

Recent Developments

The Forum for Family and Consumer Issues (FFCI)

- Housing and House Furnishings
- Legal Issues

Housing and House Furnishings

Performance Regulations for Crib Side Rail Slats May Be Coming

From January 1985 to September 1996, the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) received 138 reported incidents of crib slat disengagements involving cribs manufactured by at least 26 different manufacturers. Those 138 incidents resulted in 12 deaths and 5 serious injuries. It seems the side rail slats on the cribs become loose, break, or fall out during use.

CPSC has decided to publish an advance notice of proposed rulemaking. This will start the process of developing a mandatory performance standard for full-size and certain (non-mesh) non-full-size cribs. Crib manufacturers indicate the problems are poor quality control. CPSC is looking at a slat strength test used by Canada to test cribs. Furniture manufacturers, on the other hand, indicate that the Canadian strength test does not detect unsatisfactory glue joints.

In 1973 and 1976, the CPSC instituted mandatory standards for full-size and non-full-size cribs. The standards included requirements relating to side height, slat spacing, and mattress fit. In 1982, the CPSC amended the standards to also include prohibiting hazardous cutouts in crib end panels.

Parents of infants and toddlers need to be aware of the potential hazards. They should periodically test crib slats to be sure they are secure with no loose or broken sections. This will prevent potential accidents.

For updates on the regulation process, see [CPSC's web site](http://www.cpsc.gov/index.html) at: <http://www.cpsc.gov/index.html>.

Other Web Sites to Check

The [Carpet & Rug Institute](http://www.carpet-rug.com/) (CRI) now has a web site (<http://www.carpet-rug.com/>)

The web site includes a spot removal section. It can be an excellent supplement to our own [Homecare 1](#) computer program. The spot removal list is more extensive than Homecare 1, but their solutions are not detail specific. For example, the CRI list includes removing crepe paper stains, creosote, papier-mache, tree pitch, play-doh, solder, and suntan lotion to name a few. However, their cleaning solution options include drycleaning solvent, nail polish remover, detergent and water, vinegar and water, and ammonia and water without the details on the procedures as we gave in Homecare 1.

The [National Wood Flooring Association](http://www.woodfloors.org) also has a web site <http://www.woodfloors.org>.

This web site has information on wood flooring choices, wood flooring species and grades, wood floor finishes, caring for wood floors and repairing scratches and removing stains. This too, may be an excellent supplement to Extension's [Homecare 1](#) and [Homecare 2](#) for care and spot removal information.

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Legal Issues

A durable power of attorney containing the word "transfer" expressly confers the power to make gifts. The North Carolina Supreme Court recently clarified the law regarding making gifts pursuant to a durable power of attorney. The court held that an attorney-in-fact acting pursuant to a broad general power of attorney lacks the authority to make a gift of the principal's real property unless that power is expressly conferred. The North Carolina statutory short form power of attorney, standing alone, did not confer this power before the 1995 amendments.** The court decided that the power of attorney in question, however, conferred the authority to make gifts because it had been modified to include the word "transfer." The court reasoned that the word "transfer" is a word ordinarily used to represent a conveyance of property by sale or by gift. *Whitford v. Gaskill*, ___ N.C. ___, (No. 399PA95, 2-10-97).

** In 1995, the North Carolina legislature amended the law by adding a section to the statutory short form power of attorney which allowed the principal to give the attorney-in-fact the authority to make gifts to individuals and charities in accordance with the principal's personal history of gift-giving. The court decision is important for cases involving a durable power of attorney executed before the effective date of the amendments, and in cases where the principal does not have a personal history of gift-giving. In the latter case, the principal may wish to add

the word "transfer" to his or her durable power of attorney in order to authorize an attorney-in-fact to make gifts.

For more information, see the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service publication, "[Legal Authority](#)," FCS-363, and slide show on "[Preparing for Possible Future Incompetency](#)."

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