

Consumer Federation of America • Consumers Union
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**Consumer Advocates Urge Immediate Recall for Baby Bath Seats After
New Model is Linked to Over 70 Incidents**

Washington— On July 6, 2005 the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and Dorel Juvenile Group issued an alert informing consumers that a Safety First bath seat, has been linked to at least 76 dangerous incidents. Consumer advocates across the country called on CPSC and the juvenile products industry to protect children from this potentially deadly product by issuing a recall of all existing bath seats.

“This new product, supposedly designed to reduce the hazards posed by the original baby bath seat design, has now been shown to add additional risks to babies while using this product,” stated Rachel Weintraub, director of product safety for Consumer Federation of America. “Although the Dorel Juvenile Group received at least 76 reports of breakage about its Safety 1st Tubside Bath Seat, the company along with the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has failed to issue a recall for this product.”

The alert issued yesterday warns only about using the product on a nonstandard tub – which accounts for only 9 of the 76 incidents. The product was not recalled, the company was not asked to make repairs, to improve the design, nor to add language to the warning label.

Baby bath seats are consumer products intended to assist in bathing infants by holding the infant in a sitting position in full size bathtubs. The older model of baby bath seats relied upon suction cups to secure the seat to the bathtub, while the newer model has a clamp arm that attaches over the side of the bath tub.

Consumer groups urge caregivers not to use baby bath seats, and renew their warning to parents and caregivers that they should never leave their baby unattended while bathing them in a bathtub or any bath product. Leaving a baby unattended for a mere few seconds can lead to injury or death – even in a small amount of water.

According to CPSC is aware of 123 deaths to children and 182 non-fatal incidents or complaints associated with baby bath seats from when they first entered the market in the 1980's until April 2005. In 2004, a 10-month old boy drowned in one of the newer clamp-style bath seats. The clamp that was supposed to keep the baby in place had become dislodged, and the seat tipped over.

The biggest hazard posed by baby bath seats, including the new design, is the false sense of security they give parents. Parents assume that they can use more water or leave the bathroom while using these products. Most of the deaths took place when the caregiver was not in the room or had left the baby in the care of an older child. Baby bath seats cannot be designed in such a way as to adequately reduce the risk of injury to children nor can a design or performance standard adequately reduce the false perception of safety that these products mistakenly instill in the parents and caregivers who use them.

“The alert from CPSC does little to keep babies safe,” stated Nancy Cowles of Kids In Danger, a nonprofit organization addressing children’s product safety. “CPSC based the alert on 9 incidences involving nonstandard tubs – including drop in, claw foot, and spa type tubs. However, the alert ignores 67 other reports indicating that the seat broke during handling and assembly. In addition, the death of a child in the product was not even mentioned.”

“To protect children from these deadly products, the CPSC must act quickly to ban baby bath seats and recall both new and older models,” said Janell Mayo Duncan, Legislative and Regulatory Counsel for Consumers Union.

“CPSC and industry are moving too slowly to protect babies from an unsafe product,” says Jack Walsh, executive director of the Danny Foundation. “While proposed rule making has begun, illustrating CPSC’s acknowledgement of the danger, it is moving at a snail’s pace as they wait for industry to set their own new standards. Children cannot wait any longer. The Danny Foundation joins Kids In Danger, Consumer Federation of America, Consumers Union and U.S. PIRG in calling for a ban on bath seats and a complete recall of those already in use.”

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Consumer Federation of America is a non-profit association of 300 consumer groups, with a combined membership of more than 50 million people. CFA was founded in 1968 to advance the consumers' interest through advocacy and education. www.consumerfed.org

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The Danny Foundation is The Danny Foundation is a national nonprofit organization established after the tragic injury of Danny Lineweaver of Alamo, California, who at the age of 23 months, was fatally injured while he was trying to climb out of his crib. Danny caught his shirt on a decorative knob on the corner post of his crib and hanged himself. Though his mother was able to perform CPR the moment she found him, Danny lived in a semi-comatose state for nine years and died in 1993. www.dannyfoundation.org

Kids In Danger is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting children by improving children’s product safety. www.KidsInDanger.org