

Window Blind Recall

ONE OF LARGEST IN U.S. HISTORY

By Greg Webb

The window blind recall issued by the Consumer Product Safety Commission ("CPSC") in December - the one that targeted 50 million Roman shades and roll-up blinds - was one of the biggest product recalls in the nation's history.

The recall was sparked by a growing number of incidents where infants were getting caught in the cords of the blinds and strangling themselves, with five deaths and sixteen near-deaths. The mother of one such toddler has been leading the charge for safer shades and blinds since her daughter's death in 2002, founding the Parents for Window Blind Safety Commission.

A spokeswoman for the CPSC said the dedication and pressure of parents seeking change is enough to make waves within a given industry and bring issues to the attention of the government.

The spokeswoman also added that the CPSC attempted to work with the window blind industry over the last 15 years, but the pace of the industry to improve standards was not adequate. Finally, the industry conceded.

A spokeswoman for the Window Covering Safety Council, a non-profit that represents the manufacturers, disputed the CPSC's claims, "We're working with the Consumer Product Safety Commission every single day to work within their standards."

The CPSC and manufacturers encourage parents to check all shades and blinds, ensuring that there are no accessible cords and moving all infant bedding away from potential strangulation hazards.

— *Greg Webb is an attorney with MichieHamlett in Charlottesville, Virginia.*



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