Federal Regulation Forces Crib Replacement in Church Nurseries
By John Dougan, senior risk control specialist, Adventist Risk Management

The U.S. federal commission responsible for setting safety standards of consumer products has tightened manufacturing and use regulations for cribs, forcing retailers and child care facilities to replace cribs that do not comply with new federal standards. In a statement, the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) announced, "The new rules, which apply to full-size and non full-size cribs, prohibit the manufacture or sale of traditional drop-side rails cribs, strengthen crib slats and mattress supports, improve the quality of hardware and require more rigorous testing."

The CPSC outlined a two-part process for removing dangerous cribs from use over the next year. The first phase ensures that all cribs manufactured and sold comply with CPSC safety rules for cribs and supporting hardware by June 28, 2011. While Seventh-day Adventist organizations do not manufacture cribs, church-owned thrift shops or similar operations, may have cribs in stock that fail to meet CPSC safety standards (code: 16 CFR 1219 and 16 CFR 1220). Please be advised to discontinue sales and donations of these cribs immediately. To determine whether or not a crib in your facility is compliant, contact the manufacturer or retail store where it was purchased. To do otherwise is to put a child at risk and increase the liability of your organization to law suits.

The second phase of the new regulation requires that all cribs used in child care centers, family child-care homes, and places of public accommodation meet the new standards by December 28, 2012. Since 2007, CPSC has issued over 46 recalls of more than 11 million cribs. All but seven recalls were for product defects that were hazardous and could lead to injuries or deaths. Between April 11, 2007 and April 11, 2010, there were 35 fatalities attributed to structural problems with cribs. The majority of those (34 out of 35) were due to head, neck, or body entrapments, with 51% resulting from drop-side failures. Nearly all of the crib failures resulted from detachments, disengagements or breakages that created openings in which infants became entrapped.

Knowing the danger of these cribs, every effort should be made to expedite the changeover from non-compliant to compliant cribs. Until non-compliant cribs are replaced, CPSC strongly advises church nurseries to inspect cribs before each use and tighten or replace loose or broken parts. Churches are especially advised to replace drop-side cribs, as they do not meet the new safety standards and have been blamed in the deaths of more than 30 infants and toddlers since 2000.

To guarantee non-compliant cribs will not be reused, they should be disposed of in a way that prevents reassembly.

Information from CPSC on the new federal regulation and crib recall notices:
List of crib recall notices: http://www.cpsc.gov/cgi-bin/cribs.aspx