

Consumer Federation of America · Consumers Union Kids in Danger · U.S. Public Interest Research Group

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New Mandatory Crib Standards Adopted by CPSC Consumer and Safety Groups Laud ‘Strongest Crib Standards in the World’

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- A coalition of consumer and safety groups praised the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) for voting today to approve the strongest crib safety standards in the world.

Following recent years of recalls of millions of cribs due to entrapment deaths and injuries, the new standards, which become mandatory in six months, will ensure that new cribs have been tested for safety to rigorous standards.

The Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA), signed into law in August of 2008, requires CPSC to issue mandatory standards for infant durable products. This provision of the CPSIA was named in honor and in memory of Danny Keysar. Danny was sixteen months-old when he died in his Chicago childcare home because a portable crib collapsed around his neck. The CPSIA requires mandatory standards and testing for durable infant and toddler products, product registration cards and a ban on the sale or lease of unsafe cribs. Cribs are among the first products for which mandatory standards have been promulgated under this provision.

The groups -- Consumer Federation of America, Consumers Union, Kids in Danger and the U.S. Public Interest Research Group -- hailed the vote as a major step forward in protecting infants and toddlers.

“This new mandatory standard, the strongest in the world, will ensure that new cribs coming onto the market will provide safe haven for babies and their families,” stated Nancy Cowles, Executive Director of Kids In Danger. “We applaud CPSC for their hard work and tenacity in developing and adopting this landmark rule.”

“Parents and caregivers should have peace of mind that when they leave their baby in a crib that their baby will be safe. For too long that has not been the case,” stated Rachel Weintraub, Director of Product Safety and Senior Counsel for Consumer Federation of America. “We congratulate CPSC for shepherding this strong and much needed consumer protection.”

The new rule puts many new tests and requirements in place:

- Cribs with full side drop-sides will not be allowed -- the bottom 20" of the crib rail must be fixed to eliminate the entrapment hazards seen when the hardware fails.

- All cribs must undergo rigorous testing for slat strength, durability and mattress support strength. The series of testing is conducted on one crib to simulate a life-time use of a crib. This is the key to the new standard. Most of the 10 million cribs recalled since 2007 were able to meet the weak industry standards that were in place.
- Warnings and labeling have been improved, both to make parents more aware of when a crib is mis-assembled and to alert them to developmental signs to stop using a crib (when the child attempts to climb out). While most attention has been rightly focused on entrapment deaths in cribs, most injuries are as a result of children falling out of cribs.

The new requirements are mostly part of the ASTM International voluntary standard that has been adapted to serve as the CPSC mandatory rule. Over the past two years industry, consumer advocates and safety experts have worked feverishly to update the voluntary standard to provide real assurances of a safe product. Prior to the recent rewrite, the most recent significant changes to the voluntary standard were made in 1999. The CPSC mandatory standard was last changed in 1982. The new standards include two sets of similar rules: one for full-size cribs and one for non-full-size cribs. Non-full-size cribs can be smaller, larger or a different shape than a full-size crib, which is a standardized shape and size.

“The lack of durability of recently produced cribs is appalling and has put many babies at risk,” said Don Mays, senior director of product safety and technical policy for Consumers Union/Consumer Reports. “These new regulations will ensure safe sleep environments by raising the bar for the safety and quality of cribs.”

For the first time, this mandatory rule promulgated by CPSC applies to products already in use by some entities as well as to new products. Efforts will begin immediately to remove older unsafe products off store shelves, out of child care homes, and out of hotels. The CPSIA includes a section requiring that cribs that don't meet the new standard can't be sold -- new or used, used in child care, used by hotel guests, or used in other public accommodations. This measure alone will go far in removing unsafe cribs from use. This does not apply to already purchased cribs being used in private homes, except for barring their resale.

Six months after the publication of the standard, all cribs on the market must be in compliance. The Commission voted to give child care facilities and hotels an additional 18 months after that date to replace any non-compliant cribs. CPSC has indicated that cribs currently being manufactured and tested that meet the new standard can continue to be used, even though their sale took place prior to the new rule being official.

“After years of foot dragging by the industry, CPSC has now approved a standard and testing regimen that will keep children safe – avoiding the crib recalls, entrapment deaths and injuries that have plagued the industry,” said Elizabeth Hitchcock of US Public Interest Research Group.

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Consumer Federation of America (consumerfed.org); Consumers Union (consumersunion.org);
Kids In Danger (kidsindanger.org); U.S. PIRG (uspig.org)