

PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN

Guard Against Furniture Tip-Over

(NAPSA)—Here's a tip for parents: You can take steps to help protect your youngsters from the dangers of furniture falling on them.

The problem is more serious than many people realize. Thousands of children visit emergency rooms each year with injuries received from climbing on or pulling over furniture.

"Parents and caregivers need to be aware that these accidents tend to happen quickly—usually while a child is left briefly alone in a room," notes American Home Furnishings Alliance vice president Bill Perdue, who helped write the voluntary furniture tip-over safety standard for manufacturers.

The standard, issued by ASTM International, applies to dressers, chests, armoires or other clothing storage units taller than 30 inches—the pieces most often involved in accidents.

To meet the standard, pieces must not tip even when all drawers are open two-thirds of the way. They also must not tip when one drawer is open and a 50-pound weight is placed in the open drawer. The standard also requires manufacturers to include "tip restraints" with new furnishings.

"Tip restraints attach the piece of furniture to an interior wall, the wall framing or other support to help prevent the piece from tipping over," Perdue explains. Parents should closely follow the manufacturer's instructions for installing the tip restraints.

New furnishings that comply with the standard also carry a



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new warning label. Here's a look at three important "don'ts":

- **Don't** open more than one drawer at a time;
- **Don't** let children climb on drawers;
- **Don't** place televisions or other heavy objects on the top of products with drawers or shelves unless the piece is a media chest specifically designed to hold a TV.

Standards issued by ASTM are voluntary and not all furniture manufacturers choose to follow them.

For older furnishings that parents suspect may be prone to tip, AHFA recommends purchasing tip restraints, which are available in the safety section of hardware stores and baby specialty stores.

For a free sample furniture tip-over safety bracket, e-mail your request (with shipping address) to pbowling@ahfa.us.