



Short Safety Subject

Short Safety Subjects are provided by the Public Safety Business Center, Fort Bragg, NC. Our intent is to provide safety topics for the purpose of increasing safety awareness and improving safety performance. Additional Short Safety Subjects are available on the PSBC Business Management Web Site at:

www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm

Shopping Cart Safety

The number of children ages 5 and under injured in shopping cart-related incidents has increased more than 30 percent since 1985. Children may suffer lacerations, contusions, fractures, concussions and internal injuries when they jump or fall from a shopping cart, the cart overturns, they get pinched in the folding mechanism of the seat or they fall against the cart. Children also are at risk of injury from running into, or being hit by, shopping carts; from tipping over carts while climbing onto the outside of the basket; and from getting fingers or toes caught in the wheels.

Falls from shopping cart seats and baskets are the most common shopping cart-related injury. Shopping carts have a high center of gravity and a narrow wheel base, making them top heavy when loaded and therefore easy to tip over, especially when a child is placed in the seat. When children stand up, their chances of falling or tipping the cart over increase.

DEATHS AND INJURIES

- Since 1985, at least five children have died from shopping cart-related injuries.
- In 1998, nearly 25,600 children ages 14 and under were treated in hospital emergency rooms for injuries associated with shopping carts. Children ages 4 and under accounted for 83 percent of these injuries.
- Each year, on average, falls from shopping carts account for 60 percent (or 12,800 injuries) of all shopping cart-related injuries among children ages 5 and under.
- Five percent of children injured from falls from shopping cart seats require hospitalization.

HOW AND WHERE SHOPPING CART INJURIES HAPPEN?

- Head injuries account for approximately two-thirds of all injuries associated with falls from shopping carts.
- Approximately 54 percent of children sustaining head injuries associated with falls from shopping carts suffer severe injuries such as concussions and fractures.
- Twenty-five percent of injuries associated with falls from shopping cart seats occur among children younger than age 2. Nearly 34 percent of the children are age 2 and the remaining 41 percent of the children are ages 3 to 4. Approximately 65 percent of the children injured are male and 60 percent are treated for head injuries.

- Nineteen percent of injuries associated with falls from shopping cart baskets occur among children younger than age 2. Approximately 55 percent of the children are age 2 and the remaining 26 percent are ages 3 to 5. Approximately 54 percent of the children injured are female and 40 percent are treated for head injuries.
- An estimated 3,900 injuries among children ages 5 and under are associated with incidents in which a child runs into a shopping cart or strikes a body part against the cart. The average age of children who sustain these injuries is 3.
- Approximately 8 percent (or 1,800) of shopping cart-related injuries occur when the cart tips over and a child falls, the cart tips over and falls on the child, or the cart tips over with a child in it. Tipovers occur primarily among children ages 1 and under.
- Approximately 8 percent of shopping cart-related injuries occur when a child's body part becomes caught in the shopping cart. Nearly 75 percent of these injuries are associated with fingers, 25 percent with wrists or toes. The average age of children who sustain these injuries is 3.
- Approximately 85 to 90 percent of fall-related incidents occur inside grocery and department stores. The remainder occurs directly outside the stores or in the parking lots.

WHO IS AT RISK?

- Children ages 5 and under are at greatest risk of shopping cart-related injuries, accounting for two-thirds of all shopping cart-related injuries.
- Males are more likely to be injured from shopping cart-related incidents than females.
- Children left unattended are at greater risk for shopping cart-related injuries. More than 80 percent of parents/caregivers leave a child unattended at least once while on a shopping trip.

CHILD SAFETY RESTRAINTS

- In 80 percent of falls from shopping cart seats the children were unrestrained, primarily because the cart was not equipped with a safety belt or the belt was broken. Research has shown that even when shopping carts are equipped with safety restraints parents do not use them.

PREVENTION

- Always use safety belts to restrain children in shopping cart seats.
- Consider bringing a harness or safety belt with you when shopping to prevent your child from falling or climbing out of shopping carts.
- Always stay close to the shopping cart.
- Do not let your child stand in the shopping cart.
- Never let a child push or steer the shopping cart.