

Furniture Tip-Overs



True Story

A two-year-old boy was taken to his room for a nap by his mother. She then went downstairs and watched television. She checked on the child several hours later and found him unresponsive with his upper torso and head under the dresser in his room. The child had climbed on the dresser in the past, and investigators indicated the dresser was thinly constructed and unsteady. The boy died of asphyxia (lack of oxygen).

-From the files of MECAP
(Medical Examiners and Coroners Alert Project)

The Facts

- Most televisions involved in tip-overs are smaller with a 20-30 inch screen.
- Many parents overlook the risk of furniture falling.
- Between 8,000 and 10,000 injuries are reported each year relating to furniture tip-overs.
- In March of 2006 Consumer Reports magazine tested dressers. One in five dressers failed the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) test.
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- The ASTM tip-over standard for dressers is: The empty unit can't tip when any doors are open and all drawers are open 2/3 of the way or to the stop, whichever is less. It also can't tip when one drawer is open 2/3 of the way (or door is fully open) and 50 pounds is applied to the center of the drawer.

What You Can Do

- The safest measure is to anchor any potentially unstable furniture to a wall with tip-over straps or restraints.
- Keep heavy objects off of dressers.
- Place TVs on lower furniture, as far back as possible.
- Because glass furniture poses its own hazards, ask for furniture with safety glass, which is less hazardous than standard glass when it breaks.

Source: Consumer Product Safety Commission



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Safe Kids Greater Des Moines, led by Blank Children's Hospital, is a grassroots organization dedicated to preventing unintentional injury in children ages 0-14.

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