PREVENTING INJURIES TO CHILDREN BY TOYS

Choose safe toys.

- Ensure that children play with age-appropriate toys, as indicated by safety labels. Consider the child's interests and skill level, and look for quality design and construction.

- Consider purchasing a small parts tester to determine whether or not small toys and objects in your home may present a choking hazard to young children.

Inspect all toys regularly for potential hazards.

- Check regularly for damage that could create small pieces that are choking hazards. Make any necessary repairs immediately, or discard damaged toys out of children's reach.

Watch for toys that can become hazards.

- Young children should never play with toys with strings, straps or cords longer than 7 inches, which can accidentally strangle them.

- Electrical toys are a potential burn hazard. Children under age 8 should not use toys with electrical plugs or batteries.

- Don't let children under age 8 blow up balloons. Use Mylar balloons instead of latex balloons. If you must use latex balloons, store them out of reach of children, and deflate and discard balloons and balloon pieces of use.

Ensure that toys are used in a safe environment.

- Riding toys should not be used near stairs, traffic or swimming pools. Riding toy-related deaths can occur when a child falls from a toy or rides a toy into a body of water.

- Always supervise children at play. Play is even more valuable when adults become involved and interact with children rather than supervising from a distance.

Make sure toys are stored safely.

- Teach children to put toys away after playing. Ensure that toys intended for younger children are stored separately from those for older children.

- Make sure toy chests have no lids or have safety hinges.

Check the Web site of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (www.cpsc.gov) regularly to obtain information on recent toy recalls.

- Return warranty and product registration forms for new toy purchases to the manufacturers to ensure that you will be notified of any recalls.