

Daily Union Article  
Saturday, January 20, 2018  
Title: Safety First

"Safety First!" - Thanks to my sister-in-law, Tracey, who touts this phrase often, all of the next generation children in my family are aware of the importance of being attentive to safety.

Too many times we are not aware of a potential safety hazard until we become injured. We can easily be injured by small appliances, housewares, household cleaners, power adapters, and the list goes on. Even simple toys have been found to pose harm. A November 16, 2017 U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) report shared that an estimated 174,100 toy-related ER-treated injuries occurred in 2016. There were seven toy-related deaths involving children younger than fifteen that same year.

For example, did you know there has been some incidents reported to CPSC regarding fidget spinners? If you haven't heard about or seen a fidget spinner, just ask a teenager or younger child about it. They will likely tell you they have one, want one, or collect them. These wildly popular toys aren't safe for every age – especially younger children. Some fidget spinners have small parts – such as the weighted "arms" of the toy. These arms can break off and present a choking hazard.

What can a parent do to ensure their child is safe around these enticing gadgets? The CPSC offers the following guidelines:

### **Fidget spinners and children:**

- Keep fidget spinners away from children under 3 years of age.
- The plastic and metal spinners have small pieces that can be a choking hazard. Choking incidents involving children up to age 14 have been reported.
- "Light up" fidget spinners may come with button or lithium coin cell batteries. These batteries are an ingestion risk for children and the larger lithium coin cells can lead to severe burns in the esophagus.
- Warn children of *all ages* not to put fidget spinners or small pieces in their mouths and not to play with the fidget spinner near their faces.

### **Rechargeable battery-operated fidget spinners:**

- Be present when products with batteries are charging.
- Never charge a product with batteries overnight while you are sleeping.
- Unplug your fidget spinner immediately once it is fully charged. If there is no indicator showing a full charge, unplug after one hour.
- Always use the cable that came with the fidget spinner.

- If the fidget spinner did not come with a cable, make sure the cable you use is undamaged and has the correct connections for charging.
- Have working smoke alarms in your house to protect you if there is a fire.

It may seem that these safety precautions are a bit overdone, but don't tell the parents of the 11-year-old boy in Arizona who got his finger caught in one in August of 2017. When his parents took him to the emergency room, they had to use fiberglass saws to get it off. There have been multiple incidents where children have required surgery to get a broken part from a fidget spinner removed after swallowing it.

Adults are prone for unsuspecting accidents, as well. In a recall announced on January 16, 2018, consumers who own a power adapter wall plug sold with Fujifilm digital cameras have been asked to stop using the recalled adapter and contact Fujifilm for a free replacement.

The danger found in these adaptors is that the power adapter wall plug can crack, break or detach and remain in the wall – exposing live electrical contacts that pose a shock hazard.

Although no incidents or injuries have been reported to date, Fujifilm has identified this product flaw and voluntarily recalled the AC-5VF power adapter. Models sold with these adaptors include: XP90, XP95, XP120, XP125, X-A3 and X-A10.

The XP90 and XP95 were sold from June 2016 through January 2018, the XP120 and XP125 were sold from January 2017 through January 2018, the X-A3 was sold from October 2016 through January 2018, and the X-A10 was sold from February 2017 through January 2018. The USB cord sold with these models is safe to use. Only the wall plug presents a hazard.

Even when there is no recall on an item used in the home, you can find yourself at risk of accident. Many accidents and fires occur as a result of faulty electrical outlets and old, outdated appliances. According to the U.S. Fire Administration, in 2014, electrical fires accounted for 6.3 percent (nearly 24,000) of all residential fires of which 11 percent ended in death and 7 percent resulted in personal injury.

Replacing the old chest freezer that has been around for the past 20+ years may seem expensive, but it might be a safety hazard that will result in a much higher cost. If you live in an old home, it is not uncommon to have only one or two electrical outlets in each room, if that!

The Electrical Safety Foundation International reports that overloaded circuits are a leading cause of electrical fires. Indications that your home might have overloaded circuits include:

- Lights that frequently flicker, blink, or dim

- Frequently blown fuses or malfunctioning circuit breakers
- Outlets or switches that are warm or discolored
- Buzzing, crackling, or sizzling sounds from outlets or switches
- A burning odor around outlets or switches
- Mild shocks from switches, outlets, or appliances

If you notice any of these indications, stop using the outlets or switches until checked by a licensed electrician and repaired, if necessary.

“Safety First” is not just a smart idea, it can be a way of life. Look around your home for potential safety hazards and get them fixed before someone gets hurt. Read the safety guidelines for your purchased household goods. Keeping your family and home safe is a great way to show how much you care. Until next time, keep living resourcefully!