

# Safe Kids New London County

E-Newsletter contains information on new recalls, safety announcements, and events to help ensure your little ones safety all year long!

December 2011

## Top Decorating Mistakes to Avoid this Holiday Season

In addition to food, family, and gifts, decorations are one of the highlights of the holiday season. While candles, Christmas trees, and other decorations are part of the holiday spirit, they can pose fire and poisoning hazards, especially to curious children.

“The holidays are a time for spending with family and friends, not rushing to the emergency room,” says Esther Pendola, Safe Kids New London County coordinator. “Once all of your decorations are up, keeping a close eye on both children and the decorations themselves is an important step to a safe holiday season.”

In 2005, candles started 15,600 home fires in the United States. According to the National Fire Protection Association, the top four days for candle fires are around Christmas and New Year’s. Using battery-operated flameless candles is an alternative that does not pose a fire risk.

“Never, never leave lit candles unattended,” says Pendola. “Do not put candles on a tree or a natural wreath, or near curtains or drapes, and keep matches and lighters locked out of children’s reach. If you would like decorative lighting, make sure it is labeled with the seal of an independent testing lab, and only use it outdoors if it’s labeled for outdoor use.”

If you decorate a tree, avoid these top decorating mistakes:

Decorate with children in mind. Do not put ornaments that have small parts or metal hooks, or look like food or candy, on the lower branches where small children can reach them. Trim protruding branches at or below a child’s eye level, and keep lights out of reach below a child’s eye level, and keep lights out of reach.

Natural Christmas trees always involve some risk of fire. To minimize the risk, get a fresh tree and keep it watered at all times. Do not put the tree within three feet of a fireplace, space heater, radiator or heat vent.

Never leave a lit Christmas tree or other decorative lighting display unattended. Inspect lights for exposed or frayed wires, loose connections and broken sockets.

Do not overload extension cords or outlets and do not run an electrical cord under a rug.

Do not burn Christmas tree branches, treated wood or wrapping paper in a home fireplace.



*Safety Experts now recommend that children remain rear facing until the age of two! Real crash data tells us that they are 5 times safer in the rear facing position!!!!!!*

# Winter Sports Safety!

## Sledding

- Kids can suffer serious head injuries from sledding, and should always wear a helmet. When sledding, do not go down a hill head-first. Sit up, face forward, use a clear, safe path and make sure an adult is supervising.
- A good sledding hill does not lead to a street, a body of water or a crowded gathering place. In addition, remember to inspect sleds regularly for worn, damaged or loose parts that could break or snag at high speed.

## Snowmobiles

- Children under 6 should not be riding a snowmobile and no one under 16 should drive one. All snowmobile drivers and passengers should be wearing helmets designed for high-speed motor sports - a bike helmet isn't sufficient for a four-wheeled motorcycle that can go up to 90 miles per hour.

## Ice Skating and Hockey

- There is no consensus among experts about the need for helmets while ice skating, but parents should consider them for kids who are just beginning to learn to skate.
- Helmets are a must for ice hockey, along with mouth guards, knee pads and elbow, shoulder and shin protection.
- Teach kids how to protect themselves if they do fall through ice. Remind them to stretch their arms out wide and kick as if swimming, shout for help, and try to crawl backward onto solid ice.



## General

- Always wear sport-specific, properly fitting safety gear when participating in winter sports activities. Since proper equipment fit and maintenance are important for safety, bring your child along when shopping for skates, helmets, boots, etc.
- Dress in layers and wear warm, close-fitting clothes. Make sure that long scarves are tucked in so they don't get entangled in lifts, ski poles or other equipment.
- Stay hydrated and wear sunscreen with a rating of SPF 15 or higher.
- If children become distracted, irritable, or begins to hyperventilate, they may be suffering from hypothermia or altitude sickness, or are too tired to participate safely in winter sports. They should go indoors, rest and warm up.

“Remember, your children learn safety habits by watching you,” adds Pendola “So parents should always wear the right helmet for their winter activities too.”

*Did you know safety expert recommend that children 13 and under remain in the back seat of motor vehicles? Even if the child is a “big” kid, they do not have the bone density to withstand the impact of an airbag!*

# Recalls

[Serious Head Injuries to Infants Continue Due to Falls from Bumbo Baby Seats Used on Elevated Surfaces; Injuries occurring despite previous recall warning; parents urged to use caution](#) (Tue, 22 Nov 2011 18:30:00 GMT) Due to the serious risk of injury to babies, CPSC and Bumbo International Trust of South Africa ("Bumbo International") are urging parents and caregivers to never place Bumbo Baby Seats on tables, countertops, chairs or other raised surfaces. Infants aged 3-10 months old have fallen out of the Bumbo seat and suffered skull fractures and other injuries.

[Motion Sensing Wall Switches Recalled by HeathCo due to Electrical Shock Hazard](#) (Tue, 22 Nov 2011 18:00:00 GMT) When the switches are in the auto mode and the light is off, a small amount of leakage current passes through the electric circuit, including the socket. If consumers fail to disconnect the power at the circuit breaker and make contact with both terminals inside the socket while replacing the bulbs, there is a risk of an electric shock.

[Collective Brands Recalls KEDS Girls' Shoes Due to Laceration Hazard](#) (Wed, 16 Nov 2011 19:50:00 GMT) Ornamental stars on the heel of the shoe may loosen, posing a laceration hazard.

[Joss Rock Climbing Cam Units Recalled by Sierra Trading Post Due to a Fall Hazard; Sold Exclusively by Sierra Trading Post](#) (Thu, 10 Nov 2011 17:00:00 GMT) The recalled cams can fail unexpectedly after being set, posing a fall hazard.

[Children's Animal Slippers Recalled Due to Choking Hazard; Sold Exclusively at Family Dollar Stores](#) (Wed, 16 Nov 2011 19:20:00 GMT) The animal's eyes can detach from the slippers, posing a choking hazard to young children.

[Liebherr Expands Recall of Refrigerators Due to Injury Hazard; Door Can Detach](#) (Wed, 16 Nov 2011 18:45:00 GMT) The refrigerator's door can detach, posing an injury hazard to consumers.

[Build-A-Bear Recalls Teddy Bear Swimwear Set Due to Strangulation Hazard](#) (Wed, 16 Nov 2011 17:00:00 GMT) The inner tube accessory can be pulled over a small child's head, posing a strangulation hazard.

[W.P. Appliances Recalls Combination Grills/Griddles Due to Overheating and Electrical Shock Hazards; Sold Exclusively at HSN](#) (Thu, 10 Nov 2011 19:00:00 GMT) A defect in the electrical wiring of the electric grills/griddles can pose a risk of overheating, melting and an electrical shock hazard to consumers.

[CPSC Warns High-Powered Magnets and Children Make a Deadly Mix](#) (Thu, 10 Nov 2011 11:00:00 GMT) An increasing number of incident reports to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) indicate that high-powered magnets continue to be a safety risk to children. From toddlers to teens, children are swallowing these magnets and the consequences are severe.

[CPSC Launches Online Reporting Tool for Businesses](#) (Tue, 08 Nov 2011 20:00:00 GMT) The U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has launched important new features to the SaferProducts.gov Business Portal that make it easier and more efficient for businesses to work with CPSC. These changes are a key part of the agency's overall information technology modernization effort.

*Did you know children in the state of Connecticut are required by state law to wear a bike helmet? Please, try to set a good example by requiring everyone to wear a brain bucket!*