

Kidsafe News

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Winter 2008

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S

MESSAGE

Welcome to Kidsafe News – Winter 2008.

A major focus of our work over the last 18 months has been the statewide Playground Safety Project, funded by the Australian Government Department of Health & Ageing. The funding for this project concluded in June, however the free Telephone Advisory service and the Audit and Inspection Service (fee for service) will be ongoing. Copies of the Playspace Resource Kit will continue to be available for purchase from Kidsafe SA, and all playground related inquiries should be directed to Holly Fitzgerald, Playground Safety Project Officer.

We have recently undertaken to work with staff from the Dept for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure (DTEI), to investigate issues around child safety and houseboats. We would appreciate comment/feedback from readers of the Newsletter on this matter, eg. *Have you taken a houseboat holiday with children? What, if anything, would encourage/preclude you from doing so?*

At what age would you consider it "safe" to take children on a houseboat?

Would you see Safety Guidelines for the industry as a reassurance when considering a houseboat holiday with children?

Email or telephone us with your comments. We are very keen to hear from as wide a cross section of parents/carers as possible.

With the very cold weather already upon us, be mindful of the increase in the likelihood of burn and scald injuries in children. See "Prevention Tips" in this issue.

Take care and keep warm and safe this winter.

Helen Noblet

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New Regulations for Child Car Restraints

In response to calls from road safety experts, and after extensive community consultation, Australia's Transport Ministers have endorsed new child restraint laws. The new road rules will reduce the risk of injury caused by seat restraints which are unsuitable for the child's weight and height.



In summary, the proposed changes will see:

- children up to a minimum 6 months of age must use a capsule or rearward facing restraint, then;
- a forward facing child seat with an inbuilt 5 point harness until the age of 4 years, then;
- a booster seat from 4 to 7 years of age.
- children under 4 years of age will not be allowed to occupy the front passenger seat and
- children aged 4 to 7 years must be seated in the back of the vehicle, unless all the rear seating positions are occupied by other children less than 7 years of age.

While most parents and carers strive to do the right thing using current guidelines, the research shows many children are being moved into bigger seats too early.

A child's age is an easily understood guide, which will help parents and carers choose the safest seat restraint for their children.

The amended laws are being progressed through State and Territory Parliaments for implementation. It is hoped that the legislation will be passed into law in South Australia by the end of 2008.

Safe Sleeping: Steps to take to Reduce Risks

While sleeping, babies may get into dangerous situations. They may be suffocated under bedding, choke on toys or other objects, caught between the cot sides and mattress, or strangled on cords and ribbons.

The reasons for this are that they are not able to control their own sleeping situations, cannot understand danger, may not be able to move out of a dangerous situation and may place things in their mouths or around their necks and choke.

There are steps that can be taken to make sleep environments safer for babies.

Sleeping position:

- Put baby down on the back to sleep from birth
- When putting baby to sleep, place his/her feet at the end of the cot.
- Make up the cot so that the bedding just comes up to baby's chest, so that baby's head is not able to slide under the bedding.
- Sleep baby in a safe cot – compliant with AS 2172, and in a safe environment.
- Avoid exposing baby to cigarette smoke during pregnancy and after birth.



Bedding:

- Use only light bedding. Doonas, quilts or heavy blankets may cause your baby to over heat.
- Cot bumpers are not needed to protect your baby. Babies have been found with their faces pressed against bumpers. This can cause breathing problems.
- Do not use any type of pillow in a cot. Babies do not need pillows to sleep comfortably.
- It is UNSAFE to use hot water bottles or electric blankets due to the risk of overheating and burns.
- Remove toys from the cot when baby is sleeping. Large soft fluffy toys can smother your baby.
- Kidsafe SA recommends the use of a sleeping bag – one which is made so that baby cannot slip inside the bag and become completely covered. Grobags (baby sleeping bags) can be purchased from the SA Kidsafe Centre at the Women's & Children's Hospital.

Accidental Deaths Alert!!

Recently, we have been alarmed by several accidental deaths of infants and young children in a variety of circumstances. A number of re-current themes were evident in these deaths, including:

- The developmental ages of the children – where they were mobile and able to explore their environment and interact with objects in that environment independently of parents or carers e.g. strangulation on hanging curtain or blind cords.
- Lack of parent/carer supervision.
- Unsafe environments e.g. inappropriately soft bedding, use of U and/or V-shaped pillows in cots, co-sleeping with an adult and cot non-compliant with the Australian Standard (AS 2172).

It is important that parents and carers are aware of the potential for serious injury or death that may arise from:

- The changing developmental ages and subsequent mobility of children
- The potentially hazardous items in the child's environment
- The ongoing necessity for the supervision of young children when they are active, curious and mobile.

New Mandatory Safety Standard for Prams and Strollers

A mandatory Australian Safety Standard for prams and strollers took effect from 1st July 2008. Manufacturers and suppliers of prams and strollers have had a lead in time of about 12 months in order for all products currently available in retail outlets, to comply with the Standard. However, stock purchased over the last 12 months or more may not be compliant. The Standard (AS/NZS2088) now requires that prams and strollers sold in Australia have a number of safety features, including:

- A restraint harness
- At least one parking device or brake
- The braking device must be red in colour & stand out clearly from the surrounding framework
- Safe-use warning labels
- A suitable strap that must be tethered to carers during use to help them retain control of the pram or stroller.

Safety Checklist

- Make sure your pram or stroller has the safety features required by the mandatory Standard.
- Always use the tether strap provided with your pram or stroller when the parking brake is not engaged.
- If you don't have a tether strap, ask your supplier about buying one separately. Tether safety straps for prams/strollers can be purchased and fitted separately from Your Child's Nursery (YCN) for approximately \$6.95. Visit their website at www.ycn.com.au
- As far as possible, keep the pram or stroller in arm's reach if a child is in it.
- Make sure the child is secured in the safety harness provided with the product, at all times.
- Never hang bags or heavy items on the handles of the pram or stroller – this could cause it to tip over
- Don't let the child stand up in the pram or stroller as this could cause it to tip over
- Never leave a sleeping child unsupervised in a pram or stroller.

Burns and Scalds – Prevention Tips

Burns and scalds can be prevented through the use of safety equipment, minor household modifications, child education and supervision.

Burns are a result of contact with flames and hot objects. They include both burns from fire and flames e.g. matches, lighters, open fires, gas stoves, and contact burns from hot objects e.g. irons, BBQ's, heaters, electric stoves, oven surfaces etc.

- Keep matches and lighters out of reach of children
- Install guards around fires and heaters
- Keep irons and iron cords out of reach
- Ensure heaters are away from curtains, furniture and other flammable material. Turn them off before leaving the house or going to bed
- **Do not use a baby walker.** They enable children to move quickly into danger and to reach potential hazards, and are associated with large numbers of injuries

A **scald** is a burn caused by hot liquid, hot vapour or steam. The most common cause of scalds to young children is hot drinks, either due to children pulling a cup down onto themselves, or having a drink spilt on them while they are being held. **At 60°C, hot water can cause a third degree burn in less than one second.**

- Control the temperature of your bathroom hot tap water to a maximum of 50°C.
- Always test the water's temperature before bathing a child. The maximum recommended temperature is 38°C - warm, not hot.
- Always run the cold water first and turn it off last
- Consider using child resistant taps/tap covers. Remember that these do not protect a child from hot water already in a bath
- Turn taps off tightly, and keep the bathroom door closed when not in use
- Supervise young children in the bathroom. Do not leave them in the care of older kids
- Keep kettles, cords, pots, pans and microwaves towards the back of the bench, out of children's reach
- Use back hot plates before the front ones and turn pot handles towards the back
- Fit a stove guard around your stove top
- Keep children out of the kitchen while cooking
- Use non-slip place mats instead of table cloths
- Put your child down before having a hot drink.



What services and resources does Kidsafe SA offer?

Kidsafe SA provides an education and information service for parents and carers of children on all aspects of child safety and injury prevention. We operate the Kidsafe Centre, where a range of brochures, Fact Sheets, DVD's and booklets are available. Information is available on a wide range of topics including playground safety and the prevention of burns and scalds, drowning, falls, choking, poisoning etc.

Kidsafe SA offers a 'Community Talks Program' on child safety and injury prevention to new parents and other interested community groups. Bookings are essential, contact Kidsafe SA on 8161 6318 for more information.

A wide range of safety products are available to inspect and purchase directly from the Centre. A mail and phone order service is also available.

Kidsafe SA also offers a playground safety and general child safety telephone advisory service on (08) 8161 6318.

Kidsafe SA contact details

Location and Postal Address

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Opening Hours

Monday to Friday 9:30am – 4.00pm

Website address

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Contact us with your comments, concerns or queries on child safety issues on
(08) 8161 6318 or sa@kidsafe.org.au

Please send me the Kidsafe News electronically.

My e-mail address is:

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I would like to become a Member of the Foundation. My payment details are provided below. (\$44.00 for individuals, \$165.00 for organisations. Subscriptions are due and payable on 1st January each year).

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