

Pointers For Parents

Don't Toy With Safety

UL, NFPA Urge Consumers To "Play It Safe" With Toys

(NAPSA)—Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL), in cooperation with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), is *working for a safer world* by reminding children and adults that toys can pose certain safety risks.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), more than 191,000 children were treated in hospital emergency rooms for toy-related injuries in 2000 alone, including 70,000 toy-related injuries to children under the age of five. To play it safe all year long, the safety professionals at UL and the NFPA offer the following precautions:

- When shopping for toys, especially electrical toys, look for markings that indicate the product has been tested for safety by an independent, third-party product safety and certification organization, such as UL. If you spot a UL mark on a toy, it means that samples of that toy have been tested, (dropped, pulled, tugged at, and generally torn apart) by UL engineering staff and found to comply with appropriate safety requirements.

- Pay close attention to the recommended age designation marked on the toy or its packaging. Always make sure the child's age matches or exceeds the manufacturer's recommended age specification.

- Before children play with a new toy, read the manufacturer's use and care booklet. Make sure you and your children understand the proper way to play with the toy.

- Immediately discard plastic packaging and gift-wrapping—these materials can pose a suffocation hazard.

- Initially and periodically inspect toys for cracks, breaks, ripped seams, etc. Parts from damaged toys can break off and become a choking hazard. Sharp edges can cause serious cuts.

- If a toy requires assembly, make sure a responsible adult assembles the product by completely following the manufacturer's instructions.



- Keep deflated and broken balloons away from small children. Infants and toddlers can easily get them caught in their throats and suffocate.

- Electric toys can become a shock hazard if they're misused. Remember, water and electricity never mix.

- Be alert. Watch television newscasts and scan newspapers and consumer magazines for information on toy or other household product recalls. Whenever possible, complete and return product warranty and registration forms to the manufacturer. If a product is recalled, the manufacturer can use these forms to contact you directly.

For additional safety information, visit UL's Web site at www.ul.com/consumers or the NFPA's Web site at www.nfpa.org.

- *UL is an independent, not-for-profit product testing and certification organization that has evaluated products, materials and systems for more than a century. UL's expertise in the toy testing area stems from its more than 50 years of testing electrically operated toys. The National Fire Protection Association has been a worldwide leader in providing fire, electrical, and life safety to the public since 1896. The mission of the international nonprofit organization is to reduce the worldwide burden of fire and other hazards on the quality of life by developing and advocating scientifically-based consensus codes and standards, research, training and education.*