



Investigation Guideline

Product: Nonpowder Guns (BB and pellet guns)

Appendix #: 114

Date amended: March 2005

NOTE: This investigation guideline does not address paintball guns. Refer to Appendix 134 if doing a paintball gun investigation.

I. Introduction

A. Background Information

In 2003, there were an estimated 20,958 emergency room-treated nonpowder gun-related injuries, 59.8% of which involved victims under 17 years old. During the same period, 36.2% of all nonpowder gun-related injuries were potentially serious injuries to the neck, head, and face region. There was a higher than average hospitalization rate, 7.2%, associated with nonpowder gun-related injuries than with NEISS as a whole (5.3%). Approximately 3,370 of the 2003 ER-treated injuries were paintball related.

B. Product Descriptions

Nonpowder guns (rifles or pistols) include BB guns, pellet guns, or combination BB/pellet guns which use a nonpowder projectile propulsion mechanism. Typical propulsion mechanisms include spring-action, compressed air (involving a pump and a cylinder device), and compressed carbon dioxide (involving disposable pre-filled cylinders).

C. Specific Items of Interest

CPSC files document many shootings involving guns thought to be unloaded, sometimes because a BB or pellet was lodged in the barrel and not apparent upon opening the chamber to check the bolt tip or shaking the gun to listen for BBs.

D. Headquarters Contacts

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II. Instructions for Collecting Specific Information

We are only interested in accidental injuries. If you are unsure of the intent, assume it to be unintentional until you learn otherwise. If you know it is intentional from the beginning, do an abbreviated investigation.

WARNING!

- (1) **Always assume the gun is loaded and treat the gun as if it is ready to fire.**
- (2) **Never point the gun at anything you do not intend to shoot. Keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction in case of accidental discharge.**
- (3) **Keep your fingers away from the trigger and do not rely on the gun's safety mechanisms to prevent an accidental discharge.**
- (4) **If possible, open the bolt to verify that no BB is present at the magnetized bolt tip and leave the bolt open. The presence of a pellet in the chamber cannot be determined by inspection.**

A. Synopsis

Use **ATTACHED DATA RECORD SHEET** to obtain specific information associated with nonpowder gun related incidents.

Collect precise information about the victim, shooter, owner of the gun, the gun, and incident scenario in every case. It may not be apparent why every question on the data record sheet is important. Treat every question as critically important. Include a narrative summary of the sequence of events leading to the incident. Address unique questions that arise in the course of a particular investigation in the narrative summary.

Determine features of the incident scenario such as the activity when the shooting occurred (e.g., hunting, target practice, playing), the relation of shooter to victim and owner to shooter (acquaintance, friend, relative, stranger, etc.) whether the shooting was accidental, whether the shooter thought the gun was unloaded (and if so, why).

B. Description of Incident Environment

Describe all relevant information on environmental factors such as lighting, weather (if incident occurred outside), and any other relevant details concerning the incident environment. Estimate the distance between the gun muzzle and victim when the shooting occurred.

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

Collect accurate physical information about the victim including date of birth, date of death, gender, race, height, weight, etc. Obtain information from medical records, autopsy reports, birth or death certificates, parents, and other reliable sources. Report the medical description of the injury, and cause of death- if applicable, from medical and/or autopsy reports. Obtain demographic information about the shooter.

D. Description of Product (Involved in the injury)

Identify the make, model, serial number, date of manufacture, firing mechanism, and caliber of the gun. Identify the projectile fired in the incident (BB, pellet, or dart), its manufacturer, and the specific product. Obtain photographs of the gun (from left and right sides) and the projectile with appropriate measurement scales in the pictures. Determine when and where the gun was purchased, who purchased it, who owned it (shooter, victim, etc.), how it was obtained by the shooter, how familiar the shooter was with it, etc.

III. Photographs/ Diagrams of Incident Scene

Photograph the gun and the scene of the incident. Photograph the original packaging of the gun, if available.

IV. Obtaining samples and documents related to the investigation

Obtain copies police reports, autopsy reports, death certificates, and/or any other authoritative investigative reports of the incident. Obtain copies of the owner's manual or other documents provided with the gun, if available.

(DATA RECORD SHEET – Attached)



DATA RECORD SHEET

Investigation Guideline

PRODUCT: Nonpowder Guns

TASK NUMBER _____ INCIDENT DATE _____

A. VICTIM INFORMATION

1. Birth date _____ 2. Date of Death _____ 3. Age _____
4. Height _____ 5. Weight _____ pounds 6. Gender: Male Female

B. SHOOTER INFORMATION

7. Age ____ years 8. Gender: Male Female

C. GUN INFORMATION

9. What type of gun was involved? Rifle or Pistol
10. Is the gun a BB gun, pellet gun, or combination BB/pellet gun? BB Pellet BB/Pellet
11. What is the CALIBER of the gun? .177 .22 Other: _____
12. At the time of the incident, what was the caliber of the projectile?
13. What is the projectile type? BB Pellet Dart Other: _____
14. Does the gun have a single-shot magazine, multiple-shot magazine, or a reservoir?
Single-shot Multiple-shot Reservoir
15. What is the maximum velocity of this gun? _____
*** Note: this is found in the instructional literature or on the package.
DO NOT fire the gun ***
16. What is the gun's firing mechanism? Air CO₂ Spring Other: _____
17. How many times (maximum) could the gun be pumped (0 if none)? _____
*** Note: this is found in the instructional literature or on the package.
DO NOT pump the gun. ***
18. How many times was the gun pumped immediately prior to the incident?
19. Does the gun have a safety? Yes No Unknown

20. Are there any warnings or safety advisories on the gun itself? Yes No Unknown

If Yes, what do they say? _____

21. What is the MAKE or BRAND of the gun? _____

22. What is the MODEL NUMBER of the gun? _____

23. What is the SERIAL NUMBER of the gun? _____

24. WHEN was the gun purchased? _____

25. WHERE was the gun purchased? _____

26. WHY was the gun purchased? _____

D. SCENARIO INFORMATION

27. Was the shooting accidental or intentional? Accident Intentional Unknown

28. Did the shooter think the gun was unloaded before shooting? Yes No Unknown

29. If YES, did the shooter try to verify that the gun was unloaded? Yes No Unknown

30. If YES, how did the shooter check? Did the shooter (circle all that apply):

a. Shake the gun and listen for BBs in the magazine?

b. Open the bolt and check the bolt tip?

c. Fire the gun?

d. Other _____

31. Was the gun aimed directly at the victim when the shooting occurred?

Yes No Unknown

32. Did the projectile ricochet off an object before hitting the victim? Yes No Unknown

33. Where was the victim when the shooting occurred? _____

34. Where was the shooter when the shooting occurred? _____

35. What was the distance between the gun muzzle and victim when the shooting occurred? _____ feet (circle one: measured estimated)

36. Was an adult (18 years or older) present at the time of the shooting?

Yes No Unknown

37. Was the adult aware the gun was being used around the time of the incident?
38. If the victim died- did the owner of the gun know the gun was powerful enough to kill someone?
Yes No Unknown
39. If the victim died- did the shooter know the gun was powerful enough to kill someone?
Yes No Unknown
40. What relation was the shooter to the victim? (The shooter was a(n) ____ of/to the victim.)
Self Sibling Parent Child Relative Friend Acquaintance Stranger Unknown
41. What relation was the owner to the shooter? (The owner was a(n) ____ of/to the shooter.)
Self Sibling Parent Child Relative Friend Acquaintance Stranger Unknown
42. How old was the gun owner? _____years _____months
43. How old was the shooter? _____years _____months
44. Did the literature that came with the gun have safety information? Yes No Unknown
If YES, had the shooter read the safety information? Yes No Unknown
45. Had the shooter received gun or hunter safety training? Yes No Unknown?
46. In addition to or instead of this training, did the shooter receive any instructions on gun use/safety from his/her parents/caregiver/ or other adult?
47. Where were the entry and (if applicable) exit wounds?
Entry: Head Face Eye Neck Chest Abdomen Extremity: _____
Exit: Head Face Eye Neck Chest Abdomen Extremity: _____
48. What was the medical diagnosis of the injury and (if applicable) cause of death?
(please obtain copies of all appropriate medical records)

79. Is there any evidence of alcohol or drug involvement in the shooting?
Yes No Unknown