported.

The Nike Sport Water Bottle is a curved, 22-ounce bottle with a separate black screw top lid. The bottle body comes in gray, blue or yellow and has a black rubberized grip area on each side. The word "Nike" appears on the bottom of the bottle. The Nike "swosh" logo appears on the cap, on the bottom and on the grip area of the bottle. The $7 bottles were sold in major sporting goods and department stores nationwide from April 1999 through July 1999.

Consumers should stop using the bottles and either return them to the store where purchased for a credit or contact Nike for a redesigned cap. Consumers who want a new cap should safely dispose of the old cap. For more information, call Nike at (800) 344-6453 or access its Web site at www.nike.com.

Television carts

Bush Industries Inc., of Jamestown, N.Y., in cooperation with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, is recalling 100,000 television carts for repair because the cart can tip over, causing injury.

There have been two reports of carts tipping over and the television falling, resulting in one minor injury.

The television carts are laminated wood in black (model 5414) or brown (model 5014). There is no identifying information on the cart, but the Bush name and model number are on the instruction booklet that came with the cart. The cart measures 35.25 inches wide, 26.25 inches high and 15.5 inches deep. The carts are made to
hold a 27-inch television and a VCR, and have a bottom cabinet with hinged double doors and wheels.

The ready-to-assemble carts were sold at discount, home and furniture stores nationwide from June 1992 through August 1998 for $60 to $100. Consumers should remove their televisions and VCRs from the carts and call Bush Industries at (800) 950-4782 or access its Web site at www.bushfurniture.com. Consumers also can write to Consumer Services Department, Bush Industries Inc., 1 Mason Drive, P.O. Box 460, Jamestown, NY 14702-0406. Bush Industries will help consumers identify their cart is part of the recall and send them a free repair kit, which will prevent the cart from tipping over.

Air Comfort Products Division of Emerson Electric Co., of St. Louis, Mo., in cooperation with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, is recalling 20,000 ceiling fan installation kits because the holding bracket can fail. The kit is used when a fan is installed in a "close to the ceiling" mode, which allows the fan to be mounted higher on low ceilings.

Emerson Electric is aware of 15 reports of the brackets failing, causing the fan to fall. A 13-year-old boy suffered a cut on his nose from a falling ceiling fan. The ceiling fan kits are model number CF10N1 and are used with Emerson fans. The outside housing or canopy of the kit comes in two pieces and was sold in five colors: brown, polished brass, antique brass, white and antique white. Electrical distributors, lighting showrooms and hardware stores nationwide sold the $20 kits from December 1984 through December 1989.

Consumers should stop using the ceiling fans installed with these kits and have them repaired. To verify a fan is part of this recall, to receive a repair kit or for more information, call Air Comfort at (877) FAN KITS or access the Web site at www.emersonelectric.com.

— Alicia Hammond

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U.S. General Services Administration

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**Face masks a must when playing paintball**

Without proper eye protection, people playing paintball are at risk for severe eye injury, or even blindness.

Paintball, a combination of capture the flag and hide-and-seek, arms players with an airgun that shoots pellets filled with water-soluble paint. The pellets are thin-skinned gelatin capsules that travel 200 to 300 feet per second and burst on impact. Although the pellets have little momentum in flight, they can cause injury upon impact, particularly to the eye.

A study published in the March 1999 issue of *Ophthalmology* confirmed the potential for severe eye injuries from paintball pellets. Of the 13 people treated in the study, 11 were not wearing eye protection and eight were left legally blind. These findings are in keeping with paintball injuries reported between 1985 and 1999. Eighty-eight percent of all injured paintball players were not wearing eye protection, according to the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

Many commercial paintball facilities require players to wear specially designed paintball goggles that meet American Society of Test Materials standards of 0.1-inch thick lenses. Shop goggles, welding masks, scuba masks, sunglasses or cling wrap are not safe alternatives. Participants also should wear a face mask with ear and neck protection, and for men, a protective cup.

In addition, players should follow these rules:

- Fire your paint gun only on the field during the game.
- Inspect goggle lenses for cracks or signs of weakness.
- Make sure your mask is secure.
- Make sure to adjust the velocity setting of your paint gun 10 feet per second below the field safety limit.
- Always assume the safety device doesn’t work and the gun is loaded.
- Put a plug in the gun barrel when in a “safe zone” or anywhere people are not wearing goggles to prevent projectiles from accidentally discharging.
- Never remove goggles during the game.

— Alicia Hammond