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News Release for the Month of December

The Otsego County Department of Health reminds residents of toy safety this holiday season.

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission Delivers the ABC's of Toy Safety

As gift-givers shop for that perfect toy this holiday season, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is emphasizing the importance of shopping safely. Knowing your ABC's of toy safety will make for happy holidays: (A) awareness, and knowing the (B) benefits, for (C) consumers – (Awareness Benefits Consumers).

Awareness is not only knowing there is a CPSC and what the agency does to protect consumers but also being aware of what poses the greatest risks. The leading causes of toy-related fatalities include choking and aspiration of toy parts.

The increased scrutiny of toys and the CPSC has led to B, or benefits, to consumers. CPSC has increased the agency's inspections of toys and is taking the action needed to remove violative products from the marketplace. More companies are testing their products and reporting possible safety problems.

The Chinese government has signed new agreements to conduct pre-export inspections to prevent lead painted toys and other unsafe toys from being exported to the U.S.

"CPSC recalled 61 toys involving more than 25 million product units in 2007, underscoring CPSC's daily commitment to keeping consumers safe 365 days a year," said Acting CPSC Chairman Nancy Nord. "Toys today are undergoing more inspection and more intense scrutiny than ever before."

Finally C, consumers should stay informed and be aware of recalls by signing up to receive direct e-mail notification of recalls at www.cpsc.gov. CPSC has launched a "Drive to 1 Million" to sign up at least 1 million consumers to receive this direct notification.

Consumers can also be more aware by shopping with CPSC's Top Safe Shopping Tips for this year:

- Ride-on Toys – Riding toys, skateboards and in-line skates go fast and falls could be deadly. Helmets and safety gear should be sized to fit.
- Small Parts – For children younger than age three, avoid toys with small parts, which can cause choking.
- Magnets – For children under age six, avoid building sets with small magnets. If magnets or pieces with magnets are swallowed, serious injuries and/or death can occur.

- Projectile Toys – Projectile toys such as air rockets, darts and sling shots are for older children. Improper use of these toys can result in serious eye injuries.
- Chargers and Adapters – Charging batteries should be supervised by adults. Chargers and adapters can pose thermal burn hazards to children.

To choose appropriate toys for children:

- Be a label reader. Look for toy labels that give age and safety recommendations and use that information as a guide.
- Select toys to suit the age, abilities, skills and interest level of the intended child. Look for sturdy construction, such as tightly-secured eyes, noses and other potential small parts.
- For all children under 8, avoid toys that have sharp edges and points.

Once the gifts are open:

- Immediately discard plastic wrappings on toys before they become dangerous play things.
- Keep toys appropriate for older children away from younger siblings or neighbors.
- Pay attention to instructions and warnings on battery chargers. Some chargers lack any device to prevent overcharging.