

JOINT ACTION ON BABY WALKER'S FINISHED.....

But Safety Awareness needs to be increased!

Market Surveillance Authorities around Europe were busy this year carrying out a joint action on baby walkers found on the European market. These articles of child care were one of the joint actions undertaken by Prosafe and co-funded by the various member states participating as well as the European Commission. In all, 12 member states participated during this joint action on market surveillance which had a time span of 13 months. Member states, during the past year, have joined forces and shared information on the status of baby walkers found on the market.

A total of 36 baby walkers were sampled and tested. Trends evident during testing were discussed with manufacturers, standards professionals as well as consumers, with the aim of having safer products on the market. These trends may serve as indicators to consumers and economic operators alike in making a better choice for safer products. For example the tests undertaken showed that all baby walkers having six or more wheels/castors did not comply with the safety requirements of the applicable standard. Likewise, baby walkers tested showed that a unit having a lower maximum tray height is more likely to be non compliant than ones with a larger maximum tray height. Also evident during testing was that the overall length of a baby walker had a bearing on the safety of the unit, with shorter ones failing the 'prevention of falls down steps' test more often than longer ones. Also evident was the fact that baby walkers which have not braking stoppers underneath the frame all failed the very important 'step fall tests' carried out. These trends may give an indication to consumers and economic operators alike to ask questions when procuring a baby walker for their child. Thus economic operators should ask their suppliers to give them documentation showing that the baby walkers they are placing on the market comply with the applicable standard, EN 1273:2005 in this case. Likewise, parents should request the documentation as well when they are shopping for a baby walker.

Finally, even though a baby walker is compliant with the standard in all its requirements, parents should be aware that the best assurances against accidents are prevention and continuous supervision. A baby walker may be able to brake at the edge off a step but the best way is to block access to the stairs in the first place. Also the best protection of children against hurting themselves during play is adequate supervision by parents or other caregivers.

Ten out of the 36 sampled baby walkers have been notified on RAPEX. They were found to fail in the 'step fall test', which means that they will not stop at the edge of a step/stair. Those brands/models are withdrawn from the market. More information on the non-complying products can be found on http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/dyna/rapex/rapex_archives_en.cfm

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