

Easy Come, Easy Go

By Reg P. Wydeven
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Because of my well-documented Star Wars fanaticism, the good people at Hasbro mailed me a catalog hocking their newest wares. As my son and I “oohed” and “aahed” over the action figures from the 30th Anniversary Collection, which celebrates the release of the iconic film in 1977, my daughter noticed that there was even a section in the catalog for girls.

She was admiring the My Little Ponies and the millions of accessories for her Baby Alive doll when she noticed the Easy-Bake Oven. She couldn't seem to fathom that a little girl could actually have her own oven that baked real food. Once I convinced her that this miracle of modern science is a reality, she has spoken of nothing else since. She even vowed that if Santa leaves one under the tree for her, she will cook Christmas dinner for the whole family, consisting of pizza and cupcakes.

While her Christmas menu sounds ideal to me, hopefully Santa will work out the kinks in his appliance division before the holidays. Working with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Hasbro voluntarily recalled almost one million Easy-Bake Ovens for safety concerns.

Hasbro recalled the ovens after discovering young cooks could get their hands into the oven's opening and get their hands or fingers caught, posing an entrapment and burn hazard. The toy manufacturer received 29 reports of such entrapments and five reports of burns.

The recall is for oven model number 65805, and does not affect ovens sold before May of 2006. Consumers with the faulty ovens should contact Hasbro to receive a free retrofit kit with a warning about the hazard that stresses that the oven should be kept away from children under eight.

Because my son shoves his hands in everything he can, from VCRs to DVD players to jars of Vaseline, it's a good thing we didn't have one of these defective ovens. Thank goodness the CPSC is looking out for our kids and us to protect us from potentially harmful products.

The CPSC monitors more than 15,000 types of consumer products that cause deaths, injuries and property damage exceeding \$700 billion annually. The CPSC examines products to determine if they pose a fire, electrical, chemical, or mechanical hazard or could injure children.

If a product presents a significant risk to consumers either because it may be defective or violates a mandatory standard issued by CPSC, the agency will issue a notice of a recall, with potential remedies for the consumer. Typically there is no 'expiration date' for a recall. Once a product is recalled, consumers should stop using it to avoid injury or property damage. This can be frustrating, especially since consumers aren't guaranteed to get their money back for buying a product that gets recalled. To determine if a product has been recalled, visit the CPSC's user-friendly web site, which is continually updated, at www.cpsc.gov.

Needless to say, the engineers at Hasbro have resolved the entrapment problem in the Easy-Bake oven. Assuming my daughter stays on Santa's 'good' list, I will be having pizza and cupcakes for Christmas dinner. But the real good news is that other than possibly tarnishing your reputation as a cool guy, the CPSC has determined that Star Wars toys are perfectly safe.