

Safety

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& THE LAW

A Newsletter to live by from the law firm of **ROBERTS & ROBERTS**

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Check this Listing of Potential Problem Products

Advances In Electrical Safety

Electrical shock kills hundreds of people and thousands more are injured by it in the workplace and around their home each year. The highest percentage of these accidents occur during the summer months when people spend more time around water or working outdoors with electric tools.

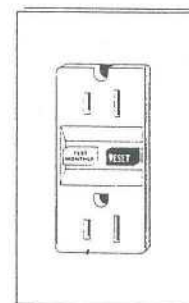
An inexpensive electrical safety device now makes many of these accidents preventable. It is called a ground-fault circuit-interrupter or G.F.C.I. This device detects the accidental leakage of current from an electrical circuit to the human body and immediately shuts off the electricity before any serious harm can occur to a normal, healthy person.

Traditional fuses and circuit breakers do not provide this type of protection. They are designed to protect circuits and appliances from the release of high currents of electricity that cause overheating and fires. Fuses and breakers are usually set to shut off a circuit at 5 to 20 amperes, however, it only takes a fraction of an ampere flowing through the chest to stop the human heart.

The typical G.F.C.I. fits in the palm of the hand and costs from \$5.00 to \$20.00. It

can be inserted into a common wall outlet or incorporated into the plug of the power cord on an electric appliance. It is easily identified by its colored "Test" and "Reset" buttons.

Wall
Outlet
G.F.C.I.



The G.F.C.I. is the state-of-the-art in electrical safety. O.S.H.A. recently revised its electrical safety regulations to mandate G.F.C.I. protection in many workplaces. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the traditional reliance on grounding for electric tools and appliances is no longer adequate for protecting human life. This is particularly true for electrical equipment operated outdoors or in damp environments.

Although the National Electrical Code requires G.F.C.I. protection for many home and office outlets, it is often absent in older buildings. For this reason, over 350 safety-conscious companies are voluntarily including G.F.C.I. protection in the electrical products they sell, including indoor spas, outdoor lighting systems, automatic lawn sprinkler systems, and pool equipment.

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Transporting Children Safely

Family Safety Update

Automobile accidents are the leading cause of death or serious injury for children under the age of 5 in the United States. Everyone should know that the safest way to transport young children is in a child safety seat in the rear seat of the car.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that, when correctly used, safety seats cut the risk of a child dying in a crash by 71 percent. They lower the risk of a child being seriously injured by 67 percent.

Carefully selecting and properly installing a safety seat, however, is just as important as using one for your child. Safety seats come in four basic models that are designed to protect different sizes of children:

- Infant seats for children under 20 pounds
- Toddler seats for children between 20 and 40 pounds
- Convertible seats for children from birth to 40 pounds
- Booster seats for children between 40 and 70 pounds

In selecting a seat, consider these safety tips:

- The label should say it meets current federal safety standards.
- Most seats manufactured before 1981 do not meet current federal crash standards.

- A seat that has been through a crash may no longer provide adequate protection.
- Do not use a household "infant carrier" as a car seat.

Safety seats are not installed the same way in every car. Take time to read the instructions that come with the seat as well as any special directions which may be in the owner's manual for the car. When installing a seat, consider these safety tips:

- Avoid placing seats in the front seat of a car with a passenger-side air bag.
- Use a locking clip with a lap/shoulder belt if the seat seems unlikely to stay in place (The seller should supply a locking clip with the seat.).
- Face infants toward the rear of the car.
- Avoid securing seats with motorized seat belts or belts attached directly to the door.

Law Update

When a passenger is injured in an auto accident because of the fault of the driver, the passenger is normally entitled to compensation under the auto liability insurance policy. Until recently, however, this was not true if the passenger and driver belonged to the same family. This was because of the "family member" exclusion in the insurance policy. This exclusion is now declared invalid by the courts.



Infant Seat



Convertible Seat



Rear Facing Convertible Seat



Booster Seat with Lap Shoulder Belt

Unfortunately, child safety seats are among the most commonly recalled consumer products. Last year alone Consumer Reports alerted its readers to safety problems affecting some 8.5 million seats.

Guidelines for Safe Lifting

Back injuries are the most common workplace injury. Approximately 25% of all accidents reported in industry each year involve back injuries. They often result from employees manually lifting equipment or bulk materials.

There is a standard for determining whether work involving manual lifting is reasonably safe. It's contained in the "Work Practices Guide for Manual Lifting" published by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (N.I.O.S.H.). This guide sets standards for acceptable and unacceptable lifting for the average person.

The N.I.O.S.H. guidelines for lifting are based on the weight of the object to be

lifted, its distance from the body, and the height to which it is lifted. Some manual lifting beyond established acceptable lifting conditions is permitted with administrative controls, such as matching workers to the physical demands of a task or training workers in how to lift properly.

Lifting that exceeds the maximum permissible limit set by N.I.O.S.H. cannot be done safely by a single worker. Hoists, rollers, conveyor belts, and other mechanical devices must be used to avoid the risk of back injury.

This N.I.O.S.H. guide is not just for employers and employees. It should be referred to by those who design tools and equipment for the workplace as well as by those who package items which will probably be manually lifted in shipping. With this safety standard, back injuries can be predicted and prevented.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration's hotline for emergency reporting of major workplace hazards is 1-800-321-OSHA.

Workplace Safety Update

ROBERTS & ROBERTS

Roberts & Roberts is an East Texas law firm with a history of helping people injured by unsafe practices and products. Randell C. Roberts and Bruce L. Roberts are certified by their state and national professional boards as specialists in Personal Injury Trial Law and Civil Trial Advocacy.

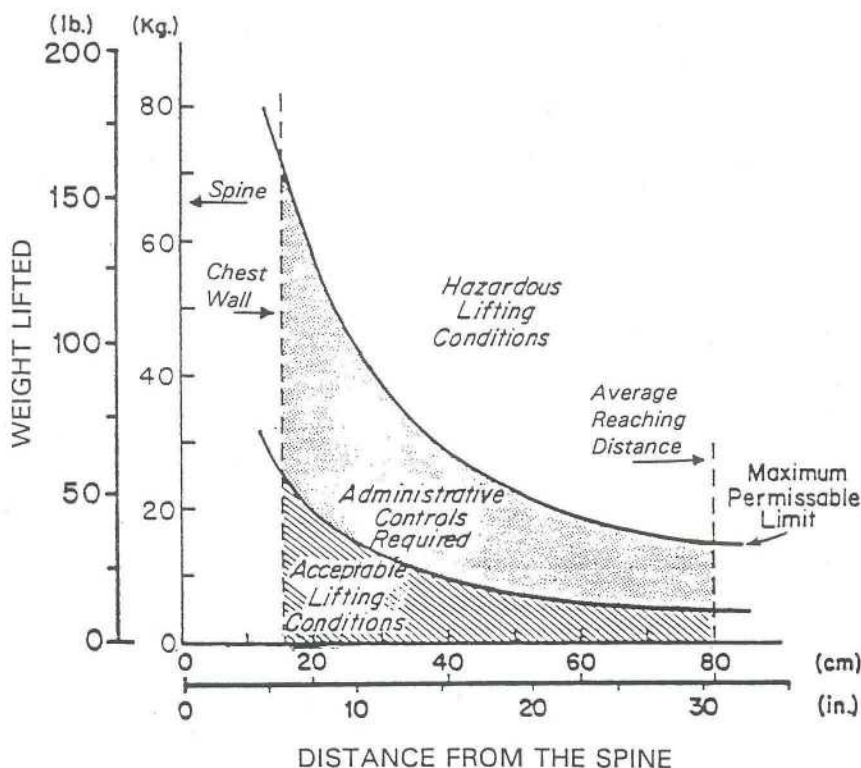
They are a Founding Member of the Institute for Injury Reduction as well as a member of:

- Institute for Product Safety
- National Safety Council
- American Society of Safety Engineers
- National Head Injury Foundation
- National Spinal Cord Injury Association
- National Paraplegia Foundation

If you know of someone who is injured, Roberts & Roberts wants to help.



N.I.O.S.H. LIFTING GUIDELINES





You may obtain more information about product recalls by calling the Consumer Product Safety Commission at

1-800-638-2772, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration at 1-800-424-9393, or the Food and Drug Administration at 301-295-8060 for drugs, 301-427-1122 for medical devices, or 202-485-0197 for foods and cosmetics.

Consumer Product Warnings & Recalls

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The Pull-Up Exerciser and Max Rower stomach exercisers sold between 1981 and 1989 by mail order through Hanover House, Inc. are recalled. They could break during use and cause severe injuries.

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Approximately 130,000 air conditioners manufactured by Amana Refrigeration, Inc. are voluntarily recalled because their control switches can overheat. These Model 208/230 volt room air conditioners were distributed nationwide between June 1987 and October 1991 and were sold for \$500-600 each.

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Approximately 155,000 metal toddler beds are voluntarily recalled by Cosco, Inc. These Model T22 and T23 Youth Options children's beds were manufactured since 1990. A child could be injured or killed when the child's head gets caught between the spaces separating the arches on the headboard or foot board, or in the space between the mattress and the arches.

• • •

Thermos Company is recalling gas barbecue grills it sold nationwide between January and March of 1991. Grills with serial numbers ending in A1, B1, or C1 appearing at the base of the grill near the wheels may be affected. The grill's regulator and hose assembly could leak gas, possibly causing a fire.

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Approximately 53,000 air rifles (Model 3100) made by Crosman Products, Inc. are recalled. They were sold nationwide since July of 1986. A potential defect in the trigger mechanism could present the risk of unexpected firing even if the rifle's safety is engaged.

• • •

Approximately 1,760 Kawasaki motorcycles manufactured in late 1991 are recalled because excessive movement of the rear brake hose allows the rear brake disc to rub against the hose, eventually causing a loss of rear brake effectiveness.