



INVESTIGATION GUIDELINE

Appendix 111

April 19, 1995

BATHTUB INCIDENTS INVOLVING CHILDREN LESS THAN 18 MONTHS OLD

I. Introduction

A. Background Information

CPSC staff will study incident scenarios involving drownings, near drownings, scaldings, and other serious injuries associated with bathing.

Over fifty infants a year drown in bathtubs. In its attempt to decrease this number, the CPSC is conducting a study to learn the circumstances surrounding drowning deaths of children aged 18 months or younger. Of particular interest are drownings associated with bath rings and bath seats. In these cases, the drowning deaths appear to be caused by:

- Tip over - The suction cups unexpectedly releasing, allowing the device AND baby to tip over in the water.
- Entrapment - Babies slipping between the legs of the bath ring and becoming trapped under water.
- Climbing out - Babies over 8 months climbing out of the product and drowning.

In addition, the study will include incidents involving scaldings occurring when the temperature of tap water is set too high (above 120 degrees F.) and serious injuries occurring when infants fall in the tub and receive head or trunk injuries leading to impairment.



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B. Product Description

Specific products of concern are bath rings, seats, and infant bath tubs. Bath rings and seats are intended for babies over 6 months and are used to help support babies during bath time. These devices usually have three or four legs with suction cups that attach to the bottom of bathtubs. Infant bath tubs are used for babies younger than 6 months. Some bath aids have restraining belts while others contain sponge seats.

C. Specific Items of Interest

Determine the general condition of the bath aid and determine if any product feature or failure contributed to the incident.

Identify any labeling including location of labels.

Specifically, on bath rings or seats, note missing suction cups and/or suction cups which do not stick to bath tub surfaces or adhere to the base of the ring or seat.

Additionally, describe the restraining belt on the bath aid, whether it was used properly during the incident, and describe any problems with the restraint system.

Determine if the bath aid remained upright or turned over during the incident. Describe in detail the position of the infant (and other children) in relation to the bath seat, bath ring, or infant tub.

D. Headquarters Contacts

Leonard Schachter, EPHA, 301-504-0470 ext. 1273
Renaë Rauchschalbe, CECA, 301-504-0608 ext. 1362
Kate Sedney, EPHF, 301-504-0468 ext. 1282



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II. Instructions for Collecting Specific Information

A. Synopsis

Describe in the synopsis the sequence of events which occurred in the incident, indicating if any product component failed. Also indicate if the infant was left unattended by a parent or care giver prior to the injury, the reason for leaving the infant unattended, and the time elapsed if the infant was alone in the bathtub. Note if a sibling or caregiver was involved.

B. Description of the Incident Environment

Determine if the incident occurred in the child's home, a daycare center, the daycare provider's home, or some other location. Describe the incident environment as a single family home, a townhouse, an apartment building, a school, or some other location.

Characterize the parent's/care giver's socio-economic stratum by determining the educational level and total annual income level. If this information is unavailable, please indicate the lack of information in your report.

C. Description of the Injured Person(s) and Product Interaction

Determine the infant's age, sex, height, and weight at the time of the incident. Indicate if the infant was of Hispanic origin; white (non-Hispanic); Black; American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut; or and Asian or Pacific Islander. Determine the infant's health status at time of the incident.

Indicate if the infant was unusually active for his/her age. Indicate if the infant was able to remain upright in the bath aid without assistance, if a bath aid was used. Determine child's ability to stand alone.



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Determine the relationship of the care giver to the injured infant. Determine if the care giver was within arm's reach when the incident occurred, was in the same room, or had left the room. Determine if anyone was a witness to the incident.

Determine if any other child was placed in the tub with the injured child and describe their age, sex, height, weight, and activity during the incident.

Determine the orientation of the child or children in the tub in relation to the tub faucets and describe faucets. Indicate the depth of water in the tub and temperature, if a scalding occurred. Determine if there were any problems with the tub prior to the incident such as a leaking faucet or problems with the stopper.

If the parent or care giver left the room or was distracted, indicate the reason for leaving or being distracted. Determine what event occurred to alert the parent or care giver to return to the bathroom, i.e., did the infant stop making noise or began screaming?

D. Description of the Product

Determine the tub dimensions (length, width, and depth) in inches. Indicate if the tub had a smooth or non-smooth (slip-resistant) surface. Indicate if the tub used appliques to prevent slippage.

Determine if any modifications were made to the bathtub or bath aid and describe these modifications.

If a bath aid was involved, describe it completely including overall dimensions. Determine the bath aid's brand name and model number. Determine if it was purchased new, received as a gift, or purchased used. Determine place of purchase.



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Describe the general condition of the bath aid and the wording and location of any product labeling.

Determine if any restraining devices, suction cups, or sponge inserts were on the bath aid and in use at the time of the incident.

Determine if bubble bath, bath salts, or bath oil were used to bathe infant. If in use, did these affect the incident in any way?

E. Product Safety Standards

There is an ASTM voluntary standard under development for infant bath rings and bath seats. Information derived in these investigations will be used in development of the standard.

III. Instructions for Photographing and/or Diagraming Factors Related to the Investigation

For on site investigations, if possible, reenact the positions of the bath aid and child using a doll and photograph reenactment. If photographs cannot be taken, please diagram these positions. For telephone investigations, obtain verbally the positions of the child, the bath aid, and faucet location in the bath tub.

IV. Instructions for Obtaining Samples and Documents Related to the Investigation

Collect any reports from attending officials including police investigations, paramedic reports, fire department reports, emergency room reports, and social worker reports.

For fatal incidents, collect medical examiner's or coroner's investigations and copy of death certificate.



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From investigating officials, determine if the parent or care giver had left the infant alone and, if so, for what length of time? Determine if the parent or care giver had left the infant alone previously in the bathtub and what, if any, incident had occurred when the infant was left alone? Determine the circumstances and products involved.

Determine if parent or care giver attempted cardio-respiratory resuscitation (CPR) or other first aid and indicate if the parent or care giver was certified to administer CPR or was guided by emergency response officials. Indicate the elapsed time in minutes from when the parent or care giver summoned assistance until their arrival. Indicate the time interval from the incident until emergency room treatment was administered. Indicate the time interval the infant was hospitalized. Indicate the time interval from the incident until the infant was pronounced dead by medical officials.

From investigating officials, determine if there was any indication of child abuse. If so, indicate the source of this finding and provide documentation.

If the bath aid is available for collection as an official sample, and there was an indication of a component failure, contact Renae Rauchschalbe, CECA, 301-504-0608 ext.1362, for instructions in obtaining the bath aid.